

Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications update report

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To give an overview of the functions of the Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications Business Unit.
- 1.2. To provide an update to the Committee regarding progress against the assurance programme in the areas of Performance Management and Equality and Inclusion.

2. Functions of the Business Unit

- 2.1. The Business Unit has five functions reporting to the Service Director, Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications:

- Business Improvement and Intelligence
- Communications and Marketing
- Corporate Programmes, Projects, Feedback and Improvement
- Human Resources and Organisation Development
- Corporate Health, Safety and Emergency Resilience

- 2.2. The core purpose of the business unit is to,

'Provide high quality, value for money, customer focussed, professional and strategic core services'.

The Business Unit is responsible for driving and delivering business improvement and communications to ensure the organisation is a customer focussed, modern, efficient and commercial minded Council.

3. **Related Elements of the Annual Governance Statement**

3.1. The business unit has a role in ensuring assurance against the following elements of the Annual Governance Statement:

- **Management Arrangements** – services can demonstrate compliance with the Managing People Framework through the completion of Performance and Development Reviews (P&DR) and managing absence through the Managing Attendance Policy.
- **Business Improvement and Intelligence** – supports the development of the Council Plan to illustrate progress achieved in delivering the priorities and outcomes of the Council Plan for 2021-2024 closely linked to the priorities and ambitious goals of the Barnsley 2030 strategy.
- **Equality and Inclusion** – Legal obligations fall into two areas: the need to pay 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty, and the requirement to produce equality objectives and publish specific information. Directorates demonstrate compliance with the equality duty through completion of equality impact assessments. Information compliance is achieved through our external facing website.

Business Improvement and Intelligence

3.2. The Business Improvement and Intelligence team (BII) supports the development of performance frameworks and co-ordinates performance management across our organisation, ensuring a consistent and coherent approach.

3.3. The new Council Plan for 2021-2024 was created to reflect the significant private sector and public engagement activities that took place for the Barnsley 2030 strategy, and the external facing priorities of both are the same, as is making Barnsley the place of possibilities vision.

3.4. The BII team delivers the Council Plan Performance report on a quarterly basis, to provide an overview of the council's latest performance, drawing upon information available for each quarter, and to illustrate progress achieved in delivering the priorities and outcomes of the Council Plan 2021-2024.

- 3.5. The Council Plan contains four external priorities and one internal priority, supported by 12 outcomes. It is also recognised that the council is not solely accountable for delivering all these outcomes as a single entity, as it works in partnership with other organisations to deliver many of the system wide outcomes.
- 3.6. The framework identifies what the council is seeking to achieve for the people of Barnsley, as defined in our key strategies and plans, and a series of outcomes which focus on specific areas of service delivery and support for the borough and its residents.
- 3.7. There is an associated Power BI online report that provides a self-service tool that allows users to interrogate each of the critical success factors that form part of the Council Plan performance framework and are measured each quarter which allows the user to view progress over time.
- 3.8. The latest Council Plan report and associated Power BI report are available on our 'How we measure performance' webpage: <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/our-performance/how-we-measure-our-performance/>

Equality and Inclusion

- 3.9. The public sector 'Equality Duty' (PSED), at section 149 Equality Act 2010, is a duty on public bodies to consider, in their day-to-day work, the needs of people who share protected characteristics. There are three aims to the duty stating the Council must pay 'due regard' to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a particular protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a particular protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 3.10. The Council complies with the PSED by conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). The assessment provides a prediction of how the 'work' could impact different groups. This ensures that the organisation does not discriminate unlawfully against a

person or group of people, and actively promotes equality. If the assessment predicts possible negative impacts for certain groups, then mitigations are required. The EIA template provides an audit trail to record the equality related decision-making process.

- 3.11. A Pre-Screening Assessment was introduced in 2020. This is a simple series of questions that assess whether the 'work' has any equalities relevance. Work that has no relevance to equality does not need to complete a full EIA, therefore providing a proportionate approach to the duty. The Equality and Inclusion Team provide an extra layer of scrutiny in this area to ensure officers have made the correct assessment and that a full EIA is not required. During 20/21 the team recorded 129 pieces of work that because of completing a pre-screening assessment, did not require completion of a full EIA. Highlighting proportionality in this area.
- 3.12. During 2020/21 the Equality and Inclusion Team supported 92 full EIA's across all directorates. Evidencing that consideration of our equality duty obligations is embedded into working practices across the council.
- 3.13. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty (annually); and to set specific, measurable objectives (at least every four years) to demonstrate compliance with one or more of the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The information required must include:
 - Information relating to employees who share protected characteristics
 - Information relating to people who are affected by the public body's policies and practices who share protected characteristics (for example residents).

Compliance is achieved through various publications on the external Council website.

- 3.14. New equality objectives have been set this year that align to, and are contained within, Our Council Plan 2021-2024. Details can be found on page nine of [Our Plan](#). This ensures accountability across the council and reduces duplication in reporting.
- 3.15. The People Strategy is key to support our aim to Be Even Better and the Enabling Barnsley priority as part of Barnsley 2030, the Council Plan, and our long-term vision

for Barnsley. The Strategy is supported by an action plan into which equality related keys actions are embedded. One of the key actions is the development of a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, with the intention for this to be overseen by the Organisational Development Board.

- 3.16. Performance indicators have been introduced in the BU15 performance report to measure whether a suitable percentage of job applicants are from Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) backgrounds or are disabled. A RAG rating of red was scored in quarters one and two for both indicators. Linked indicators were introduced to measure whether a suitable percentage of successful candidates were from BME backgrounds or disabled. The indicator for BME applicants was red in quarters one and two, but green for the percentage of successful disabled applicants in both quarters. There is an action in the diversity and inclusion action plan to conduct an end-to-end review of the recruitment process to ensure our practices are equitable for people with protected characteristic backgrounds, and therefore pay due regard to the equality duty. (Performance report OWI20-23 refer).
- 3.17. Changes have been made to the Cabinet Report Template during 2021 making it mandatory for officers to complete the 'Equality Impact' section of the template which was previously optional. This takes the form of drop-down options and where a full EIA has been completed, the information required on the template can be directly lifted from Stage 8 on the EIA template. Ensuring the process is not burdensome for officers. This strengthened compliance is supported by a performance indicator on the BU15 performance report (OWI24) which analyses whether officers have completed the drop-down option correctly. Quarter one and two recorded 100% compliance. A future consideration could be to analyse the robustness of full EIA's should staffing levels allow following the BU15 restructure.
- 3.18. In April 2021 the council started a new contract with AA Global to supply all translation and interpretation services. This offers better value for money than the previous multiple rolling contracts.

4. Conclusion / Recommendations

- 4.1. This report is for information

5. Background papers

- 5.1. Business Improvement and Communications Business and Delivery Plans and Annual Governance Statement are available for inspection.

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