



Report to Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Yvonne Asquith,
Head of Business Sheffield, City Futures

Tel: 07909898754

Report of: Kate Martin, Executive Director City Futures

Report to: Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee

Date of Decision: 30th November 2022

Subject: Race Equality Commission and the Business Growth Response

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 1323				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<p><i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>				

Purpose of Report:

This report seeks to update the Committee on the focus and progress of Business Sheffield towards supporting the delivery of the Race Equality Commission (REC) report recommendations and to approve a specific action for the development of a diverse and inclusive Sheffield Business Board for the city.

In doing the above the report will outline

- Race Equality Commission (REC) background
- Overview of Business Sheffield’s response to the REC Commission
- Provide an update of the progress made to date towards recommendations of the REC Final Report
- Outline a key action for a diverse and representative Business Board

Recommendations:

That the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee:

1. Notes progress of Business Sheffield in meeting the recommendations and actions from the Race Equality Commission Final Report dated July 2022.
2. Endorses a proposal to develop a new Sheffield Business Board which is representative of the city's diverse business base. The board will be developed with other business facing services of the Council and in collaboration with the Sheffield Chamber.
3. Instructs that once developed, the proposed terms of reference for the new Sheffield Business Board be brought back to the Committee for consideration and further recommendations as appropriate.

Background Papers:

- Sheffield City Council Race Equality: Business and Employment Hearing Business and Invest Submission
- Race Equality Commission Final Report, July 2022
- African Women's Group – case study
- The Federation of Small Business "Unlocking Opportunity" the value of ethnic minority firms to UK economic activity and enterprise (July 2020).

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Kerry Darlow
		Legal Marcia McFarlane
		Equalities & Consultation: Bashir Khan
		Climate: Jessica Rick
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	EMT member who approved submission:	Kate Martin, Executive Director, City Futures
3	Committee Chair consulted:	Martin Smith
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for	

submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
Lead Officer Name: Yvonne Asquith	Job Title: Head of Business Sheffield
Date: 31st October 2022	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1.1 This report seeks to inform the Committee on Business Sheffield's progress towards the recommendation 7 of the Race Equality Commission (REC) Report: Sheffield Equal and Enterprising: Supporting Black Asian and minoritized ethnic Business and Enterprise. It will provide background to both the REC and Business Sheffield's progress in developing a more diverse business support programme.

'Sheffield an Anti-Racist City', is Sheffield City Council's wider response to the Sheffield Race Equality Commission Report, and will be tabled at the Strategy and Resources Committee on 5th December.

The Economic Development and Skills Committee requested an early update on Business Sheffield's progress to date. A summary of the key actions that Business Sheffield is focussing on to meet the recommendations of the report will be tabled in the Strategy and Resources Committee paper as well.

1.1.2 **Background**

The Race Equality Commission is an independent commission into racism and racial disparities in Sheffield. The Commission was established by Sheffield City Council in June 2020, to provide an independent strategic assessment of the nature, extent, causes and impacts of racism and race inequality within the city.

The Race Equality Commission has been chaired by Professor Emeritus Kevin Hylton from Leeds Beckett University who was supported by 24 Commissioners.

The Sheffield Race Equality Commission carried out inquiries, taking evidence before producing its report making recommendations on the key themes of:

- Education
- Business/Employment
- Health
- Civic Life and Communities
- Crime and Justice
- Sport and Culture

The Sheffield Race Equality Commission has considered a range of written and oral evidence received from organisations and individuals from Sheffield and elsewhere. It has looked at what people thought would work to tackle racism and racial inequalities in the city.

Hearings for each of the six themes were held between May and July 2021 after which evidence was assessed. An interim update was published in October

2021 and the final report with full recommend actions was published in July 2022. It is important to note that the recommendations are for a range of organisations and key stakeholders in the city and our own response to the report has involved us liaising with the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce in particular.

The Commission made seven overarching recommendations. The first was identified by the report as fundamental to everything that follows. The recommendations are:

- Sheffield: An Antiracist City - Governance, Leadership & Workforce
- Educating Future Generations and Showing Leadership in our Educational Institutions
- Inclusive Healthy Communities: Wellbeing and Longevity for All
- One Sheffield in Community Life: Inclusion, Cohesion, and Confidence
- Celebrating Sheffield Through Sport and Culture: Past, Present and Future
- Proportionality and Equity in Crime and Justice
- Equal and Enterprising: Supporting Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic Business and Enterprise

For completeness this report focuses on the four specific actions relating to Equal and Enterprising, Supporting Black Asian minoritised ethnic Business and Enterprise and are listed below:

- Action 36 - Business Development/support organisations to be made more accessible and available locally for Black, Asian and minoritized businesses
- Action 37 - Banks, funding agencies and anchor organisations in Sheffield to improve access to finance for Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic businesses.
- Action 38 - Sheffield businesses to consider signing up to the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter and the Race Equality Code
- Action 39 - Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and partners to improve its membership, engagement and support for Black owned businesses.

This report also seeks to identify key actions from Recommendation 1: Sheffield: An Antiracist City – Governance, Leadership and Workforce, that are highly relevant in the business support context, namely:

- Action 2 – Organisations need to invest in educating and developing leaders and employees to design-out racism from their organisation, services and practices.

- Action 4 – Governing Bodies and City Partnerships should seek to increase the diversity of their boards to reflect the diversity of their client group and the city.

1.2.1 Overview of Business Sheffield's response to the Business and Employment REC Hearing.

Business Sheffield has been making continuous improvements in its inclusivity and accessibility over the last two years, in response to the pandemic and subsequently learning from both the REC Employment and Business hearing, and the REC draft and final report. The evidence provided at Appendix 1 highlights the full submission to the Employment and Business hearing but the points to note are outlined below.

Our starting point:

Business Sheffield data outlined that during 2019/20 we recorded working with 834 businesses of which 18.32% identified themselves as BAME. The report stated that business support offered by Business Sheffield had consistently been accessed by a diverse client base from across Sheffield, that BAME businesses attended the workshop programme and networking events and added value to those sessions. For businesses who did not speak English as a first language we would offer a 1-2-1 with a business advisor with a colleague and/or family member to help translate.

