

## COUNCIL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE

3 September 2020

Present: Councillor D Walford (Chair)  
Councillor J Johnson (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors A Dychton, M Mills, M Parker, N Shah and M Watkin

Officers: Executive Head of Human Resources and Organisational  
Development  
Democratic Services Officer (AG)

### 1 **Apologies for absence/ committee membership**

There were no apologies for absence.

### 2 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### 3 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2020 were agreed. These would be signed once members and officers had returned to the Town Hall.

### 4 **Workforce Monitoring Report 2020**

The committee received a report of the Executive Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development about the profile of Watford Borough Council's workforce.

The Executive Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report. He explained that the document covered the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 and that there was a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to publish the data.

He drew member's attention to Section 3 on page 8 of the report and outlined the measures being taken by the council in seeking to address the issue of

individuals being reluctant to disclose personal information. The aim was to encourage personnel to provide the data and thereby provide a fuller picture.

The Executive Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development turned to matters in relation to recruitment discussed on page 15 of the report and advised that an applicant tracking system, Webrecruit, had been introduced during 2019/20 and this had resulted in a significant increase in the number of applicants stating their ethnic origin. He informed the committee that there was an error in paragraph 17.1 on page 15 of the report in that the data therein relating to job applications referred to the year 2018/19 and not to 2019/20 as published. He clarified that In 2019/20 there had been 613 black and minority ethnic job applications equivalent to 50% of the total.

Members discussed the impact of staff being reluctant to provide personal information and how it was difficult to extrapolate meaningful data. The Executive Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development advised that it was hoped the measures he had outlined to address the issue would lead to an improvement. He emphasised that the introduction of the new HR iTrent system would provide an opportunity to ask all staff to confirm that their personal details was correct and to add any missing data; albeit they could not be compelled to provide information.

In response to questions from members, the Executive Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development:

- Explained how the council would seek to employ younger people in the organisation through an increase in the number of apprentices (with a report on the matter going before the Senior Leadership Team and members shortly), by developing an academy approach in the Customer Services Centre and through an examination of recent government proposals.
- Advised that some research indicated that older job applicants were less inclined to provide personal information; although the council had a good age range of responses. Furthermore, there was no age limit on employment.
- Confirmed that the council was similar to other authorities across Hertfordshire in respect of the number of individuals having a reluctance to provide personal information. There was perhaps a need to communicate better to staff what the information was for and of how it would be used.

RESOLVED –

that Council Functions Committee approves the Workforce Monitoring Report.

It is noted that the meeting was late in starting due to a problem with the Chair being able to join on-line, and there was a short adjournment during the meeting when a member's link dropped out.

Chair  
Council Functions Committee

The Meeting started at 6.38 pm  
and finished at 7.00 pm