

<b>Item No.</b> 14.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 15 March 2016	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Workforce Strategy Update	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	

## **FOREWORD FROM COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Southwark's workforce are the men and women who work day in and day out to deliver the fairer future for all in Southwark. It is their commitment and dedication that are improving services, driving up standards and making the difference that makes Southwark special.

Local government is undergoing huge change including with year on year cuts to our budgets from central Government. It is essential that our workforce is fit for purpose to meet these challenges and the challenges of the years ahead. In October 2013 Cabinet agreed a three year workforce strategy to do this, and this report updates the cabinet on this strategy.

Although we are working within tight constraints and face ongoing budgetary restrictions, it is reassuring that the majority of staff are satisfied in their jobs and speak highly of the council. This is re-enforced through positive feedback from the Local Government Association. Their peer review reported that there is a huge passion and pride for Southwark. We need to maintain this enthusiasm and commitment as we build upon our successes. We have been upgraded to Gold Status by Investors in People, in recognition of our continued investment in staff learning and development. We have provided an increasing number of training workshops and continue to develop our leaders for the future.

We continue to provide a large number of opportunities for apprentices across many areas of the council's services and through partnerships with our contractors. Individual excellence is recognised at the Apprenticeship awards and our Future Leaders Programme will equip people with the skills and qualifications to develop their careers.

As we reach the three year mark, for the strategy, it is time to refresh it to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the council and our residents. I have asked officers to work on this and to bring a strategy to cabinet in October 2016 where we can fully review progress and set out our strategy for the years ahead.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To note the updates made to the council's workforce strategy.
2. To note the strategy is being refreshed and will be presented to cabinet in October 2016.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. In October 2013 cabinet agreed a three year Workforce Strategy to support implementation of the council's aims and objectives. The strategy was presented as a forward looking view of the council's aims and ambitions in the management of its human resources. It is a dynamic statement, reviewed annually in light of prevailing circumstances (including economic climate), to ensure that it remains contemporary.
4. In July 2014 cabinet agreed the mission, new fairer future promises, the fairer future principles and the commitments of the council for the following four years. This remains in line with the core principles agreed in 2011:
  - Treating residents as if they were a valued member of our own family
  - Being open, honest and accountable
  - Spending money as if it were from our own pocket
  - Working for everyone to realise their own potential
  - Making Southwark a place to be proud of.
5. In October 2014 progress against the Workforce Strategy was reported back to cabinet and a new area for development agreed; building a workforce for next generation public services.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The original Workforce Strategy identified six key employment related areas to support delivery of the council's fairer future promises:
  - Recruitment
  - Resource management
  - Employee development and career opportunities
  - Reward, recognition and support
  - Engagement and communications
  - Identifying and developing leaders.
7. There has been an additional area agreed for the strategy:
  - Building a workforce for next generation public services.
8. The key outcomes within each of these areas are set out below:
9. **Recruitment** – It is essential that Southwark is an employer of choice and we recruit, develop and retain staff of sufficient numbers and talent to deliver our fairer future promises.
  - The workforce has grown from 4,624 at year end 2012-13 up to 4,847 at year end 2014-15. However as at 2 November 2015 the number of employees has fallen to 4,702. This is mainly due to the number of staff leaving under the Voluntary Redundancy scheme.
  - The digital Recruitment System has been established to support the council's reputation as a modern employer. 100% of job applications are on-line and over 9,000 job applications have been submitted during the past 12 months.

- Excellence in recruitment practices. The council prides itself on having best practice and fair employment processes. But it is important we remain vigilant to ensure proper application at all times. We have built in some extra layers of scrutiny and monitoring to make sure staff are always being treated fairly and equitably.
- Improvement in time to hire. The latest report indicates that 90% of posts are filled within three months (time between application and agreement of start date). This achieves the ambition set out in the October 2014 progress report.
- Introduce innovative recruitment options. There has been a significant increase in the use of digital solutions and a mobile enabled job site has been introduced.
- Increase in the number of apprentices taken on. We have taken on 177 apprentices since 2013 and currently have 63 apprentices on a programme.
- Since the apprentice scheme was first launched (in 2005) 238 people have moved into permanent employment upon leaving the scheme and 65 people have progressed to higher level qualifications or university.
- Working with local press to better promote opportunities to local people. The agreement to advertise opportunities with Southwark News has been extended for another year, until November 2016.

10. **Resource Management** – Ensuring that we use every penny as if it were our own through striving to do things better.

- Controls on agency workers and consultants have reduced the number of workers on assignment. At its peak in 2010 there were regularly more than 600 agency workers at any given time. The “snapshot” for November 2015 shows that the council has 414 agency workers on assignment.
- Our employee health and well-being strategy is established. Regular health promotion events take place. The council achieved accreditation from the London Healthy Workplace Charter.
- Externally provided support is offered to every employee facing redundancy.
- The average sickness level for 2014/15 was 7.7 days per employee. The latest figure available (rolling 12 months to 30th September 2015) is 7.82. The projected figure for 2015/16 is an average of 6.6 days sickness per person.
- Voluntary Redundancy Scheme. A total of 243 employees have left under the enhanced redundancy scheme since it was introduced. 178 left under the Open Council-wide Voluntary Severance Scheme (scheme 1) and 65 people left through the Re-organisation Voluntary Redundancy Scheme (scheme 2).