New delivery models during COVID:

In expanding Business Sheffield significantly during Covid and working with 10 times the number of businesses, the Business Sheffield team was exposed to a much larger number of businesses. Businesses were contacting us by telephone to access critical support and Government funding, we were providing same day critical advisor support, providing webinar and workshops with Covid specific content and we also introduced a new team of High Street Advisors; Business Information Officers who took support out to all Sheffield's local high streets to provide door to door support to the businesses that were hit the most during the pandemic.

Opening up to a larger business base and expanding our customer service team, advisor team and delivery model allowed us to better understand the needs of businesses. We provided clear communications and resources to a wider and more diverse business base, provide guidance on restrictions and opening up safely and critically how to access and apply for financial support available during the pandemic for businesses to survive.

Messaging and communications were coordinated across the Council's business facing services including Business Sheffield, Health Protection Teams, Licensing, City Centre Management and Business Rates and Local Community Response Teams. Communication to businesses was extensive and used many different forms of media from social media, radio, digital promotion of surveys, direct mails to accountancy services and grants flowcharts. We proactively focussed getting messages out and engaging with BAME

businesses using video business case studies with a specific focus on BAME business owners, community newsletters, local papers and community radio programmes. Business checklists and posters were produced in nine different community languages available on line and distributed to businesses by the Business Information Officer Team.

Learning:

The submission highlighted key learning in how to engage and communicate more effectively with BAME led / owned businesses, supporting understanding and accessing of the support available, including grants and the importance of taking a more proactive approach to inclusion so we represent the diversity of the business base we serve. This learning is embedded into service design and delivery.

The Submission also acknowledged that there are structural inequalities in the wider business ecosystem, and often programmes are designed and tested with a small segment of businesses, that is not diverse and representative of the full business base. It highlighted the need to design our partnership interfaces and engagement to be more inclusive.

1.3.1 Progress towards Recommendation 7: Equal and Enterprising, Supporting Black Asian minoritised ethnic Business and Enterprise

Since Business Sheffield’s involvement in the REC hearing and the publication of the final report we are progressing the following key activities against the REC report recommendations.

The actions required for an impactful response to Recommendation 7, are far reaching and beyond that of Sheffield City Council alone. We have already started working with Sheffield Chamber of Commerce to share insights and collaborate on key actions (detailed in the table below). We have more to do to convene key stakeholders across the Business Support landscape to collaborate on these actions.

Action	In progress	Next Steps
Action 36 - Business Development/s support organisations to be made more accessible and available locally for Black, Asian and minoritized businesses	Continuation of support businesses in their communities and on local highstreets – The Business Information Officers established during COVID, have been a critical change to how we deliver Business Services. They are working in communities, and by providing face to face and bespoke support we are delivering a much more inclusive service.	Black, Asian and minoritized businesses to be directly involved in designing and developing business support.

	<p>We work hard to connect with BAME led businesses, and utilise community champions and trusted intermediaries to connect us with new businesses that required support.</p> <p>Bringing together business facing Council services - Business Sheffield works to bringing together Council services including Environmental Health, Licensing, Planning, City Centre team and Business Rates to identify key issues being faced by vulnerable sectors and businesses, identifying key communication and resources and the distribution of these key communications and translating these messages into the nine community languages.</p> <p>Widening our business engagement – BAME business owners / leaders speak of accessing advice from within their own community settings and networks and from relatives as key sources of support. Business Sheffield will continue to widen our business engagement with established BAME businesses by using community networks, business forums and word of mouth. We are also working to deliver business support in community settings and with established groups as well as centrally.</p>	
<p>Action 37 - Banks, funding agencies and anchor organisations in Sheffield to improve access to finance for Black, Asian</p>	<p>Early conversations are in train to identify best practice across finance and investor networks. Meetings planned with Lloyds Bank to their Supporting Black-owned businesses Business Support Lloyds Bank.</p>	<p>Further focus required by Sheffield Anchor institutions</p> <p>Sheffield City Council to act as convener for discussions as appropriate</p>

and minoritised ethnic businesses.		SHEFFIELD CHAMBER are collaborating with British Business Bank around start up loans targeted at minority businesses and the aim is to work with Business Sheffield to target appropriately.
Action 38 - Sheffield businesses to consider signing up to the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter and the Race Equality Code	Business Sheffield Advisor network to be informed of these opportunities and signposted to key information.	
Action 39 - Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and partners to improve its membership, engagement and support for Black owned businesses	<p>Business Sheffield has been building better relationships with BAME led businesses and being more presentative of the city - The report to the REC and feedback during the hearing was that we needed to use our experience to build better relationships with a wider business base, outside of high street small businesses and also with individuals looking to start up a business. We have made progress in piloting activity, examples are included below. What we have learnt in this process will influence the future delivery of the business support programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Smart Young Men's Group – African Caribbean heritage. Attending an established group resulting in ongoing business support with specialist advisors for individuals working at senior levels in Sheffield businesses 	Sheffield Chamber are planning a session to be led by Malcolm John on encouraging diverse trustees onto charity boards. Education piece for the charities on how to attract diverse people.

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	<p>that were not already working with Business Sheffield and providing start up support to those individuals who had start up ambitions and ideas that Business Sheffield is now helping them progress with 1-2-1 support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Women’s Group; a group of first generation immigrants looking to utilise their existing skills and experience to start their own businesses in Sheffield. We have been able to speak to the group in their own community setting, where they feel comfortable, with interpreters and with colleagues in Employability and Skills to link into the statutory training required for their chosen fields. A full case study is attached at Appendix 2. • Business Sheffield through its Advisor team have actively engaged with a further 20 BAME business owners/leaders through word of mouth and networking. This group of businesses have also helped us to progress some of the overarching thinking about the makeup and function of a more diverse and representative Business Board. <p>Sheffield Chamber are working with a new business forum for Page Hall, acting as a sounding board in an area that they have never worked in before.</p>	
<p>Action 2 – Organisations need to invest in educating and developing</p>	<p>Sheffield Chamber have hosted a racial literacy workshop to give the staff team, executive, board, Patrons and Council the tools on how to talk about race and to make sure their policies and</p>	

leaders and employees to design-out racism from their organisation, services and practices	processes are inclusive through workshops.	
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The above activity is helping us to ensure our current business support offer is more reflective of the diversity of the business base. We are also feeding these insights into the future business support landscape as we work with other local authority partners, SYMCA and the universities on future business support funding, including Shared Prosperity Fund for local business support as the fund that will replace existing European funded business support programmes.

