HALIFAX

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Item No. 2
Halifax Regional Council
January 11, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 22, 2021

SUBJECT: Human Resources Processes and Practices Review Update 2021

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

On January 28, 2020, Regional Council passed the following motion:

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Mason, seconded by Councillor Mancini:

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to accept and implement the recommendations from the KPMG Human Resources Processes and Practices Review at Halifax Regional Municipality, except for recommendations 4, 6, 9, 13 and 26.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, s. 34(1):
Council and Chief Administrative Officer Relationship
34   (1)   The Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council.

BACKGROUND

In 2018, KPMG LLP ("KPMG") was retained to undertake a comprehensive review of the Halifax Regional Municipality's Human Resources policies, programs and organizational practices that support a safe, healthy, diverse, inclusive and harassment-free environment; where all persons are treated with dignity and respect. The requirements of the review included:

- The assessment of Human Resources (HR) policies, practices and systems related to the provision of a safe, healthy, diverse, inclusive, and harassment-free work environment to determine their effectiveness including a comparison with other organizations and leading practices.

- Evaluation of how they are implemented within the organization, including attitudes, decision-making and behaviours.

- Review of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including but not limited to individual business units, directors, managers, supervisors and employees to locate gaps in the implementation of the policies, procedures and practices.

- A due diligence review regarding the prevention of harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

- Establishment of a baseline for future improvements to enhance the organization's reputation in the community– as an employer and provider of municipal public services.

In its report, KPMG outlined 31 recommendations. Of the 31 recommendations, 26 were accepted by the organization.

DISCUSSION

The following section lists the 26 recommendations provided by KPMG that were accepted by the organization along with an update on each recommendation.

Of the 26 recommendations:

- 17 (65%) are complete

- 9 (35%) are underway

	Recommendation	Status
1	Continue to provide inclusive leadership training to HRM leaders and managers and deliver cultural competency and unconscious bias training to all employees in the organization. Business unit directors should actively report on their employee participation in this training to allow managers and employees to be held accountable for attendance (i.e., include in yearly performance reviews).	Complete. These courses are offered as part of HRM's regular training calendar. Participation in training is tracked through the HR department. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, many in-person training opportunities over the last year have been on hold. Since November 2020, 26 employees have participated in unconscious bias training. A focus on Cultural Competency/Bias has been added to Our Values: New Employee Training as well as to all Business Unit-specific training sessions developed by HR.
2	Review hiring, performance management and evaluation, promotion and compensation processes and criteria, and take corrective action to mitigate unconscious bias in talent decisions.	Underway. The Fair Hiring Policy for all employees has been updated. A Succession Planning Program has been developed with built-in mechanisms for considering diversity and equity throughout the process. An increased focus on bias has been added to the Hiring Manager Certification training. The Valuing Diversity competency has been added as a compulsory element of the non-union performance management program (My Action Plan or MAP). In addition, HRM's compensation structures were reviewed from a Pay Equity perspective and it was determined that they were compliant with the Pay Equity principles of equal pay for work of equal value and that gender was not a contributing factor to pay differences between employees in the same job.