11. **Employee Development & Career Opportunities** – Develop people’s skills and knowledge so that they enjoy productive careers and deliver innovative high performing services and excellent customer care.

- Investors in People. Awarded Gold Status by IiP in August 2015, as recognition of our investment in staff learning and development.
- Promotion of a variety of flexible working arrangements.
- Growth of e-learning modules and My Learning Source for employees.
- Offer different training options that fit with individual learning styles.
- Provision of comprehensive set of training programmes, since 2013 over 2,800 training workshops have been delivered. We are on target to exceed 900 workshops again this year.

- Creation of the Housing Academy in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Housing. Recruited 42 Housing apprentices and trainees since August 2015, covering four different development levels. The Housing academy also incorporates sponsorship from internal staff completing a level 4, 5 or 7 Housing studies qualification. There are currently 14 staff members completing this qualification, in addition to the 42 above.
12. **Reward Recognition and support** – The total reward package, including pay and non-financial rewards must be seen as fair and robust to external scrutiny.
- London Living Wage implemented and maintained across the workforce.
  - Extension of Childcare Voucher scheme to 2017
  - Creation of an Employee Discount Platform at no cost to the council
  - From July introduction of free swim and gym facilities for Southwark residents on Fridays and weekends.
13. **Employee engagement & communication** – Employees must trust the organisation and be committed to its goals. They must be empowered to believe that their views count and will be acted upon.
- Results from the 2015 staff survey showed that the majority of employees (70% of the respondents) are satisfied with their jobs. The majority of staff (66%) would speak highly of the council as an employer and service provider.
  - Effective consultation mechanisms in place with the trade unions, especially effective on changes arising from budget restrictions.
14. **Identifying & Developing Leaders** – Employ and develop managers who can demonstrate the courage, energy and capability to deliver organisational goals and work in partnership with others.
- 175 participants in the management development programme.
  - Our Leadership and Management Development programme offers managers at different levels the opportunity to enhance their skills and knowledge to progress their careers. The programme is endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). At present there are 89 employees on the programme, at a variety of levels. An additional 60 people are due to commence in 2016.
  - Continued increase in BME staff at JNC level. At year end 2013/14 the figure was 14.8%, at 31 March 2015 the figure increased to 17.8%.
15. **Building a workforce for next generation public services** – drawing on the talent and diversity of London communities to create a workforce with the capability and confidence to meet new and changing demands.
- Engaged and supported large numbers of apprentices in many areas of the council's services and with our business partners. Our partners are currently Lend Lease, A&E Elkins, Mears, Saltash, Keepmoat, Capita, Interserve, Conways Aecom, SCCI Alphatrade, and JA Stott Carpentry.
  - Recognising and applauding their contribution to areas such as customer services and individual excellence through the London Borough Apprenticeship Awards for Best Progression and the council's Apprentice of the Year award.

- The Future Leaders Programme has been designed to build the future leadership capability and capacity for the council. This programme aims to provide structured development for individuals with the aspiration and potential to become our future leaders. Programme members will attain qualifications and develop their career in alignment with future council business needs.
16. **Corporate Peer review** – a report was presented to cabinet on 27 January 2016 providing feedback from the corporate peer challenge of Southwark Council that was undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) in November 2015.
  17. The LGA reported that there is a great deal for the Southwark to be proud of. The council is highly ambitious and there is a huge passion and pride for the place, which was judged as both impressive and unusual in its extent. There are a number of good partnerships in place and there is a strong commitment by the council and its partners to addressing inequalities. Further, the council demonstrates a real 'can do' attitude and confident approach.
  18. Southwark Council is seen as a good place to work. The council looks after its people and is keen to aid their development, reflected in the securing of the Investors In People (IIP) Gold standard. Performance management operates well at the level of the individual and within individual services. However, the LGA noted that there is a need for a more systematic approach to performance management at the strategic level that drives organisational improvement, which entails managing performance through more cross-cutting measures and linking the reporting of finance and performance together.
  19. The peer review also challenged the council to enable the new management structure to be fully capitalised upon – building relationships, enhancing corporate working and ensuring a further development in collective leadership.
  20. Although there is some crossover with organisational development, now part of Transformation, the workforce strategy will consider how to deliver these recommendations and build this in to the ongoing action plan.

### **Policy Implications**

21. Some action points may require amendments to existing HR policy, or more likely our approach to policies. Where necessary this will be subject to consultation and appropriate governance decision-making.

### **Community/Equality Impact Statement**

22. Any policy changes will be subject to impact assessments.

### **Resource implications**

23. There are no specific implications arising from this report. Existing resources are already in place to meet the strategic aims. Any actions arising which have resource effects will be subject to separate decision-making process and reallocation within existing budget.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

### Director of Law & Democracy

24. The Director of Law & Democracy (acting through the corporate section) notes the content of the report.
25. The report asks Cabinet to note progress made to the council's workforce strategy which was agreed by Cabinet in October 2013 and updated in October 2014.
26. This is in accordance with Part 3B of our constitution.

### Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

27. The strategic director of finance and governance notes the recommendations in this report. Where the updates to the council's workforce strategy have financial implications, these will be managed within the existing agreed budgets for 2016/17 for the council's general fund and housing revenue account.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Gerri Scott, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation	
<b>Report Author</b>	Marie Rance, Acting Head of Human Resources	
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<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Law & Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
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