

BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Ethnic Minority Representation in the Workforce

24th October 2005

Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Panel with information about what the City Council is doing to increase the number of employees who are from ethnic minority communities.

This report is public.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report is noted.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 At a previous meeting of the Budget and Performance Panel, Members resolved the following:

"The calculation of BVPI 17a needed consideration to ascertain if it was a fair reflection of the ethnic proportion of the district, and that the Panel consider informing Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)." And

"That a report be requested regarding how the City Council compares to comparable authorities and actively tries to encourage job applications from minority groups, and that this be brought to a future meeting."

The Relationship between BV 17a and 17b

- 2.2 The calculation of the Council's performance against BV 17a (percentage of ethnic minority employees in the workforce) is a "stand alone" figure. The performance is reported by expressing the number of ethnic minority employees as a percentage of the total workforce rather than being expressed as a link to ethnic minority representation within the community. The percentage of ethnic minority residents in the community is calculated as a result of the collation of census data and again is a "stand alone" figure upon which the Council has no influence. It is not clear from the previous minute whether it is Members' intention to query BV 17a, BV 17b or both. To query BV 17b would involve taking the

matter up with the ODPM. This report is primarily concerned with explaining and comparing the Council's performance in respect of BV 17a, which, in part, involves expressing the percentage of ethnic minority employees as a percentage of published census data for the District.

- 2.3 BV 17b is the "Ethnic minority representation in the workforce – local population" and this is the percentage of the economically active (persons aged 18-65) population from ethnic minority communities in the Lancaster City Council area. The full definition is included at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 Members will note that in order to calculate the percentage of economically active people from ethnic minority communities in the local authority area the 2001 Census data, returns from surveys conducted for BVPI 3 in 2003/04 or other more reliable data can be used. In Lancaster City Council's case, the 2001 Census data has been used, as no other more reliable data is currently available.

Comparable Information

- 2.5 Details about how the City Council compares to other comparable authorities are given at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.
- 2.6 Appendix 2 provides the 2003/04 outturn figures for local authorities in the Exeter Benchmarking Group, of which Lancaster is a member. This is a group of authorities that have been deemed as being similar. These figures have been taken from the ODPM website and show that Lancaster is in the bottom quartile in relation to this indicator. At the time of writing the 2004/05 outturn figures were not available from the ODPM website.
- 2.7 Appendix 3 provides both 2003/04 and 2004/05 outturn figures for Lancashire authorities which show that Lancaster is not performing particularly well against local authorities in this area. It should be said, however, that not all local authorities in the Lancashire area have comparable populations to that of Lancaster and, therefore, some caution should be given to direct comparisons.

Encouraging Applications from Ethnic Minority Communities

- 2.8 Lancaster's performance against this BV indicator has improved slightly from 2003/04 to 2004/05. However, work is required to make more progress in this area. Initiatives that have been introduced so far in order to increase the number of ethnic minority employees working for the Council, and which form part of the Council's Race Equality Scheme action plan, are as follows:
 - A positive welcoming statement is included on all job advertisements and on the Council's jobs webpage;
 - Links are included on the jobs webpage to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy, Recruitment Charter and Guidance on Completing Job Application Forms;
 - The Jobs Go Public website, where all Council vacancies are advertised, has a link to an Asian website;
 - All vacancies are circulated to eight local community groups and with the Job Centre Plus national network;
 - The Council is a partner on the Equal 'Beyond Face Value' project, which is being led by St Martin's College and which aims to, amongst other things, encourage ethnic minority people in the Lancaster area to apply for work with the partner organisations.

In addition, plans for the future, which will be included in the revised Race Equality Scheme, include:

- Approaching all ethnic minority candidates for feedback on their experiences during the recruitment process at Lancaster. Depending on the level of interest, this may extend to holding discussion groups (also as part of the Beyond Face Value project);
- Promoting the Council as a reputable employer and employer of choice at careers events and within schools with high numbers of ethnic minority pupils;

3. Conclusion

3.1 The Council has made some progress in increasing the number of employees from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, improvements can be made, particularly in respect of working more closely with partner organisations to identify and remove the barriers to employment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS There are resource implications in relation to HR staff but no direct financial implications.	
SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Deputy Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.	
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS Legal Services have been consulted and have no further comments.	
MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Contact Officer: Katie Dunne – Principal HR Officer