



Cabinet
23 October 2017

**Report from the
Strategic Director of Resources**

For Action

Wards Affected:
All

Brent Council Workforce Strategy

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Any successful organisation needs to have three key strategies:
1. A business strategy setting out its vision, strategic priorities and how to achieve them.
 2. A financial strategy to ensure viability of the business and business strategy achievement.
 3. A people strategy to ensure the workforce has the right skills and is fully engaged to successfully deliver the business strategy.
- 1.2 Brent council has undergone many changes in the last 18 months. With development of the Brent 2020 strategic priorities, Brexit, changes in local government finance and increasing demand for services, it's absolutely the right time to have a new workforce strategy. This strategy being presented to Cabinet has been to the Council Management Team and discussed at five different focus groups with senior managers and employees. The Strategy has also been discussed with the Trade Unions. The high level action plan will evolve over the lifetime of the strategy and will be underpinned by a more detailed annual action plan.
- 1.3 The workforce strategy is often perceived as an HR strategy and although HR plays an important delivery role, the workforce strategy is owned and led by the Chief Executive and Council Management Team. This ensures the right level of senior ownership and support for strategy implementation. It will mean too, that the workforce strategy remains relevant and focused on the right priorities for the council as it progresses towards achievement of Brent's 2020 vision. The Workforce Strategy annual action plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Council Management Team.
- 1.4 Subject to approval by Cabinet, it is proposed to launch the strategy in November 2017.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet approve the Brent Council Workforce Strategy 2017 – 2020 including the four workforce priorities and high level action plan. There are no specific proposals to change terms and conditions in the Workforce Strategy.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The workforce strategy used a variety of sources to inform its drafting such as interviews with senior managers, feedback from the staff survey and “Forward Together” sessions, Brent 2020 Vision, Outcome Based Reviews (OBRs), high level workforce data and information from professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD), the Public Sector People Managers Association (PPMA) and examples of workforce strategies from other public and private sector organisations.

3.2 In seeking to assess the key factors influencing the current and future Brent workforce, Brent 2020 priorities, the digital strategy, Brexit, skills and demographics and the local government landscape are considered to be the most important.

3.3 It's clear the workforce will need to develop its skill set becoming more engaged, customer led, collaborative, skilled and innovative to meet future challenges. This will help people to thrive in a changing culture of collaborative relationships/working within the workforce, and across the community and strategic partners. The reasons for highlighting these skills are covered in the workforce strategy.

3.4 It's not only important what we do to achieve successful outcomes but how we go about it. Everyone working for Brent will need to understand and act in accordance with our values, demonstrating this through their behaviours. This must be led from the top down. Although there are headline descriptions of what the values mean, there needs to be further work on mapping desired behaviours for each of our values.

3.5 Managers are going to be key, demonstrating leadership, driving a different culture and helping to deliver Brent's strategic priorities. In a world which is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, a different approach to effective leadership is needed. Leaders must be equipped with mental and emotional resilience, a personal preparedness to deal with uncertainty and a readiness to act. This combination of skills is a different leadership approach to what we've had traditionally and will be needed to sustain employee engagement and wellbeing especially if top talent is to be attracted and retained. This is more likely to create an environment too for creativity and innovation. This is the reason that leadership and management is one of the priorities in the workforce strategy.

3.6 There is a significant amount of activity in the high level action plan. Based on information in the workforce strategy and feedback from CMT, it's proposed that initially work activities in the next stage more detailed action plan should focus on:

- A development programme for junior managers

- Introducing a coaching approach to management – this will feed positively into performance management. It's intended this will be a one day course covering coaching principles for better performance management
- A specific course for helping managers improve performance management and take a more consistent approach across the council
- Reviewing corporate learning and development and other similar activity across the council with the aims of:
 - Improving the corporate offer and taking a more strategic approach than hitherto
 - Better utilising resources
 - Having a more co-ordinated approach aligned with strategic priorities.
- Using our “Managing Potential” Strategy to assess our talent across the council.
- Having an Apprenticeship Strategy and action plan.
- Development of a workforce planning tool supported by market intelligence.

3.7 The next steps in taking the workforce strategy forward are proposed below.

	Activity	When
1.	Approval of Workforce Strategy by Cabinet	23/10/17
2.	Approval of Workforce Strategy Action Plan by CMT	02/11/17
3.	Formal launch of the Workforce Strategy	November 2017

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 It is not possible to determine the total amount of money that will be required to deliver the Workforce Strategy over a three year period. This is because individual activities will be costed as they are scoped. Proposals for one-off interventions may have other options for funding other than the revenue budget. It is clear that in an environment where ongoing savings will be necessary, revenue funded activity will be difficult either in HR or from departments and therefore will have to be considered on their merits as detailed proposals are brought forward.

4.2 Expenditure required to deliver the Workforce Strategy will, however, operate within the annual Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Council will use every opportunity to match learning needs with any appropriate new apprenticeship standards which can be used to draw down the council's apprenticeship levy for training purposes.

4.3 The existing corporate learning and development budget is £0.3m, which is currently forecast to be spent in full in 2017/18.

5.0 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.

6.0 Diversity 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 and do not unintentionally disadvantage underrepresented groups across the council. An Initial Screening Equalities Analysis has been completed for the Workforce Strategy.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

7.1 The amount of use of the training facilities within the Civic Centre is increasing especially with Brent Start losing its current training facilities. Implementing the workforce strategy is likely to further increase demand on the training suite at a time when options are being considered for more commercial use of the Civic Centre.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 - Workforce Strategy

Appendix 2 – Initial Equality Analysis

Contact Officers

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