However, we recognise that we need a more effective way of hard-wiring in diverse business voices and insights into shaping future service and business support provision. As such this report also recommends, a new diverse and inclusive Sheffield Business Board, which will represent the diversity of the city’s business base.

Action 4 – Governing Bodies and City Partnerships should seek to increase the diversity of their boards to reflect the diversity of their client group and the city	Sheffield Chamber are working with Melanie Ellyard of D-List (Diversity List), a diverse directory of UK entrepreneurs and put her in touch with key people in the region and stakeholders including LEP and key institutions so they can improve the diversity of their boards and panels.	Development of a new Sheffield Business Board which is representative of the city’s diverse business base. The board will be developed with other business facing services of the Council and in collaboration with the Sheffield Chamber in consultation with BAME business owners.
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A proposed new representative Sheffield Advisory Business Board

During the pandemic, the Business Response Group, which is made up of Sheffield’s leading business networks and support organisations convened fortnightly to work collectively to develop solutions to key economic issues facing businesses during COVID. They co-authored the Business Recovery Plan with Sheffield City Council. Its membership included Sheffield Chamber, Sheffield Property Association, Sheffield Digital, The Company of Cutlers, The Culture Consortium, Unight Sheffield, The University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University .

Priority 6 of the Business Recovery Plan highlighted the need to work with business leaders on a longer-term Economic and Business Strategy for

Sheffield. The BRG worked well during the pandemic, and it is demonstrating the ability and appetite for the public and private sectors to work effectively together, however going forwards the BRG recognise that a different mechanism is needed, that brings together a more diverse set of businesses and economic actors together.

As such we propose, with the BRG and the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce that we develop a new Sheffield Business Board which is representative of the city's diverse business base to act in an advisory capacity. The fundamental recommendation of the REC to be an antiracist city, is to design out racism from our organisation and practises and involve those from underrepresented groups in the strategic development of the City. This is at the core of the proposal to develop a new representative Business Board which will act in an advisory capacity.

The new board will;

- Be representative of the city's business base
- Influence future economic strategy
- Inform how businesses access and engage with other business focussed services within the Council and city
- Shape future business support proposals

1. The development of the Advisory Board will be formulated over the next few months and will involve identifying potential board members from a more diverse business base, working on a terms of reference for the board and establishing how the board will connect into and inform Sheffield's anchor institutions. The Board draft terms of reference will be brought back to the Committee once developed for final approval at which point the Committee will be asked to approve the setting up of the Board.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 The decision contributes to the Council's corporate response to the Race Equality Commission and in particular how Business Sheffield will contribute to the recommendations made in the Final Report for the seventh recommendation related to providing Equal and Enterprising support to Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic Business and Enterprise. Finally, it will contribute the overarching and fundamental recommendation, Sheffield an Antiracist city in the REC Final Report.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 Consultation through the REC process, followed by:

- Ongoing work with high street businesses through the Business Information Officers.
- Consultation with groups who represent diverse backgrounds to fully understand their needs.

- Consultation with black and minority ethnic business owners, their views of our services and needs from a business support programme.
- 3.2 Consultation with key groups such as the other SY LA's and both universities will be engaged in respect to Business Support and Skills development for future business support programmes.
- 3.4 Consultation with the Business Recovery Group with respect to the future of the new Business Board has also been undertaken.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 Purpose of the work is to make the business support programmes future more equal and representative of need alongside ensuring that ore representative business leaders are involved in the future economic strategy development. As individual projects of activity are developed the equality impacts will be at the core of project development.
- 4.1.2 The Council as a public sector organisation is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED - Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). It also applies to services and functions that we contract with who are carrying functions on our behalf.

Decisions need to consider the requirements of the PSED. The General Duty notes that we must pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't

4.1.3 The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership (discrimination only); pregnancy and maternity (employment only); race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

4.1.4 There are also other equality implications outside of the Equality Act that the Council commits to responding within our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process such as socio-economic disadvantage and carers.

4.1.5 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and highlights the work in response to the recommendations of the Sheffield Race Equality Commission's report is to make the business support programmes future more equal and representative of need alongside ensuring that more representative business leaders are involved in the future economic strategy development. As individual projects of activity are developed the equality impacts will be at the core of

project development and this will help drive progress on all areas of inequality and to ensure that the business support culture within the Council becomes more inclusive.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

There are no financial implications for the report the development of a Business Board will be undertaken with existing resource. Finance have signed the report off with no amendments.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 Implementing the REC's recommendations will facilitate the council's efforts to improve its delivery on the Public Sector Equality Duty which is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This duty is already summarised in the Equality of Opportunity Implications of this report.

4.3.2 Currently there are no further legal implications from this report but there are likely to be legal implications when the Committee is asked to consider the draft Terms of Reference for the new Board and further recommendations as appropriate.

4.4 Climate Implications

There are no significant climate impacts for this report. The Business Board should consider if low carbon action can be part of its remit or a working group set up from it that focusses on low carbon action.

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 The *Do Nothing* option is discounted developing a more diverse Business Board is essential in meeting the recommendation for an equal and enterprising city. To not follow through on the work already undertaken by supporting this part of the Commissions feedback and recommendations would pose a reputational risk for Business Sheffield and for the Council more generally in meeting the specific recommendation and its contribution to the wider overarching theme of becoming an antiracist city.

6. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 To note the work undertaken so far by Business Sheffield in becoming anti racist and reaching and diverse business base in its provision and

- 6.2 To ask Members to endorse and agree the proposal for a new Business Board and to note that the draft terms of reference for the Board will be brought back to Committee for consideration and further recommendations as appropriate.

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Sheffield City Council Race Equality: Business & Employment Hearing Business and Investment Submission

Purpose

This document provides evidence and information to the SCC Race Equality Commission for the Business and Employment Hearing alongside other submissions on Sheffield's workforce.

This submission focuses on the business and investment activities of the Council within the City Growth Department, and specifically business support delivered pre and post COVID via Business Sheffield. It provides information on our work to support BAME businesses during COVID, and some of the key challenges BAME businesses have faced in accessing our services.

The Council has a key role in ensuring that race inequalities are systematically reduced and eventually eradicated, through the services we provide as one of the biggest employers and in terms of our civic leadership role. This paper recognises that although improvements have been made, further progress is required to deliver a powerful change in how we communicate and support BAME businesses across our business facing services.

