



Cabinet
12 September 2022

**Report from the Corporate Director,
Governance**

The Council's Workforce Strategy

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix 1 - Draft Workforce Strategy 2022-25
Background Papers:	None
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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval of the proposed Brent Council Workforce Strategy for 2023 - 2025.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To consider, and if satisfied agree, the Workforce Strategy 2022-25
- 2.2 To agree the proposed governance arrangements in respect of oversight of the implementation of the strategy set out in paragraph 3.7.

3 Detail

- 3.1 In October 2017 Cabinet agreed the Council's Workforce Strategy for the period 2018-2020. This was a substantial document and committed the Council to a series of actions to ensure that its People Management performance was exemplary, delivering an organisation that put its workforce at the centre of its thinking. This was prior to the organisational review of the then Resources Directorate, which disaggregated the then HR function across three separate service areas. A subsequent review of the smaller HR service in 2018

reconfigured the service into a broadly operational function but shaped to deliver the outcomes of the Workforce Strategy, and the Apprenticeship Strategy that had been adopted at the same time.

- 3.2 In 2019 a Graduate Trainee undertook a project to review the performance of HR in delivering against the Workforce Strategy. The outcome was positive but served to demonstrate that although a substantial document the 2018-20 Workforce Strategy was repetitious in nature and unwieldy to work to.
- 3.3 The intention in the new proposed strategy is to provide a higher-level strategic document that does not seek to set out in advance a multitude of specific actions and targets over a number of years, but which has alongside it an action plan for each year of the strategy. This action plan will contain detailed actions and targets for the impending year and an outline of what is planned for each of the later years of the strategy. Progress in respect of the Strategy and the action plan will be reviewed at least annually, with more detailed actions and targets being developed for each year of the Strategy as it approaches.
- 3.4 The draft proposed Workforce Strategy is contained in Appendix 1 and is structured around the following four priority areas as set out below.
 - Priority 1 – Workforce planning
 - Priority 2 – Workforce insight and experience
 - Priority 3 – Workforce growth and development
 - Priority 4 – Workforce ways of working

These have been developed in discussion with the officer Ways of Working Group and informed by the staff surveys undertaken during the pandemic. The draft also takes account of the developing Borough Plan that the Workforce Strategy will support, the Black Community Action Plan and the Equalities Strategy. The Workforce Strategy aims to ensure the council's workforce is shaped and enabled to achieve the council's objectives for its diverse communities.

- 3.5 Early in 2022 an audit of workforce and succession planning was undertaken. The outcome report made a number of recommendations, in particular that more structured governance arrangements to monitor implementation of the Workforce Strategy should be established.
- 3.6 The outcome of this audit also re-enforced the need for a more formalised approach to workforce planning (including succession planning) which had already been identified as one of the key priorities of the proposed workforce strategy.
- 3.7 It is proposed that the Council Management Team receive reports on progress in achieving the outcomes of the new Workforce Strategy twice a year, once before the start of the year to consider and agree the updated action plan for the remainder of the period of the strategy and once during each year to review progress on that year's actions, including the embedding of the Flexible Working policy. The actions for each year will be incorporated as appropriate

into HR's annual service plan and monitored at HR Management Team meetings. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform will also be regularly updated in respect of progress.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The financial implications of implementing the workforce strategy can be contained within the existing the HR budget.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the council has a duty when exercising its functions to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not. This is the public sector equality duty. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 5.2 Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances. The weight to be attached to the effects is a matter for the council. As long as the council is properly aware of the effects and have taken them into account, the duty is discharged.

6 Equality Implications

- 6.1 We must ensure that any development and policies arising from this strategy provide opportunities for our whole diverse workforce, comply with our Equality Duty, are fully accessible and inclusive and do not unintentionally disadvantage underrepresented groups across the council.
- 6.2 It is not anticipated that the proposed workforce strategy will have any adverse equality implications. When identifying specific actions and developing interventions to implement the strategy, this will be carried out with due regard to our Public Sector Equality Duty. Equality Impact Assessments may be carried out depending on the nature and impact of proposed interventions.

Report sign off:

Debra Norman
Corporate Director Governance