3	Focus on the attraction, retention, development, and promotion of under-represented populations, including women, Urban Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians, and immigrants at every level (i.e., through targeted development programs and awareness about them).	Complete. A community outreach strategy has been developed and is in year two of its deliverables. The strategy was updated to reflect an enhanced focus and increased outreach to these communities. An Employment Equity Committee has been formed and is currently working through its foundational goals.
5	Conduct annual review of employee diversity in the succession planning process to increase gender and non-gender diversity at the leadership level, and then all levels of the organization over time, and take corrective action where gaps/opportunities exist.	Complete. The Make Yourself Count employee self-identification census is complete and has identified areas of focus for the organization. The information has been shared across the organization. An Employment Equity Committee has been formed and is currently working through its foundational goals. A Succession Planning Program for the organization has been developed and shared with managers and will formally be rolled out in fiscal 21/22. This program includes a focus on mitigating bias in the succession planning process.
7	Implement a centralized system to see consolidated information from the Hiring 2.0 Employee Onboarding Program.	Complete. Employee onboarding process and forms are available on the intranet site in a centralized location accessible to employees and managers. There will be future enhancements to this process when our recruitment system is updated. It should be noted that the Hiring 2.0 program is no longer an HR initiative but many of the same projects and principles are still underway.
8	Implement a learning management system (LMS) to collect and manage training participation data and adopt a training policy that offers "supported learning hours" where employees are granted 1-2 days per year to complete required learning. Follow up with the employee on training completed during yearly performance review.	Underway. Corporate training records exist with reporting available upon request. There will be future enhancements to this process when Learning Management System is implemented. The second part of the recommendation, the "supported learning hours" concept, may not be feasible from an operational and financial perspective and will need further analysis.
10	Increase transparency and accountability through improved communications with key internal and external stakeholders on ongoing D&I operations and progress towards goals. Key messages should be related to who does what in HR, hiring progress towards goals, hiring roles and responsibilities (Hiring 2.0), and simplified step-by-step guide with SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for all policies with clear responsibilities defined between the HR and the business roles.	Underway. A revised Fair Hiring Policy was implemented February 1, 2021 that addressed the specific hiring roles and responsibilities. The Employment Equity Program steering committee is currently working towards finalizing procedures related to designated and preferred hiring mechanisms as well as creating a fulsome plan that focuses on increasing diverse representation with a focus on the five equity groups in leadership positions.
11	Regularly review and update HR policies and programs to increase the use of simple language and easy communication throughout all business units.	Underway. An inclusive review of all HR policies is well underway with 40 of 62 policies now complete. The remaining policies have been reviewed and revised by HR and are awaiting either Subject Matter Expert review or approval. Each policy has been reviewed to ensure they are in plain language with responsibilities clearly articulated and

		considered through a D&I lens that specifically addresses the following questions:
		Is the policy written in a manner that can be understood by a wide audience? Does the policy use gender neutral language? Does the policy contain assumptions or biases? Does the policy use correct terminology for diverse groups? Does the policy create barriers for any groups?
12	Make the Office of Diversity & Inclusion a separate business unit from HR. This separation will provide the D&I Office with increased autonomy, allowing D&I to be recognized as important to HRM.	Complete. The Office of Diversity & Inclusion reports to the Chief Administrative Officer.
14	Develop, fund, implement and communicate an Employee Recognition Program.	Complete. A corporate Employee Recognition Program was implemented in January 2020.
15	Clarify the scope of the Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure, update the EHSM system to be more user-friendly, clearly outline the responsibilities of all stakeholders involved, and track mandatory H&S training of employees.	Underway. The Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure will be reviewed and updated as part of HR's policy review in conjunction with the Workplace Rights Harassment Prevention Policy. The EHSM system is a part of HRM's SAP program and is unable to be modified. However, our internal supporting processes and documents around the use of EHSM will be updated. Mandatory Safety training is tracked through HR.
16	Communicate, standardize, and put into practice the multiple flexible work options available in HRM; where feasible, redefine to consider and improve employee wellness and wellbeing.	Complete. The FlexWork Halifax program was implemented in September 2021 and the Corporate Wellness Strategy was introduced to the Organization on October 12, 2021.
17	Further simplify the conflict resolution process to be user-friendly and consistent, communicate the availability and importance of refresher conflict management/resolution training to managers and supervisors, and ensure this training focuses on teaching managers and supervisors how to approach difficult conversations, disputes, and how to support employees.	Underway. The conflict resolution process has been streamlined internally. A revised Workplace Rights Harassment Prevention Policy is forthcoming. HR continues to offer training and support to management regarding dealing with conflict.
18	Develop a 5-year D&I strategy and action plan with diversity targets that are reported annually.	Underway. A D&I strategy will be developed based on the existing framework. The Diversity and Inclusion unit has prepared a D&I framework for the organization. This framework is used to assist each Business Unit in creating their own D&I strategy; this work takes place and is monitored via the D&I Champions Table. HR currently has a representative at the Champions table and yearly review, amend a report on unit specific D&I strategy. Between April 2020 and March 2021, HR reported 21 D&I deliverables, all which were