Background: Business and Investment in City Growth

Sheffield City Council invests around £2.9m in 'Business and Investment' growth services, this delivers the following core services and covers associated running costs:

- Business Sheffield
- Invest Sheffield
- Regeneration and development services
- Marketing Sheffield and Business Conferencing
- Major Events Budget
- Economic Strategy and Programme Team

The investment leverages significant economic benefits but it also secures further income and funding to support key economic activities. For example, these services collectively bring in annual income, and secure external funding to deliver additional activity. In the previous 4-year period, at least £5million of additional funds and activity had been secured through bidding for ERDF funds to support Sheffield businesses, securing partner's contributions for the RISE programme and winning over £700,000 from Visit Britain. This level of match funding is the norm for the service although funding streams change, dependant on projects and financial opportunities available.

Within the new Cooperative Executive 'business and investment'¹ activity is led by the:

- Executive Member for Inclusive Economy, Jobs and Skills, who is responsible for: strategic economic policy, district centres, Business Sheffield and support to businesses, skills, employability and lifelong learning.
- Executive Member for City Futures: Development, Culture and Regeneration, who is responsible for Forward and Area Planning, including Local Plan, planning service delivery, housing strategy and delivery, all aspects of housing growth and new homes delivery, including HRA Business Plan, acquisitions and Council new

¹ 'Business and Investment' was the previous administrations Cabinet Portfolio.

build, regeneration of city centre, including City Centre Plan and Heart of the City II, cultural development, libraries and archives, city and community events and city centre management.

Stakeholders and Partnership Working

The delivery of business and investment services above, requires open and trusting relationships with partners, allowing us to act together to ensure the best outcomes for our city.

Partners come together through our civic boards and governance, but we also form task groups, collaborations, and project teams from across the public and private sector to make good things happen in Sheffield. During the pandemic there has been an unprecedented collaborative response, with the public and private sector working together to respond and find solutions to the challenges brought by the pandemic.

We have developed strong connections with the private sector through our Business Response Group. It is made up of Sheffield's leading business networks and support organisations, who are working together to help address the issues local businesses are facing now and into the future. It includes the Chamber of Commerce, Sheffield Property Association, Sheffield Digital, The Company of Cutlers, The Culture Consortium, Unight Sheffield, The University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University. The BRG co-authored a [Business Recovery Plan](#) and meet fortnightly to work collectively to develop solutions to key economic issues arising from COVID 19.

We are also part of the Mayoral Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership. The MCA is supported by four Thematic boards; Business Recovery and Growth, Education, Skills and Employability, Transport and the Environment and Housing and Infrastructure, where partners, Cllrs and the private sector come together to shape the future of the region.

Achieving a private sector membership which is balanced and representative of Sheffield's business community across gender, ethnicity, business sector and size of businesses, is often discussed and forms part of our aims for the boards and project teams we convene. However, we do not always achieve this. The Council recognises that more needs to be done across our services to ensure that we: a) convene boards and groups that design in diversity as a criteria for success, not just an aim. b) alongside improvements in the diversity of our membership, ensure that BAME expertise and views are represented and sought at meetings we attend, and c) as senior leaders in the Council, test whether the stakeholders we meet and listen to are representing the city and our customer base, particularly BAME voices.

During Covid, we have also worked more closely with local community groups and organisations through the Council's Local Community Response Teams. Through the collaboration within these teams, we were able to work with organisations, such as Shipshape Health and Wellbeing Centre (where we now hold regular surgeries), and community forums in Page Hall. We have also worked with public health colleagues and engaged with BAME groups to discuss their needs and seek their advice and partnership in engaging and supporting BAME businesses.

Business Sheffield: Overview of services provided (pre COVID)

Business Sheffield offer a comprehensive service to help businesses thrive and grow, whether they be a start-up or an established business. Our service provision is designed to flex to any business, regardless of size or sector, be it micro, SME or large. There is no charge for any of the services we offer, and our sole aim is to help support business owners to develop a successful business.

Prior to COVID, Business Sheffield resources were divided into four key areas:

- **Business Sheffield Gateway team** – four individuals providing administrative and customer service support including taking phone calls and email enquiries, organising the workshop programme, CRM data entry and collating project evidence for funded contracts.
- **Launchpad** – Business Sheffield is the delivery partner for the Sheffield City Region programme providing start up support and support to small SME's with up to 10 employees. The team includes 2 x Start Up Advisors, 2 x General Business Advisors, 1 x sales and Marketing Expert. It provides a comprehensive face to face workshop programme delivered quarterly using the expertise of Advisors or business experts from the private sector.
- **Growth support** - for manufacturing businesses and tech start-ups and scale ups through contracting of 3 Growth Advisors (freelancers working with us on a consultant basis) with strategic growth experience of supporting manufacturing businesses to grow, and 3 Tech Scale Up Advisors (again freelancer experts and founders of their own successful tech businesses) helping tech starts to reach minimum viable product and supporting established tech businesses with scalability to grow and access investment.
- **A quarterly networking event** – Pre Covid this was one of the largest in the city, with a real mix of businesses at different stages with approx. 100 attendees at each event.

Ethnicity data of businesses accessing Business Sheffield (pre Covid)

Business Sheffield Customer Relationship Management (CRM) includes data collection from individuals and businesses, including ethnicity information. This helps the service to understand if it is providing an accessible service that is reflective of the business population in Sheffield. As an example, from the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 Business Sheffield recorded working with 834 businesses, of which 18.32% identified themselves as BAME.

The Business Sheffield service has consistently been accessed by a diverse client base from across all of Sheffield. BAME businesses attended our workshops and networking events and added value to these sessions. For businesses who did not speak English as a first language, we would offer a 1-2-1 with a business advisor with a business colleague or family member to help translate.

The table below shows the information businesses provided when asked about their ethnicity. Please note that this data reflects how people self-identified their ethnicity rather than a set list:

Ethnic Group	Number s	%	Description of ethnic group
Asian or Asian British	48	5.75%	includes any Asian background for example Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani or other East or South Asian
Black, African, Black British or Caribbean	52	6.23%	includes any black background
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	35	4.19%	includes any mixed groups
Another ethnic group	18	2.16%	includes any other ethnic group for example Arab
White	497	59.52%	includes any white background
Preferred not to say/declined/blank	185	22.16%	Did not provide ethnic group and preferred not to say
	835	100.00%	
BAME	153	18.32%	

Business Sheffield: Overview of Covid Business Support

The economic climate has been very challenging for most businesses over the last 15 months. Sectors that are most reliant on social interaction or deemed non-essential, such as retail, hospitality and culture have faced prolonged closure and even as they now reopen, continue to face reductions in demand, as consumer confidence takes time to return.

