

# Race Equality in Harrow Council

*An Action Plan for Change*

# Our approach

We started our work on race equality in September 2020 and have been led by the strategic principles that guide our corporate work on equality, diversity, and inclusion, this involved:

- Evidence and insight
- Consultation and Partnership working
- Developing a strategic approach
- Communicating our strategic approach
- Development of an Action Plan
- Implementation

We took the following approach:

## Qualitative research

- Conducted an Independent Race Review by Prof. Patrick Vernon
- Feedback from 573 staff members via Race Survey conducted by FW Business
- Focus Groups with over 230 staff members

## Quantitative research

- Analysis of Workforce Profile
- Ethnicity Pay Report (published as part of Cabinet papers)
- Findings from Race Survey

The Action Plan has considered key themes that emerged from the Independent Race Review, including:

- Psychological safety
- Racism in the workplace
- Challenges with management behaviour
- Lack of career opportunities for Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic staff
- Impact of racism on health and well-being
- Race and sexism
- Institutional and structural racism

The council's high-level approach for the Race Equality Action Plan centres around:

1. **Creating safe spaces**
2. **Changing the organisation's culture and behaviour through leadership, training, and development**
3. **Recruitment and Retention**

# Response to the Independent Race Review

## **Acknowledging and recognising the journey of ‘righting the wrongs’**

- A clear commitment to addressing deep-rooted inequalities and doing all that we can to become an inclusive anti-racist organisation and the recognition that we need to invest in the capacity to lead this and our broader EDI work.
- Personal pledge by CSB around their commitment to the EDI agenda

## **Recruitment and retention**

- Reviewing our recruitment practices, including looking at more creative ways to ensure we are sourcing talent from a more diverse pool of candidates, and launching equality training for all recruiting managers.

## **Changing the organisation’s culture and behaviour through leadership, training and development**

- Making a clear commitment to developing our staff across all levels of the organisation by making EDI integral to the people strategy, ‘Great People, Great Culture’ and launching a series of new Diverse Talent Management training programmes and reviewing our use of the apprenticeship levy.

## **Creating safe spaces**

- All staff will be expected to undergo mandatory EDI training and we are exploring ways to create a new reporting mechanism, which will allow staff to raise incidents of bullying, harassment, and racism anonymously both online and onsite.
- New Dignity at Work Policy and Zero Tolerance Statement

## **Governance and accountability processes**

- New governance and accountability structures in place through CSB and the newly established Cross-Party Member’s Working Group on BLM and EDI. The council’s strategic objectives on race equality will be reported against quarterly as part of our usual HROD reporting mechanisms.

# The Council's Race Equality Action Plan

## Creating safe spaces

1. To develop an inclusive culture of dignity at work for all and zero tolerance of racism and discriminatory practices.
2. To create a culture of openness and inclusivity by continuing to listen to our Black, Asian and Multi-ethnic staff on an ongoing basis and learning from their experiences in the workplace.
3. Senior leaders to cultivate an environment of psychological safety for all staff within the organisation, directorates, divisions, teams and on a one-to-one basis through personal interactions.

## Changing the organisation's culture and behaviour through leadership, training and development

1. Senior leader sponsorship of our Black, Asian and Multi-ethnic staff with the aim of increasing representation at senior levels of the organisation through a number of avenues, such as shadowing, mentoring, access to opportunities, career coaching.
2. Each directorate to create their own clearly defined pathways for Black, Asian and Multi-ethnic staff by exploring opportunities for them to gain exposure to broad areas of work that contribute towards their career development.
3. Targeted training and development programme for staff from Black, Asian and Multi-ethnic backgrounds to progress from junior to middle management grades.

## Recruitment and retention

1. The top 5% of our staff to be representative of our overall resident population by 2025.
2. Each Directorate to review the number of Black, Asian and Multi-ethnic staff within their services areas and take steps to adequately represent the community that we serve at all levels.
3. Transparency in the recruitment process across the organisation by providing sufficient training for staff before they undertake a recruitment exercise in order to tackle bias throughout the process and to ensure fairness.

# A new offer for staff

## **Consideration for managers: Terminology and providing psychological safety**

- Clear guidance for managers and all staff around creating safe spaces to build up psychological safety
- Key principles around what to do and what not to do when discussing race in the workplace
- Using the right inclusive language to help all staff along this journey

## **New approach to dignity at work and zero tolerance towards all forms of discrimination**

- New Dignity at Work Policy which sets out the council's intention to create an environment built on dignity and respect
- New Zero Tolerance Statement aimed at staff, residents, suppliers, members, and all stakeholders that have an association with the organisation

## **Training and development**

- A suite of new Diversity Talent programmes aimed at staff up to G8 and MG+ grades, including a women's development programme, Be You, Black on Board, First Steps to Management, Management Apprenticeships
- A more formalised approach towards mentoring, coaching and sponsorship

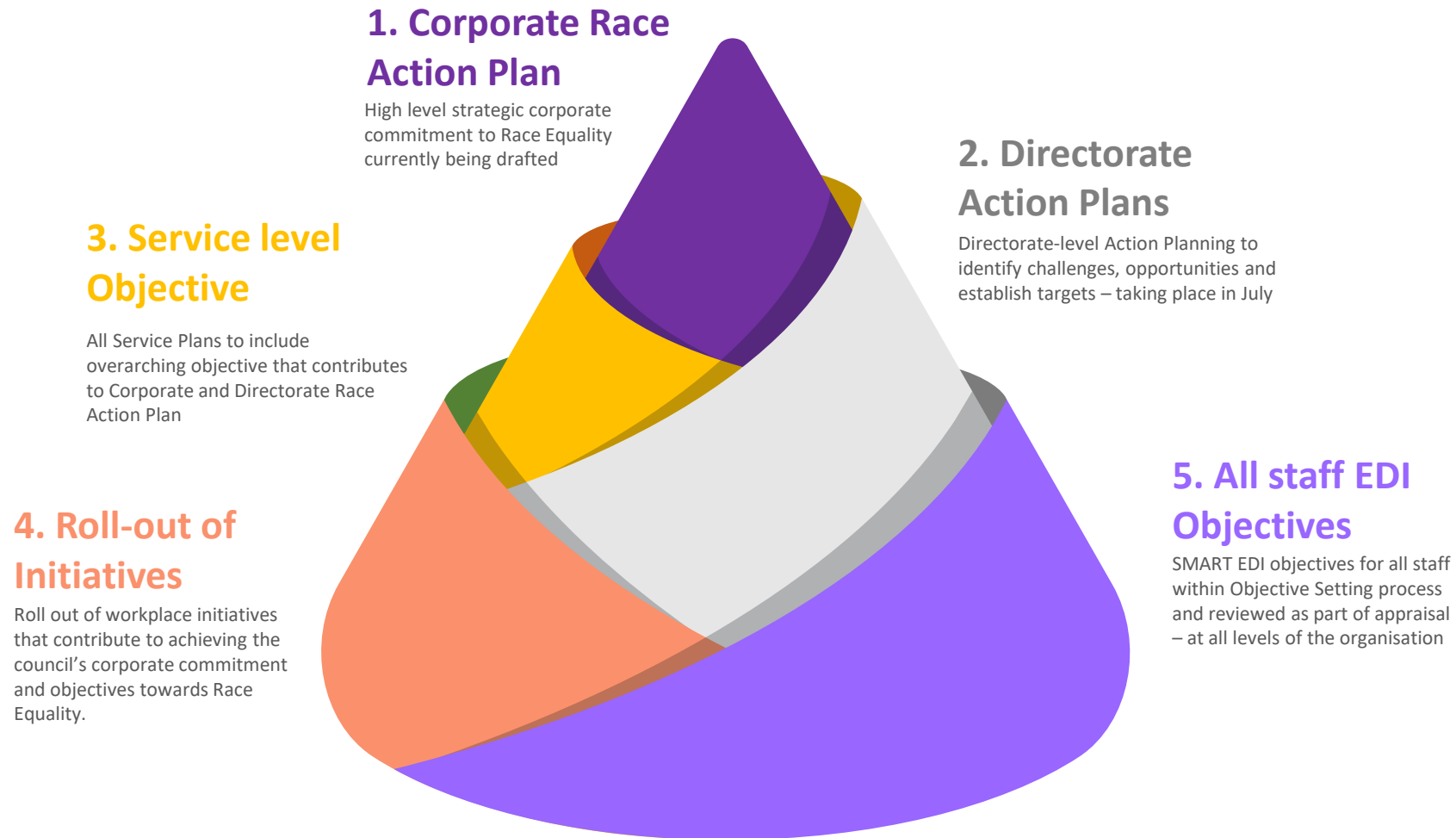
## **Supporting staff**

- EDI mandatory training and anti-racism training
- New training to undertake Equality Impact Assessments
- Better access to evidence and insight via the EDI hub

## **In the process of launching:**

- A new confidential reporting mechanism for all staff
- A new EDI toolkit to help managers guide the conversation around race equality in teams
- Anti-racism webinars to support staff around emerging language and building equity
- Equality training for the recruitment process for all recruiting managers
- EDI training during procurement to ensure diversity within our supply chains

# Achieving our ambitions



# Next steps

## Last week

- The Race Equality in Harrow Council Report and Action Plan was published last week
- A new space has been created for Race Equality on the hub which contains details of all new initiatives
- A Staff Guidance has also been published to help staff navigate the Action Plan

## This month

- The EDI team will be hosting a series of hybrid drop-in sessions to discuss the Action Plan and answer any questions (on-site and online)
- A paper copy of the report will be sent to colleagues who cannot access it remotely

## November - December

- Continue to work with Directorates and Divisions over the coming months to support staff in setting their local objectives

## January 2022

- A series of further drop-in sessions hosted by the EDI team for staff for post-implementation discussions and to take feedback on where improvements can be made on all initiatives that have been launched as part of the Action Plan