		directly linked to D& I's broader organizational framework. The Employment Equity Program steering committee is working towards creating a fulsome plan that focuses on increasing diverse representation with a focus on the five equity groups in leadership positions.
19	Ensure the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and a representative from each business unit regularly review HR policies and programs and their integration with the D&I strategy, track the strategy implementation, identify improvement opportunities, talk to employees regularly to make sure objectives are known and actions are taken throughout the organization.	Underway. The municipality has several working groups, including the Diversity Champion's table, in place to address diversity, equity, and inclusion across the organization, and will continue to seek input on the effectiveness of programs, policies and strategy implementation. The Diversity & Inclusion team is included in the consultation process when HR policies are being revised to ensure alignment with the strategy. Members of the D& I team also sit on the Employment Equity Steering Committee.
20	Develop a talent management strategy over five years to foster an active pipeline at all levels for under-represented populations, including women, Urban Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians, and immigrants.	Complete. A community outreach strategy has been developed and is in year two of its deliverables. An Employment Equity Committee has been formed and is currently working through its foundational goals. Recruitment processes are regularly updated to include best practices and tools which reflects best practices related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
21	Embed D&I content into employee communications with messaging from the CAO, directors and managers, and opening opportunities for employees to become actively involved in key decisions.	Complete. D&I content is already regularly embedded into employee communications and employees are given opportunities to become actively involved in key decisions.
22	Have managers/supervisors foster open communication and employee engagement by asking for employee input where possible to demonstrate that employees play a key role in making the workplace better for everyone.	Complete. This is a best practice encouraged across the organization and is a key part of front-line supervisor and manager training programs currently being developed.
23	Embed leadership skills, D&I capabilities, and respect for each person into all roles at HRM and communicate how each employee contributes to creating a respectful workplace.	Complete. Leadership skills are a requirement of leadership positions but not all roles within HRM. Assessing respectful behaviour and valuing diversity are already part of our hiring processes.
24	Train those who manage people to help them develop the skills to address sensitive workplace issues, and coach them to act as role models.	Complete. HR already offers a number of leadership courses that cover these topics and will continue to make this a focus.
25	Develop training procedures for recruitment and onboarding with D&I principles and practices clearly embedded. Ensure candidates possess leadership aptitudes and/or skills in addition to technical skills during the recruitment process for all roles.	Complete. HR has developed a Hiring Managers training program that embeds D&I principles and practices and human rights considerations. Our recruitment processes measure competencies (including leadership skills for leadership positions) and technical skills. A Diverse Hiring Panel process is in place for all regular competitions.
27	Embed D&I in a communications strategy and Plan on a Page 2017- 21 and	Complete. With the recent update to the Plan on a Page for 2021-25, diversity and inclusion remains a

	communicate how diversity contributes to the sustainability of the organization.	core value of the organization. The importance of D&I is embedded in all corporate training, including the new employee orientation program.
28	Continue to use the D&I website page to communicate the organization's commitment to D&I.	Complete. The D&I website is regularly updated.
29	Increase transparency about HR policies and practices that include consideration for managers and supervisors on how to interpret the policies to improve reputation amongst HRM employees and citizens.	Underway. All policies are under review and are published internally as approved.
30	Use D&I messaging in job postings, public reports, website, and traditional and social media.	Complete. There are currently internal communications incorporating D&I messaging, such as weekly HRM bulletins, quarterly CAO newsletters, monthly online Learning & Development updates, Employee Hub online with celebration of cultural events (i.e., October was Mi'kmaq History Month). All job postings include wording on diversity & inclusion.
31	Provide frequent updates to the media to improve HRM's reputation, "tell your story", and communicate HRM's compliance with legislation and its commitment to making HRM a better workplace.	Complete. Corporate Communications is currently publishing regular "stories" through various channels and is working with HR to improve our social media presence and get the appropriate messages out to the community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Human Resources Processes and Practices Review (KPMG Report)

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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KPMG

HR Processes and Practices Review at Halifax Regional Municipality

Prepared by: KPMG People and Change, Inclusion and Diversity Practice

Executive Report

KPMG Inclusion IQ™

November, 2019

Introduction

KPMG LLP ("KPMG") was retained to undertake a comprehensive review of the Halifax Regional Municipality's Human Resource policies, programs and organizational practices that support a safe, healthy, diverse, inclusive and harassment-free environment; where all persons are treated with dignity and respect. The requirements of the review included:

- The assessment of Human Resource policies, practices and systems related to the provision of a safe, healthy, diverse, inclusive and harassment-free work environment to determine their effectiveness including a comparison with other organizations and leading practices

- Evaluation of the manner and extent of which they are implemented within the organization including attitudes, decision-making and behaviours

- Review of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders including but not limited to individual business units, directors, managers, supervisors and employees to locate gaps, lapses, or shortcomings in the implementation of the policies, procedures, practices

- A due diligence review regarding the prevention of harassment and discrimination in the workplace

- Establishment of a baseline for future improvements to enhance the organization's reputation in the community– as an employer and provider of municipal public services

This engagement is following the Halifax Regional Council's expression to support the actions and response from the Chief Administrative Officer, June 11, 2018, regarding HRM's commitment to a safe workplace, as a result of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission Board of Inquiry report. The recommendations of KPMG, as the external consultant, regarding HR processes, procedures and implementation, will be presented back to the organization through the Chief Administrative Officer.