The demand for support through this period has been vast; the Council has distributed over £200million in grant funding, and Business Sheffield has responded to over 10,000 calls and provided over 6,000 1-2-1 business advisor sessions since March 2020 to support businesses through lockdown. The Council has distributed its 'Reopening Guide' to 8000 businesses directly and via partners such as The Chamber, Sheffield Bid, Hoteliers Association, etc. A set of business checklists have also been produced and distributed, including translations, to help businesses understand what it expected of them.

To respond to new levels of demand we scaled the Business Sheffield service (working remotely) from a gateway of 4 to 20 people (at its maximum) to create the Business Sheffield Covid helpline (investing in new enabling systems to do so) and expanding expert advisor team contracted support from 6 to 10. The shape of the service was redesigned to include:

- **Business Sheffield Covid Helpline** – The first point of contact for businesses, often distressed, to diagnose their needs and providing up front information about grants and referring to a Business Advisor for critical support.
- **Business Advisor Critical Intervention Support** – Expert support was brought in on a consultant basis to do detailed critical interventions with

businesses, including helping businesses to access financial measures including all the grant regimes administered by the Council for businesses, and advice on government loans including support to access CBIL's and BBIL's, furlough and job retention support. They also provided assistance on opening, social distancing working with colleagues across the Council including Environmental Health, Licensing, Housing and Property Services.

- **Business Information Officers** – Funded through ERDF Reopening the Highstreet Safely project, Business Sheffield has a total of 7 Business Information Officers going from door to door on Sheffield's high streets, in district and local centres, targeting independent retail and hospitality businesses to; ensure that businesses are COVID-secure and supporting where they were not; helping businesses understand the guidance on QR Codes, face mask wearing and social distancing guidelines; working longer term with the business on their viability from accessing grants, to cash flow forecasting, e-commerce and customer engagement. The Business Information Officers had experience of working with BAME businesses and were able to break down barriers and work with the local community to build rapport and develop trust.
- **Business Sheffield Workshops** – Business Sheffield normally offers an extensive programme of in-person workshops, training sessions and networking events, so the team had to look at new ways to continue providing this support. The workshop programme was reintroduced as a Virtual Business Workshop Programme in June 2020, with sessions being delivered via video meeting platform Zoom. To date, the team have now delivered around 200 workshop sessions online. The programme continues to cover a wide variety of topics each month, for both start-ups and established businesses, delivered by business advisors along with industry experts, while incorporating up to date COVID specific content. The team also devised a special series of one-off workshops and webinars to support High Street Businesses most impacted by restrictions. These sessions were recorded live so that they could then be hosted as an online video resource after the event and made available to all businesses. The links for these were sent out to thousands of businesses via the Gov Delivery emailer system and promoted on social media.
- **Hospitality, Accommodation and Leisure** – The Business Conferencing Team were redeployed to focus on business support across the sector. Weekly contacts including webinars and Q&A sessions were set up (subjects such as Tier regulations, reopening guidance, national accreditation schemes etc), with presentations to monthly hoteliers meeting (open Q & A). A Reopening Hospitality Guidance document has been produced at each point restrictions have changed.

Key issues and challenges for BAME businesses in accessing Business Support

During COVID, Business Sheffield has supported at least 10 times the number of businesses than pre-COVID levels. This has given us insight into a wider spectrum of the business base than ever before. Critical to this have been the Business Information Officers working with our local high street businesses. On a weekly basis we would bring advisor teams together to gain feedback on the key issues businesses on the ground were facing.

We also conducted business surveys throughout the pandemic, to enable us to understand business need and shape our COVID response. The most recent survey was done in partnership with the University of Sheffield, and we would be happy to share the results of the survey when it is available.

Our understanding of the nuances of different businesses and the barriers they face, both during the pandemic and in accessing our services has grown significantly during this time. We have taken positive steps to ensure that we work to overcome key issues. With respect to BAME businesses, the below issues highlight the challenges we understand from our work on the ground, that BAME business were facing, and how we sought to support them.

Getting the message out to BAME businesses

A key part of the Business Sheffield's activity in the last year has been marketing and communications to actively promote the availability of financial support, guidance and COVID resources for local businesses at every stage of the pandemic. This has been communicated to all businesses across Sheffield, and our data includes many BAME businesses.

Our RHSS Business Information officers have worked with all high street businesses across Sheffield. This has included a wide variety of BAME businesses. Our officers have engaged with these BAME businesses with an understanding of their needs, and ensured the businesses have access to the SCC resources they need in the appropriate language.

We have worked very closely with the Local Community Response teams who have been invaluable in providing links to local business forums, community support groups (e.g. Shipshape and the local Pakistani and Muslim radio station). Business advisors have been able to deliver business surgeries in the communities and have worked with elders and local mosques, churches and synagogues to get the grant and business support message out in all communities of Sheffield.

Our communications have been coordinated across SCC business facing services to include Business Advisors, Information Officers, Health Protection teams, Licensing, City Centre Management and Local Community Response Team networks. Activity has included:

- Weekly media releases on latest schemes and recaps
<https://sheffnews.com/category/business-city-development>
- Email bulletins to 9,000 businesses via Gov Delivery mailer system
- Weekly newsletter to top employers in Sheffield

- Video business case studies to support grant messaging via social media
- BBC Radio Sheffield interviews
- Hallam FM radio advert campaigns
- Business updates for Member/MP Covid Bulletin
- Grants summary postcard – hard copy and digital- to provide a practical summary on what grants were available
- Grants flowchart (hard copy and digital) to make it easier for businesses to understand which grant they might be eligible for
- Concentrated social media campaign to help combat confusion on business grants (myth busters)
- Direct emails to all Sheffield Accountancy businesses to help them support clients on guidance
- Digital promotion of Business Impact Surveys to ensure all businesses had the opportunity to respond

We have proactively focussed on getting messages to and engaging with BAME businesses. This has included:

- Video business case studies to support grant messaging via social media with a specific focus on BAME business owners
<https://twitter.com/sheffbusiness/status/1364948953133953029?s=21>
- Community newsletters, local papers and community radio programmes identified by the Local Community Response Team leads including the local Pakistani Muslim radio station, Shipshape Newsletter, Darnall Community Newsletter, Look Local and others.
- Business resources and posters in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Italian, Kurdish, Polish, Punjabi, Slovak, Somali, Urdu (see next section)
- Grant postcards available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Italian, Kurdish, Polish, Punjabi, Slovak, Somali, Urdu

