

**Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications Governance  
Domain 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 seven broad 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
- Equality and Inclusion
- Organisation and Workforce Development (including the Member Development function)
- HR Business Advisory, Employee Wellbeing and Reward
- Recruitment and HR Traded Services

- 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 Future 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** –support the development of the new Council Plan for 2021-24 and continue to support the current Corporate Plan to illustrate progress achieved in delivering the priorities and outcomes for the organisation.
- **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 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 arrangements across our organisation, ensuring a consistent and coherent approach.

3.3. The BII team delivers the Corporate 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 Corporate Plan 2017-2020. The plan is scrutinised by directorate management meetings and SMT before being shared with Cabinet and then publicly released.

3.4. The Corporate Plan contains three priorities, supported by 12 outcomes. It outlines what the council has committed to undertake in order to deliver the priorities, but it is

also recognised that the council is not solely accountable for delivering these outcomes, as it works in partnership with other organisations.

- 3.5. 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 objectives which focus on specific areas of service delivery and support for the borough and its residents.
- 3.6. The Corporate Plan has continued to be produced throughout 2020-2021 even with the impact of COVID-19, as it is essential the council continues to monitor progress towards the key priorities and how key outcomes may have been impacted by the pandemic.
- 3.7. To support the delivery of the Corporate Performance Plan and to communicate the progress against the Outcomes Framework, 2 products are produced for the public:
  - The Corporate Plan Performance Report
  - Power BI online report that includes all associated key performance indicators
- 3.8. The Power BI online report is a self-service report that allows users to review the red/amber/green status of each of the key corporate indicators that are measured each quarter and allows the user to view progress over time (quarterly or annually).
- 3.9. The BII team is currently working on the next Council Plan for 2021-2024, which will be influenced by the extensive consultation that has been undertaken for the Barnsley 2030 project. This consultation has resulted in public and partner organisations identifying key themes to improve across the borough, some of which will require collaborative efforts to achieve over the next 10 years.
- 3.10. The new Council Plan will incorporate the findings from the Barnsley 2030 work that are relevant for a 3-year plan, as well as other key council initiatives such as Zero Carbon and the Inclusive Economy work taking place.

## Equality and Inclusion

3.11. 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 particular 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.

3.12. 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.

3.13. 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.

3.14. An Aggregated Equality Impact Assessment was conducted against the proposed budget efficiency savings for 2021-22. The assessment considered whether: any of the savings could impact different groups of people protected by law; there could be a negative cumulative impact against a group; and whether there could be additional negative impact on groups most impacted by Covid-19. The assessment concluded that at present, efficiency proposals are not predicted to have an adverse impact on protected groups.

- 3.15. 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.

- 3.16. Work has started to produce new equality objectives which will align to key themes from the new Council Plan.
- 3.17. Implementation of the Success Factors solution will provide an opportunity to improve the demographic data of employees. A communications plan will accompany the launch to encourage staff to update the information held about themselves.
- 3.18. The procurement process was updated during 2020. All procurement activity must now show 'due regard' to equality considerations. Previously work with a value under 20k did not need to consider equality.
- 3.19. Work is on-going to update and strengthen compliance through changes to the Cabinet Report Template. It will become mandatory for Officers to complete the 'Equality Impact' section of the template, which currently is optional.
- 3.20. In addition to the above, work is ongoing as part of the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 Action Plan. This includes:
- The Council Equality and Inclusion Policy has been updated and published.
  - Training courses are now available on 'Unconscious Bias', 'Uncomfortable Conversations' and 'Uncomfortable Truth' to promote the Black Lives Matter movement and help build an inclusive culture.

- Power BI dashboard has been produced to show equality and inclusion training completions within business units and directorates, with a view to increasing take up of these.
- Religious Observance guidance has been produced to raise awareness of the different religious or cultural beliefs and help build an inclusive culture.
- An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is being drafted to support delivery of the equality objectives mentioned previously.

#### **4. Conclusion / Recommendations**

4.1. This report is for information

#### **5. Background papers**

5.1. Business Improvement, Human Resources and Communications Business and Delivery Plans and Annual Governance Statement are available for inspection.

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