The objective of this engagement was to determine the effectiveness of HRM's HR policies and programs in attaining its goal of providing a safe, healthy, diverse, inclusive and harassment-free environment where all persons are treated with dignity and respect. This comprehensive review included the mechanisms that support it, such as conflict resolution process and procedures, communications and messaging to employees, employees'/managers roles/accountability in maintaining a harassment, discrimination-free and respectful workplace, training to support the policy and program, as well as any information, technology, operational or structural changes that might be required. Although the initial focus from the RFP was on discrimination and harassment, these areas were not found to be as prominent. Thus the focus of the engagement moved to Diversity and Inclusion, which encompasses both discrimination and harassment.

The findings and observations included in this report are based on data from interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups. High participation levels show extremely high engagement in the organization and a commitment to making the workplace better for everyone.

Organizations are at different stages in their journey to create and implement HR policies and practices for everyone, including visible minorities, women, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ community members and Indigenous peoples. The results of KPMG's assessment show an organization that is at the first of five stages of maturity on the KPMG *Inclusion IQ* maturity curve. This shows that HRM is making steps in the right direction to more meaningfully engage in creating a work environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. Many organizations are not at a 4 or 5 level and do not aim to be at those levels. Levels 1 and 2 are the starting point. Regardless of maturity levels, most important is to start the journey to creating inclusive work environments.

Summary and key recommendations

Key recommendations are:

1. Development of a Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) strategy and action plan
2. HR process clarification and simplification
3. HR policies communication
4. Inclusion of D&I component in Public Relations and external communication plans
5. Optimization of HR operating model and resourcing plan
6. HR system to manage D&I employee data

Summary of all areas of analysis from the employee perspective:

Health and safety: safety in the workplace, wellness and mental health

- Health and Safety is the number one concern for employees, supervisors, managers, and Directors.
- Through all interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, participants raised the following concerns:
    - **Safety**: fear of violence in the workplace due to adversarial relationships between employees, safety concerns with lack of training for new equipment, and lack of time to report, deal and follow up properly with accidents in the workplace.
    - **Wellness**: stress due to understaffed areas that are overloaded with work, cleanliness of the workspace due to pest control, or lack of basic kitchen needs for eating areas: microwaves, dishwashers, coffee, etc.

Diversity & Inclusion: under-represented populations representation, LGBTQ+, gender equity, multicultural, multigender, multigenerational, and multinational diversity, inclusion of persons with disabilities, and talent management

- The inclusion of all types of people was a top concern for most participants.
- They are aware that the city is changing and the make-up of HRM employees is still predominantly white males in many areas. There is awareness of the need to hire, onboard, train, develop, retain, and support people from different genders, generations, ethnicities and cultures, to represent the community they serve.

Conflict management and issue resolution: sexual and workplace harassment, and employee relations

- Conflict management was not top of mind during the focus groups (groups across 7 business units), and was not mentioned as a current issue. The participants felt there is a focus on the media attention to historic events, and that keeps the conflict conversations open in the community.
- Mention of the need for more open communication: all focus groups mentioned the need to communicate more between employees and their supervisors, who say they lack time to dedicate their attention to people matters due to the lack of capacity in their units.

Respect: bullying and violence, respect in the workplace, discrimination and bias, leadership sponsorship and role modelling, and ethics and values

- Respect was an area mentioned in most focus groups (5 of 7 business units) and questionnaires: participants identified a lack of respect and thus expressed a need to have respectful relationships between all levels of hierarchy in the organization, including respectful language, emails, tone of voice, and care for confidential personal information.

Findings and Observations

Findings

HR Policies and Practices: Talent Processes

Competency Model:

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders expressed that employees do not attend mandatory training.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** 32% of leaders (56 out of 174 respondents) agreed with the statement "our Competencies *Valuing Diversity* and *Values/Ethics* show in our organization". It appears that D&I competencies are not linked to talent processes, although there seem to be some efforts underway (i.e. Employee Competency Dictionary).

- **Recommendation 1:** Continue to provide inclusive leadership training to HRM leaders and managers and deliver cultural competency and unconscious bias training to all employees in the organization. Business unit directors should actively report on their employee participation in this training to allow managers and employees to be held accountable for attendance (i.e. include in yearly performance reviews).

