



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Race Champion and Race Action Plan</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th April, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Christine Sheridan, Head of HR

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To update the Committee on proposals to develop a Race Equality and Diversity Action Plan and appoint a Race Champion.
1.2	The Belfast Agenda states that “In 2035, Belfast will be a City that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive.” The Council’s Good Relations Strategy sets out our vision and values for a shared, peaceful and reconciled Belfast. It states that good community and race relations are essential for a healthy and safe City and that it will set the standard for Belfast to aspire to be a place of welcome and diversity. The strategy outlines how we can play our part in building a better city for residents and visitors alike, where different identities can be strength

	and our diverse cultural traditions can all be part of collective cultural wealth; a City where everyone has an equal place and where no-one is left behind.
1.3	A previous request from the Lord Mayor, Cllr. Kate Nicholl for the appointment of a Race Champion and a Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Canavan, seconded by Councillor Garrett, calling for the Council area to become a racism free zone, further highlight the importance of addressing race inequalities and racism. Two reports presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June and December 2020, provided updates on existing work in this area. It was agreed that further consideration of how the Council could address the above proposals was required, and that recommendations should be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at a later date.
1.4	<p>In addition, at the Council meeting on 4th April 2022, the following notice of motion was proposed by Cllr Kyle and seconded by Cllr McMullan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that the Council supports Belfast City Council becoming a "Council of Sanctuary" and supports the initiative to have Belfast recognised as a "City of Sanctuary", in order to provide a welcome and safe place for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and,</li> <li>that a Race Action Plan be developed to review how we deliver our services and take action as an employer to create a diverse workforce."</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that a Race Champion be appointed from within Corporate Management Team to lead a Race Equality and Diversity Action Group to oversee the development of a Race Action Plan; and</li> <li>that the Council signs up to the Business in the Community initiative "Race at Work Charter" initiative to learn from best practice and for support in developing our approach, agreeing actions and setting achievable goals and targets.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Council's approach to promoting good relations and tackling issues such as racism stem from the Good Relations Strategy. The Council's Shared City Partnership (SCP) oversees the work of the Council's District Good Relations Programme and the PEACE IV Local Action Plan. Through these, the Council facilitates a number of projects such as the Migrant Forum, the Diversecity Programme and recently, the Council has signed up to a 3-year Inclusive Cities Programme.

3.2	<p>Consultation with black and ethnic minority groups in the community and a good relations audit have indicated that groups and people from black and ethnic minority groups find it challenging to engage with official structures and difficult to play a full and equal part in civic life and this is reflected in the statistics/data. They report that while positive relationships have been developed at community level with groups and individuals through Council programmes or through relationships with particular officers, black and ethnic communities find it difficult to have their voices represented at decision making level.</p>
3.3	<p>A review of current arrangements and programmes of work is required to identify where improvements can be made to promote the inclusion and visibility of black and ethnic minority groups in our workforce; to improve access to council services and elected members and to encourage the participation of black and ethnic minority groups in civic life.</p>
3.4	<p>It is therefore proposed that Corporate Management Team nominate a chief officer to undertake the role of Race Champion to establish and chair a Race Equality and Diversity Action Group. This group will oversee the development of a Race Action Plan with three distinct strands of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Workforce:</b> attracting more ethnic minority applicants and supporting our existing ethnic minority staff in the workplace</li> <li>○ <b>Accessibility to services:</b> promoting access to council services to ethnic minority customers and citizens and;</li> <li>○ <b>Civic leadership:</b> championing ethnic minority inclusion in decision making, in communities and in public life</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>Subgroups will be established for each strand to develop appropriate action plans which will be incorporated into one Race Action Plan. The subgroups will involve a variety of staff including officers from Corporate HR, the Equality and Diversity Unit, Good Relations, Employability and Skills, departmental policy officers, community safety, the Customer Hub, Marketing and Communications etc. to ensure necessary linkages with existing relevant service delivery, activity, and work plans.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter</u></p> <p>The Council has been approached by Business in the Community to sign up to its national Race at Work Charter. This campaign requires employers to commit to the following actions:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint an Executive Sponsor for race</li> <li>• Capture ethnicity data and publicise progress</li> <li>• Commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying</li> <li>• Make it clear that supporting equality in the workforce is the responsibility of all leaders and managers</li> <li>• Take action that supports ethnic minority career progression</li> <li>• Support race inclusion allies in the workplace</li> <li>• Include BAME and other ethnically diverse led enterprise owners in supply chains.</li> </ul>
3.7	<p>Already well established with employers in all sectors across the UK, involvement with this campaign will enable us to learn from existing best practice to develop our approach and actions and set achievable goals and targets. Involvement in this initiative is available to the Council through our existing membership of Business in the Community at no additional cost. It is therefore proposed that the Council signs up to the Race at Work Charter as a visible commitment to addressing racial inequalities.</p>
3.8	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no direct resource implications in terms of costs associated with this report at present. Further resource implications will be identified through the development of a race action plan and costed for future approval.</p> <p>A Chief Officer/Director will be required to champion this work and all chief officers will be asked to nominate officers to the three sub-groups identified at paragraph 3.4 and ensure that officers are released to participate in the groups and deliver the work required.</p>
3.9	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Actions, which promote the inclusion of black and other ethnic minority communities in employment and civic life, would have a positive impact on equality and good relations within the city.</p>
4.0	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None