Interpretation and understanding of guidance

To enable business to better understand and apply guidance during each phase we have developed a suite of materials for businesses to access. These materials have been developed to help business do three things:

1. Understand the government guidance (and the difference between guidance and law). Materials were designed to signpost businesses to the relevant areas of gov.uk and broken down into easy to manage checklists, 'How to' Guides and practical tips on things to try.
2. Communicate key messages to their customers/workforce. With the onus on businesses to ensure customers and staff follow the rules, we developed materials such as posters for staff rooms and front of house areas reminding customers and staff of key things, e.g. wearing face coverings, reducing transmission in the workplace by doing simple things like taking breaks outside or opening windows.
3. Understand where to go for help. Our reopening guide contained a range of contact points to help businesses get further information. All materials and communications work consistently raised awareness of the Business Sheffield helpline as a first point of contact for anything of which a business was unsure.

Our suite of materials was made available in 9 languages (matched to the business community) - Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Italian, Kurdish, Polish, Punjabi, Slovak, Somali, Urdu. We began with a flyer that was handed out to businesses to inform them of our reopening guide, the area of the SCC website they should go to for specific business/grant information (www.sheffield.gov.uk/coronavirus-business) and our Business Sheffield phone line. Subsequent materials included checklists for reopening businesses (retail, close contact, outdoor hospitality, indoor hospitality, wedding venues), avoiding transmission in the workplace, better ventilating the workplace, and accessing testing. We also included posters for staff rooms to encourage wearing face coverings along with 'How To' Guides on downloading QR codes. They are updated every time guidance changes and are available here: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/business/coronavirus-business-resources>

We have maintained a close working relationship with Disability Sheffield on all of our information to businesses and included a Top Tips section in our reopening guide. We signposted to their wider resource via our weekly bulletin to c.9,000 businesses and via our social media channels. <https://www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk/accessibilitytipsforshopscafesandpubs>

Barriers to grant application due to technical nature of the process and eligibility evidence required.

Through our outreach, we discovered that often BAME businesses were not accessing grant support they were entitled to, because:

- English was often not the business owner's first language, and businesses struggled with the information on the Council's business pages to understand how to complete the application form (the website is written in accessible English and for a reading age of 12, however when requiring technical information in an application this has often been difficult to interpret)
- There was a lack of understanding about eligibility
- Some BAME high street businesses have been mainly cash businesses and often struggle to provide the evidence required in the application process.

Information Officers and business advisors, who are experienced in working with businesses whose owner's first language is not English have been able to identify those businesses and support them to make applications. Before our Business Information Officers were in post (Sep 2020) where a business has contacted us on the phone for assistance, our business advisors helped them to apply over the phone, often using friends and relatives to assist the business owner in the process of amalgamating information. Once the Business Information Officers were in post, we ensured any enquiry from a business who did not speak English as their first language got a 1-2-1 visit at their business premises to help them to apply for the grant.

Although Business Sheffield, alongside other business facing services in the Council such as Business Rates, Licensing and Environmental protect, have worked hard through the Council's COVID response to support BAME businesses, we do not have data on the number of BAME businesses that have accessed our COVID business support, or received grants.

Amid the pandemic and the overwhelming demand from businesses for support, temporary data capture systems were set up to allow the speedy capture of business information, to allow the business to be directed to the most appropriate support at speed. Furthermore, due to remote working, which was in its infancy, and the limited ability to access our usual CRM system, data capture was done through a series of spreadsheets, which did not include ethnicity data.

In addition, national grants schemes do not require the capture of ethnicity data, as they focus on the business entity, not the business owner, and as such we do not hold data on BAME owned businesses that have received grants.

This demonstrates that as an organisation we still have issues to address and positive actions to take to help ensure equitable service delivery.

Concluding remarks:

Pre COVID, the service had processes in place to ensure equal access to our services, which we monitored. Adaptations to service provision were made to allow equal access to services, taking ethnicity and language barriers into account.

However, we have learnt through COVID that more is required. Being in touch with a wide range of businesses on the ground through the deployment of Business Information Officers and handling the sheer number of enquiries and grants, has exposed the service to new businesses, new barriers, and new insight into how the Council and our business facing service can evolve.

We have operated with an aim of 'equality of opportunity'; whilst this is important, it is not sufficient.

The Council acknowledges that there are also structural inequalities in the wider business ecosystem. We have reached out across our sectors and communities to a diverse range of businesses and proactively engaged them through the pandemic. We now need to engage with them further on their growth aspirations and any barriers within the business ecosystem. We need better data and intelligence about how our services are meeting the needs of our BAME customers.

In terms of best practice, we note the report by the Federation of Small Business 'Unlocking Opportunity: The value of ethnic minority firms to UK economic activity and enterprise' (July 2020). This has shaped our Covid response, and we will seek to further implement its recommendations.

The Council welcome recommendations and any additional resources from the Commission to help us understand how we can further improve our services and utilise our position as a leader in the city to embed equality and inclusivity into all aspects of business and enterprise support.

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APPENDIX 2

Business Sheffield supports the United Women's Affiliation and its entrepreneurial members



Business Advisor Christina Lima Trindade met Dr Hawa Yatera in July 2021 and supported her to set up the charity United Women's Affiliation, the group has since built from 22 members to 76. Members are from Senegal, Gambia, Congo; central and republic, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Satome – Principe and Ghana. Some of the women are fleeing from horrific and often traumatic experiences.

Dr Hawa's mission is that everyone in the group thrives and Christina has been supporting Dr Hawa to do this, the women have formed great bonds and friendships and with each step the women help each other to gain courage to move forward.

Through regular one to one meetings with Dr Hawa Christina has been able to advise Dr Hawa how to build the organisation alongside supporting the individual members of the group through group work and one to one meetings with the women who have an ambition to start up a business, many of whom have run businesses before they came to the UK. Start up workshops and ongoing one to support available through Business Sheffield has been brought in by Christina with the help of the Business Sheffield team including our Start Up Advisors and also Esther Morrison, High Street Business Information Officer, hospitality and BAME business expert all of which has been delivered at their premises at 12 o'clock court. Christina has also introduced the group to local entrepreneur Hawa Talbot of Fula Flavour who was able to talk to the group about her experiences of arriving at 17 in Sheffield from Guinea, also fleeing difficulties and then facing significant challenges in the UK to learn the language, experiencing levels of discrimination that included not been allowed to work "out front", going to college and then university, to setting up her own business from an initial idea to make and see authentic chilli sauces that were "just like home".

Through identifying a number of learning needs to realise these business ambitions, Christina introduced the group to colleagues in Opportunity Sheffield; Pippa Proctor and Asima Zahir. Opportunity Sheffield help people to access training, skills and employment opportunities – photos from the session and a video are included below. During the session the women were able to talk about their ambitions and their skills and training needs. The group are now exploring training with Pippa and Asima including English lessons, financial literacy, therapy and counselling training.

The support and collaboration will not stop here, Hawa has ambitions to find a permanent home for the group, a community launderette, commercial kitchen to provide meals for older members of the community, a training room and childcare facility all of which could really utilise the business

ambitions and skills of the group in its delivery. Christina and Esther will continue help Hawa and the members on their journey and helping Hawa to determine which of the premises they are looking at would best suit their needs.

The charity is still only 2 years old!

PART A

Initial Impact Assessment

Introductory Information

Proposal name

Race Equality Commission and the Business Growth Response

Brief aim(s) of the proposal and the outcome(s) you want to achieve

The report seeks to update the Committee on the progress of Business Sheffield towards the Race Equality Commission (REC) final report recommendations and to approve a specific action for the development of a diverse Business Board for the city.

Proposal type

Budget Non Budget

If Budget, is it Entered on Q Tier?

Yes No

If yes what is the Q Tier reference

Year of proposal (s)

<input type="radio"/> 21/22	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 22/23	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 23/24	<input type="radio"/> 24/25	<input type="radio"/> other
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Decision Type

- Coop Exec
- Committee (Economic and Skills Policy)
- Leader
- Individual Coop Exec Member
- Executive Director/Director
- Officer Decisions (Non-Key)
- Council (e.g., Budget and Housing Revenue Account)
- Regulatory Committees (e.g. Licensing Committee)

Lead Committee Member

Cllr Martin Smith

Lead Director for Proposal

Kate Martin

Yvonne Asquith

EIA start date

14/11/2022

Equality Lead Officer

- Adele Robinson
- Annemarie Johnston
- Bashir Khan
- Ed Sexton
- Louise Nunn
- Beverley Law

Lead Equality Objective ([see for detail](#))

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Understanding Communities | <input type="radio"/> Workforce Diversity | <input type="radio"/> Leading the city in celebrating & promoting inclusion | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Break the cycle and improve life chances |
|--|---|---|---|

Portfolio, Service and Team

Is this Cross-Portfolio

- Yes
- No

Portfolio/s

City Growth

Is the EIA joint with another organisation (e.g. NHS)?

- Yes
- No

Please specify

Sheffield Chamber

Consultation

Is consultation required? (Read the guidance in relation to this area)

- Yes
- No

If consultation is not required, please state why

The paper is for the Committee to note the progress made on the of Business Sheffield and the Sheffield Chamber towards the recommendations of the Race Equality Commission Final Report published in July 2022 and to ask for endorsement of a diverse Business Board.

If consultation has already been carried out, please provide details of the results with equalities analysis

Business Sheffield and Sheffield Chamber have consulted with a diverse business base and stakeholders from community organisations since reporting to the REC Hearing these are wide ranging and include:

1. Continuation of support to the retail and hospitality businesses across all Sheffield's local high streets which continues to provide intelligence of the key issues our smaller business base in Sheffield are facing and how we can best support and work with other business facing services in Sheffield.
2. Consultation with larger business base with Black, Asian and Minoritised ethnic leaders to build a better understanding of how businesses access support and advise and how Business Sheffield and Sheffield Chamber can better support the diverse business base of Sheffield. With a number of critical friends identified within this group of businesses who have provided specific challenge and support around the make up and terms of reference for a City Business Board.
3. Consultation with other council services and how we collectively work together to meet the needs of Sheffield's diverse business base including Licensing and Environmental health teams also adds to this ongoing consultation process.

Are Staff who may be affected by these proposals aware of them?

- Yes No

Are Customers who may be affected by these proposals aware of them?

- Yes No

If you have said no to either please say why

Initial Impact

Under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) we have to pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

For a range of people who share protected characteristics, more information is available on the [Council website](#) including the [Community Knowledge Profiles](#).

Identify Impacts

Identify which characteristic the proposal has an impact on tick all that apply

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Health	<input type="radio"/> Transgender
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Age	<input type="radio"/> Carers
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Voluntary Community & Faith Sectors

<input type="radio"/> Pregnancy/Maternity	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Cohesion
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Race	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Partners
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Religion/Belief	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Poverty & Financial Inclusion
<input type="radio"/> Sex	<input type="radio"/> Armed Forces
<input type="radio"/> Sexual Orientation	<input type="radio"/> Other
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Cumulative	

Cumulative Impact

Does the Proposal have a cumulative impact?

Yes No

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Year on Year	<input type="radio"/> Across a Community of Identity/Interest
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Geographical Area	<input type="radio"/> Other

If yes, details of impact

The journey that Business Sheffield and the Chamber are on to contribute to the REC Report Recommendation 1 to be an antiracist city is far reaching and the more we learn and change and alter business support provision the more cumulative the impact on our business base will be.

The longer term impact of a diverse Business Board for the city will have impact for years to come on future delivery and design of economic policy.

Local Area Committee Area(s) impacted

All Specific

If Specific, name of Local Committee Area(s) impacted

Initial Impact Overview

Based on the information about the proposal what will the overall equality impact?

The Committee is being updated on the progress of Business Sheffield towards the Race Equality Commission (REC) final report recommendations.

There is an overall equality impact of the continuation of progress towards the recommendations of the Race Equality Commission and a new diverse business board.

Is a Full impact Assessment required at this stage? Yes No

If the impact is more than minor, in that it will impact on a particular protected characteristic you must complete a full impact assessment below.

PART B

Full Impact Assessment

Health

Does the Proposal have a significant impact on health and well-being (including effects on the wider determinants of health)?

Yes No *if Yes, complete section below*

Staff

Yes No

Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

The inclusive healthy community's recommendation of the REC outlines the necessary actions to ensure wellbeing and longevity for all. The continued progress of a more inclusive business support programme will mitigate some of the health impact on BAME business owners and especially on the mental health of business owners and in particular sole business owners by being more responsive to their individual business needs, including ensuring they are linked into other council services in a prompt manner thus reducing the impact on their overall mental health especially during the current cost of living crisis which is already anecdotally having an impact on mental health of small business owners.

Comprehensive Health Impact Assessment being completed

Yes No

Please attach health impact assessment as a supporting document below.

Public Health Leads has signed off the health impact(s) of this EIA

Yes No

Name of Health Lead Officer

Age

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

The data of age of business owners for the city is unknown, however understanding that the working age population of Sheffield provided in the Annual Equalities Report, SCC 2020/21 was 65%. Having a business support programme and a Chamber membership which is made up of a diverse age range and represents business owners of all ages is important.

The cost of living crisis is creating a number of issues for many businesses but most vulnerable are those small businesses; sole traders, especially older sole traders whose businesses were affected by Covid quite recently too.

The terms of reference for the business board and the make up of age of its Board Members will need to reflect a diverse age range of owners.

Disability

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

The intention of the Commission final report to drive progress on all areas of inequality including intersections with race such as disability, ensuring that the culture and the delivery of the Council's business support programme in the Council is more inclusive is essential. Ensuring our business data is accurate and that disability data is been collected by the customer service team and advisor team is now a focus for the following six months. Similarly, business support targeted at individuals looking to start a business as well a established businesses is important.

During April 2021/22 Business Sheffield data showed 7% of individuals looking to start a business classed themselves as disabled and just 3% of businesses. 25% of individuals at pre start stage did not answer the question or were not asked and 42% of established businesses in the database was left blank. Training advisors and customer service team to collate this data systematically will be a focus for the next 6 months.

The business support programme is actively exploring how it better supports individuals with additional learning needs and working with colleagues in employability and partners in DWP. Business workshops and 1-2-1 advise is made available via teams and recorded webinars for people to access advice and training is part of the offer and for larger face to face events we are also providing the ability for individuals to access recorded content.

Business Sheffield has also just released a new webinar that will be sent via Gov Delivery to a large business database of how businesses can welcome customers with disabilities, [is now live on the Business Sheffield website](#).

Race

Impact on Staff

Yes

No

Impact on Customers

Yes

No

Details of impact

The impact of business support and the ability to deliver a business support programme which is meeting the needs of all diverse individuals/businesses who are business owners and/or senior leadership teams in established businesses is paramount. Continuing to develop our relationships with high street businesses through the Business Information Officer advice is essential to ensuring that our support to smaller independent businesses is reflective of their needs and also that we continue to work with other business facing council services to ensure that business issues are reflected quickly and resolved quickly across all our local high streets. In addition to ensuring that all other business support to start ups and bigger businesses in the city is reflective of business need and that we take our support out to businesses in the same way we approach independent businesses on the high street. We have piloted activity in a number of areas and are using this learning to reflect future business support including our approach to Shared Prosperity Funding priorities with SYMCA, universities and other local authorities. The report highlights a recommendation for a Business Board which is reflective of the diverse business base, we will utilise the individuals from different black and minoritized ethnic groups who have acted as critical friends and provided appropriate challenge as we develop this business board over the next few months.

Ethnicity data for April 2021/March 2022 for Information Officer high street reporting shows 25% are Black, Asian and minoritized ethnic businesses but the different categories requires further work to determine the percentages under each ONS category as advisors are currently writing free form into the customer records management system rather than using the ONS categories to record properly, and a further 34% is left blank. For all other business support including launchpad activity – start up and early stage support 19% of individuals and businesses supported are from Black, Asian and minoritized ethnicities but again there is still a significant number been left blank at 23%. We have put in place processes to deal with the collection and monitoring of the data so that we can use this data to compare against national data sets for businesses which indicate that 6% of SME's are BAME led with significant variations within the BAME communities, with Indian led businesses at 28% compared to Pakistani at 8% and Black African at 4%

Sex

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

Gender data across Business Sheffield is much better than race and disability in terms of completion 61% of pre starts were female and 40% of established businesses were female. Nationally only 16% of businesses are led by women.

Sexual Orientation

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

Through offering inclusive business support we would expect the LGBTQ+ community would be expected to benefit from all elements of the programme.

Carers

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

Business Sheffield is providing start up support and workshops at weekends and evenings as well as during office hours as well as providing recorded content on a more regular basis.

Poverty & Financial Inclusion

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

Sole traders are often financially vulnerable especially during the current Cost of Living crisis. Our support for businesses facing financial difficulty is at the forefront of high street business support, supporting businesses to understand their leases, energy bills and other costs is part of the support that advisors provide on a daily basis.

Cohesion

Impact on Staff

Yes

No

Impact on Customers

Yes

No

Details of impact

Providing business support across the city is essential on high streets going from door to door ensures that all businesses can get help, and in turn this ensures cohesion. Working with groups of businesses on high streets on Economic Recovery Fund projects has also helped with high street cohesion often with business owners from different Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic businesses working together on common goals.

Partners

Impact on Staff

Yes

No

Impact on Customers

Yes

No

Details of impact

Business Sheffield is working with stakeholders in the city such as the Chamber on the REC recommendations, we also work with colleagues from other services to actively support businesses with their individual needs and in particular with Local Area Committee (LAC) teams in local areas.

Action Plan and Supporting Evidence

What actions will you take to mitigate any equality impacts identified? Please include an Action Plan with timescales

Alongside reporting to the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee on the progress of Business Sheffield in meeting the REC recommendations our key actions for meeting the wider REC recommendations are listed below:

To consistently report ethnicity data across all business support programmes, including data refresh, consistent data input and monthly monitoring of ethnicity data by the Summer 2023.

To establish a Business Board reflective of the diversity of the business base and in conjunction with other Council services with business customers by the Summer 2023.

Supporting Evidence (Please detail all your evidence used to support the EIA)

REC Final Report

REC Business and Employment Hearing Business and Investment Submission

Following mitigation is there still significant risk of impact on a protected characteristic. Yes No

If yes, the EIA will need corporate escalation? Please explain below

The proposal should result in positive impacts across protected characteristics.

Sign Off – Part B (EIA Lead to complete)

EIAs must be agreed and signed off by the Equality lead Officer in your Portfolio or corporately. Has this been signed off?

Yes No

Date agreed

Name of EIA lead officer

Review Date