Design:

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders expressed that bias exists in current talent processes, but is best mitigated in the recruitment process.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** 7% of leaders (13 out of 174 respondents) believed that bias is fully avoided in all talent decisions and processes. Employees indicated in the questionnaire comments that there is favouritism and employees are often provided opportunities based on personal relationships with their managers.

- **Recommendation 2:** Review hiring, performance management and evaluation, promotion and compensation processes and criteria, and take corrective action to mitigate unconscious bias in talent decisions.

Talent Development:

- **HR Documentation Review**: It was indicated that unconscious bias training is provided to hiring managers to eliminate bias in the recruitment process.

- **Interview Findings:** Although this training is available, leaders indicated that employees do not attend training and need to be held accountable for completing these requirements.

- **Recommendation 1:** Continue to provide inclusive leadership training to HRM leaders and managers and deliver cultural competency and unconscious bias training to all employees in the organization. Business unit directors should actively report on their employee participation in this training to allow managers and employees to be held accountable for attendance (i.e. include in yearly performance reviews).

Targeted Development Programs:

- **HR Documentation Review**: It was indicated that development programs that target high-potential, under-represented groups/individuals are not readily available and funded at HRM, with the exception of The Foundation for Aspiring Leaders Program training for African Nova Scotian employees.

*All numbers rounded up to full percentage and may result in rounding discrepancies.

Findings and Observations

Findings

HR Policies and Practices: Talent Processes

- **Questionnaire Findings:** 23% of leaders (39 out of 173 respondents) do not know if there are development programs for high-potential individuals in under-represented groups.

- **Recommendation 3:** Focus on the attraction, retention, development and promotion of under-represented populations, including women, Urban Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians, and immigrants at every level (i.e. through targeted development programs and awareness about them).

Motivation and Accountability:

- **Interview and Focus Group Findings:** During interviews and most focus groups, leaders and employees made it clear that people are not held accountable for their behaviour. Leaders expressed a desire for managers and supervisors to model the right behaviour and hold people accountable when they act inappropriately.

- **Recommendation 4:** Integrate a performance KPI(s) at the individual and organizational levels to introduce accountability for people goals, including those relating to fostering safe, healthy, diverse, inclusive and harassment-free environments (measure in 360 feedback or similar tool), and require review and discussion in yearly performance reviews.

Succession Planning:

- **HR Documentation Review:** There did not appear to be findings on documentation related to a succession planning program or formal review of high potential candidates.

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders mentioned that there is no formal succession planning program or formalized review of high potential candidates, including those from under-represented groups.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** 36% of leaders (63 out of 174 respondents) believe there is no formal review process of diverse individuals.

- **Recommendation 5:** Conduct annual review of employee diversity in the succession planning process to increase gender and non-gender diversity at the leadership level, and then all levels of the organization over time, and take corrective action where gaps/opportunities exist.

Additional: During the HR Process Workshop, HR managers discussed areas of strength and opportunity in current workforce planning, employee onboarding, and learning processes.

Workforce Planning:

- **Workshop Findings:** HR managers indicated that HRM has adopted a workforce planning process, with a multi-year business planning process aligned to the organization's overall strategy. However, workforce planning needs to be better aligned with talent processes and the organization should use data to understand future workforce needs.

- **Recommendation 6:** Have the Director of HR present the future state workforce planning strategy and concept to the CAO and Directors/Managers. This will foster their alignment and

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Findings and Observations

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HR Policies and Practices: Talent Processes

> understanding on how to plan for future workforce needs.

Employee Onboarding:

- **Workshop Findings:** HR managers expressed that HRM has an employee onboarding program in place as part of its Hiring 2.0 Program, however, issues exist because information that governs this program is not consolidated in one location.

- **Recommendation 7:** Implement a centralized system to see consolidated information from the Hiring 2.0 Employee Onboarding Program.

Learning:

- **Workshop Findings:** HR managers mentioned that HRM offers basic skills training with little focus on role-based training, and that many employees do not attend training. They also expressed that manual collection of training data poses difficulty for the organization to manage the participation rates of employees in their training courses.

- **Recommendation 8:** Implement a learning management system (LMS) to collect and manage training participation data and adopt a training policy that offers "supported learning hours" where employees are granted 1-2 days per year to complete required learning. Follow up with the employee on training completed during yearly performance review.

HR Policies and Practices: Talent Infrastructure

Investment:

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders expressed that there is no clear budget to fund initiatives, including those relating to D&I.

- **Recommendation 9:** Establish a budget to support the implementation of a D&I strategy and conduct a quarterly review of the progress, as measured by metrics and KPIs to take corrective action where needed with the authority of the CAO.

Measurement:

- **HR Documentation Review:** There did not appear to be findings on documentation related to organizational talent metrics and performance measures for diversity.

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders expressed that there is no measurement to track representation in retention and advancement rates at each level by gender, sexual orientation, racial background, Indigenous status, and persons with disabilities.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** 31% of leaders (51 out of 166 respondents) do not know if there are organizational talent metrics and performance measures for diversity.

- **Recommendation 10:** Increase transparency and accountability through improved communications with key internal and external stakeholders on ongoing D&I operations and progress towards goals. Key messages should be related to who does what in HR, hiring

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Findings and Observations

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HR Policies and Practices: Talent Infrastructure

progress towards goals. Key messages should be related to who does what in HR, hiring roles and responsibilities (Hiring 2.0) and simplified step-by-step guide with SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for all policies with clear responsibilities defined between the HR and the business roles.

HR Policies and Programs:

- **HR Documentation Review:** HRM submitted 57 documents, consisting of policies and programs, to be reviewed. These documents were assessed against leading practice criteria according to KPMG Industry Research on leading practice of I&D and HR functions across industries.

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders believed that employees do not feel protected by current policies nor do they understand them due to complex language.

- **Focus Group Findings:** Employees expressed that policies are ambiguous and do not provide them with sufficient and clear guidance.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** When asked if the HR policies help all employees regardless of gender, racial background, Indigenous background, disabilities and sexual preference, 51% of employees (430 out of 843 respondents) strongly agree or agree, showing that not all employees believe they are helpful.

- **Recommendation 10:** Increase transparency and accountability through improved communications with key internal and external stakeholders on ongoing D&I operations and progress towards goals. Key messages should be related to who does what in HR, hiring roles and responsibilities (Hiring 2.0) and simplified step-by-step guide with SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for all policies with clear responsibilities defined between the HR and the business roles.

- **Recommendation 11:** Regularly review and update HR policies and programs to increase the use of simple language and easy communication throughout all business units.

Capabilities:

- **HR Documentation Review**: It was indicated that HRM has various committees tasked with supporting and reaching out to under-represented groups, such as Indigenous people and individuals with disabilities.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** 37% of leaders (61 out of 165 respondents) believe there are adequate people/committees dedicated to D&I within HRM. Although they are in place, leaders and employees believe that they do not have full decision-making autonomy .

- **Recommendation 12**: Make the Office of Diversity & Inclusion a separate business unit from HR. This separation will provide the D&I Office with increased autonomy, allowing D&I to be recognized as important to HRM.

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Findings and Observations

Findings

HR Policies and Practices: Talent Infrastructure

Data and Analytics:

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders expressed that there is minimal to no data gathering at the organizational level. They seemed to understand that gathering data is critical to enhancing transparency and accountability.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** Of those who completed the leader questionnaire, 30% (50 out of 166 respondents) do not know if there is data gathering related to talent management and people or HR programs.

- **Recommendation 13:** Develop internal capabilities to gather qualitative and quantitative data to track representation, retention and advancement rates at each level by gender, race, Indigenous status and persons with disabilities annually.

Additional: Employee recognition was discussed in the HR Process Workshop, and health and safety and conflict management / resolution leading practice sessions were held with members from the HR / Office of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I Office) Business Unit, and Legal and Labour Relations teams.

Employee Recognition:

- **Workshop Findings:** HR managers indicated there is a framework in place for an employee recognition program, however, budgetary constraints have prevented funding for this program, as well as the use of a modern solution or tool to track the implementation and use of the program.

- **Recommendation 14:** Develop, fund, implement and communicate an Employee Recognition Program.

Health and Safety:

- **Workshop Findings:** During the health and safety session, it was indicated that HRM's Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure was updated a couple of years ago, and the new procedures developed simplifying the process but putting more responsibilities on the business units to report incidents.

- **Focus Group Findings:** During focus groups (5 of 7 business units), employees expressed safety concerns, caused by a lack of trust between employees and management, a lack of role clarity, and an inconsistent enforcement of rules to guide operations. They also indicated that they feel there is a lack of empathy and consideration for flexibility in the workplace.

- **Recommendation 15:** Clarify the scope of the Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure, update the EHSM system to be more user-friendly, clearly outline the responsibilities of all stakeholders involved, and track mandatory H&S training of employees.

- **Recommendation 16:** Communicate, standardize and put into practice the multiple flexible work options available in HRM; where feasible, redefine, to consider and improve employee wellness and wellbeing.

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Findings and Observations

Findings

HR Policies and Practices: Talent Infrastructure

Conflict Management / Resolution:

- **Workshop Findings:** During the conflict management / resolution session, participants indicated that the current complaint process only allows for reporting on discrimination based on race and that many avenues to report issues of conflict are causing confusion amongst employees. They also said there is an inconsistent approach to conflict and safety incident resolution.

- **Recommendation 17:** Further simplify the conflict resolution process to be user-friendly and consistent, communicate the availability and importance of refresher conflict management / resolution training to managers and supervisors, and ensure this training focuses on teaching managers and supervisors how to approach difficult conversations, disputes, and how to support employees.

D&I Strategy:

Strategy and Alignment:

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders spoke about a general awareness that the D&I office exists but that they do not have a good understanding of its purpose or objectives.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** 31% of leaders (56 out of 180 respondents) agreed that the strategy and action plan are aligned with the Plan on a Page 2017-21, but only 6% (10 out of 180 respondents) agreed that a formal D&I strategy exists and is evidently top priority for HRM.

- **Recommendation 18:** Develop a 5-year D&I strategy and action plan with diversity targets that are reported annually.

- **Recommendation 19:** Ensure the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and a representative from each business unit regularly review HR policies and programs and their integration with the D&I strategy, track the strategy implementation, identify improvement opportunities, talk to employees regularly to make sure objectives are known and actions are taken throughout the organization.

Governance:

- **HR Documentation Review:** It was indicated that some governance efforts exist with the creation of the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, but since there is no D&I strategy, there is no governance process to monitor it.

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders expressed that employees are not aware of a formalized process or system in place, and there is a lack of understanding around the importance of it.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** Of those who completed the leader questionnaire, 38% (69 out of 180 respondents) believe that HRM needs to review its HR programs more regularly.

*All numbers rounded up to full percentage and may result in rounding discrepancies.

Findings and Observations

Findings

D&I Strategy:

- **Recommendation 19:** Ensure the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and a representative from each business unit regularly review HR policies and programs and their integration with the D&I strategy, track the strategy implementation, identify improvement opportunities, talk to employees regularly to make sure objectives are known and actions are taken throughout the organization.

Performance:

- **HR Documentation Review:** In this analysis, HRM's gender, racial and Indigenous diversity was quantified at the Regional Council and executive team levels compared to seven other similar municipalities. HRM's Regional Council female representation is significantly below average (at 12%) and HRM's leadership team female representation is slightly above average (at 27%). With respect to racial and Indigenous diversity, HRM is below average at 6% (the average itself is low at 13%) at the Regional Council level and at the executive team level (at 0%, compared to the very low average of 6%).

- **Recommendation 20:** Develop a talent management strategy over 5 years to foster an active pipeline at all levels for under-represented populations, including women, Urban Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians, and immigrants.

Leadership & Culture:

Leadership Commitment:

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders expressed that the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and his team appear to be very committed to D&I efforts, with the need for a collective effort to visibly champion D&I.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** Of those who completed the leader questionnaire, 21% (37 out of 175 respondents) believe that leaders visibly support HRM efforts and encourage employee participation.

- **Recommendation 21:** Embed D&I content into employee communications with messaging from the CAO, directors and managers, and opening opportunities for employees to become actively involved in key decisions.

Engagement:

- **Questionnaire Findings:** Of those who completed the leader questionnaire, 48% (84 out of 176 respondents) believe that employees participate in internal and external HRM initiatives, and view HRM as somewhat supportive of all employees.

- **Focus Group Findings:** Employees expressed the desire for more wellness programs to engage employees. While some employees feel valued and respected, others feel that their voices are not heard, and this view was confirmed in the questionnaires as well.

- **Recommendation 22:** Have managers/supervisors foster open communication and employee engagement by asking for employee input where possible to demonstrate that

*All numbers rounded up to full percentage and may result in rounding discrepancies.

Findings and Observations

Findings

Leadership & Culture:

employees play a key role in making the workplace better for everyone.

Value Proposition:

- **HR Documentation Review:** D&I appeared to be embedded in roles with D&I accountabilities and there does not appear to be an explicit call out of a D&I strategy or initiatives to promote greater diversity in the employee value proposition.

- **Recommendation 23:** Embed leadership skills, D&I capabilities, and respect for each person into all roles at HRM and communicate how each employee contributes to creating a respectful workplace.

Management Commitment:

- **Questionnaire Findings:** Comments in the employee questionnaire indicated that managers treat employees differently, while questionnaire data results show that 61% of employees (509 out of 843 respondents) strongly agree or agree that their manager/supervisor leads by example to treat everyone with respect. Additionally, 61% of employees (511 out of 841 respondents) strongly agree or agree that their voices are heard when they speak to their immediate manager/supervisor about a workplace issue.

- **Recommendation 24:** Train those who manage people to help them develop the skills to address sensitive workplace issues, and coach them to act as role models.

- **Recommendation 25:** Develop training procedures for recruitment and onboarding with D&I principles and practices clearly embedded. Ensure candidates possess leadership aptitudes and/or skills in addition to technical skills during the recruitment process for all roles.

Brand & Reputation:

Communication:

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders indicated the need to visibly promote HRM's brand more and to demonstrate that it is a positive place to work.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** With respect to D&I, of those who completed the leader questionnaire, 35% (55 out of 157 respondents) believe there is some D&I communication to the public largely focused on compliance.

- **Focus Group Findings:** During almost all focus groups (5 of 7 business units), employees expressed that they often do not know who to contact to learn more about or how to engage in HR policies and processes.

- **Recommendation 26:** Communicate monthly updates from each business unit so that all business units are informed of what is happening in the organization.

- **Recommendation 27:** Embed D&I in a communications strategy and Plan on a Page 2017-21, and communicate how diversity contributes to the sustainability of the organization.

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Findings and Observations

Findings

Brand & Reputation:

- **Recommendation 28:** Continue to use the D&I website page to communicate the organization's commitment to D&I.

Sustainability:

- **Interview Findings:** HRM does not appear to be recognizing the link between D&I efforts and sustainability. Leaders did not comment on this connection during interviews.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** Of those who completed the leader questionnaire, 26% (41 out of 156 respondents) do not know if there is a connection between D&I and sustainability.

- **Recommendation 27:** Embed D&I in a communications strategy and Plan on a Page 2017-21, and communicate how diversity contributes to the sustainability of the organization.

Employer Brand:

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders indicated that HRM appears to be an attractive employer in terms of benefits, however, they believe that the organization's culture does not encourage people to apply to work for HRM. They also expressed that negative news stories in the media are challenging HRM's brand and messaging.

- **Questionnaire Findings:** The leaders' view is validated by employees, as 29% of employees (246 out of 846 respondents) disagree with the statement that HRM has a positive reputation in terms of how people are treated: fairly and with respect.

- **Recommendation 29:** Increase transparency about HR policies and practices that include consideration for managers and supervisors on how to interpret the policies to improve reputation amongst HRM employees and citizens.

Customer Brand:

- **Interview Findings:** Leaders expressed that they believe citizens see the value in the services that HRM delivers (i.e. the park and recreational services), but there is too much focus on human rights legislation.

- **Reputation Risk Assessment Findings:** Many Halifax citizens appeared to express discontent with the municipality, as a street check report published revealed that police stopped African Nova Scotians six times more often than white people.[1]

- **Recommendation 30:** Use D&I messaging in job postings, public reports, website, and traditional and social media.

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Findings and Observations

Findings

Brand & Reputation:

Media Coverage:

- **Reputation Risk Assessment Findings:** HRM appears to have negative coverage in respect of D&I related issues. Articles on traditional news channels appear to describe HRM's involvement in discrimination lawsuits filed by employees, with some employees describing HRM as a toxic workplace.[2] Some articles highlight HRM positively by sharing the municipality's acknowledgment of these issues and its efforts to improve its workplace environment.

- **Recommendation 31:** Provide frequent updates to the media to improve HRM's reputation, "tell your story", and communicate HRM's compliance with legislation and its commitment to making HRM a better workplace.

1. CBC News (2019). https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/street-checks-halifax-police-scot-wortley-racial-profiling-1.5073300
2. CTV News (2018). https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/we-all-have-to-do-better-halifax-mayor-on-systemic-racism-in-nova-scotia-1.3955043

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