

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17TH MAY 2023

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND STAFF RELATIONS

BECOMING AN ANTI RACIST ORGANISATION

The Council has a strong and enduring commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. This applies to the services we deliver to the communities of Leicestershire as well as the people who work for the Council. As Lead Member I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all three Group Leaders for their support.

This week has been dedicated to anti-racism. There are several events and workshops taking place across the organisation. It is part of the commitment the Council made in February 2022 to work towards becoming an anti-racist organisation.

The Council is on a continuous journey to challenge racism, prejudice, and discrimination in all its forms, and to develop a culture which is welcoming, inclusive, fair and transparent. I'd like to set out some of our achievements in the past 15 months.

- New guidance for managers to respond effectively to incidents of racist abuse of staff. This is part of the commitment to a “zero-tolerance” of racism.
- Representative interview panels and specific support for recruitment to senior positions, to ensure that the best people for the job are selected.
- A robust and thriving staff network for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff. The network provides support for staff and constructive challenge to the organisation.
- Heritage projects with people from the South Asian and Traveller communities to value their experience of living in Leicestershire and promote understanding.
- Analysis of the Census 2021 data to ensure that the workforce is representative of the communities of Leicestershire at all levels.
- Promoting an open culture where issues of race and ethnicity are discussed. The “Big Conversation” is an on-line forum, open to all staff where topics related to equality are shared. In the past year it has covered Anti-Semitism, Traveller prejudice and the Black Lives Matter movement. The authority also encourages staff to become speak-up champions and diversity champions.

The Director of Children and Families is the executive sponsor for this work and chairs a corporate task group dedicated to this work. She is supported by a dedicated senior Anti-Racism policy officer who leads on the day-to-day implementation of the action plan.

If they have not already done so, I would encourage all Members to look at the exhibition boards in the Members' Lounge and also encourage them to attend one or more of the events that are taking place this week. There will also be a special Members' Briefing on 4th of July. This will look at recent reports into the culture of the Metropolitan Police and the Fire and Rescue Services, identifying the lessons all large public sector organisations, and the need to remain vigilant and active in challenging racism and all forms of prejudice.

Mrs P Posnett
Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations