

Human Resources
Newington Barrow Way

Report of: Corporate Director of Resources

Meeting of: Policy & Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: 8 June 2023

Ward(s): All

Subject: Workforce Strategy 2023-2026

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. The report sets out the background to the development of the workforce strategy and introduces the proposed strategic priorities and outcomes. It seeks input from the Committee before these are finalised.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To note the work undertaken to date to develop a new Workforce Strategy aligned to the Islington Together 2030 Plan.
- 2.2. To provide feedback on the four proposed strategic priorities and outcomes before their finalisation.

3. Background

- 3.1. The council has had a workforce strategy since 2019 with the majority of actions completed. Since 2019, new priorities also emerged as a result of the Covid pandemic, the appointment of a new Chief Executive and Leader and the development of the Challenging Inequality Programme following the murder of George Floyd.
- 3.2. Although the 2019 workforce strategy initially ran to the end of 2022, it was agreed that the refreshed strategy would be aligned to the new Islington Together 2030 Plan, given the importance of shaping its content to deliver the strategic priorities for our communities. To reach our ambitious mission to create an equal Islington, the culture within the Council needs to have high performance and the drive for excellence at the centre.

- 3.3. Our workforce strategy sets out the vision for our staff and identifies the areas we need to focus on, over the next three-year period. The strategy provides the Council with the outcomes we are working towards to create a psychologically safe, inclusive, well managed workplace and to be an employer of choice. Our workforce strategy sets out the way we will support our staff and managers to perform at their best, progress their careers and truly believe that Islington is their employer of choice.
- 3.4. We have brought together our future work plans and the outcomes we are aiming to achieve for our colleagues, under four strategic priorities;
1. Employee experience
 2. Equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion
 3. Organisational, team and individual development
 4. Wellbeing and resilience
- 3.5. We have engaged with many colleagues in the design of our workforce strategy along with aligning our outcomes with important corporate plans and initiatives.
- 3.6. Through People Planning work with each Department in the Council, we also have drawn out the local workforce needs and included those in our workforce strategy.
- 3.7. We also conducted focus groups and surveys with front line staff, staff networks and our Corporate Management Board to test our proposed strategic priorities and outcomes.
- 3.8. Members of the committee have expressed an interest in understanding the breadth of ambition for the council's workforce which aligns with the committee's remit to carry out scrutiny in respect of matters relating to the Resources Directorate. Officers would welcome feedback and comment on the draft strategic priorities and outcomes.
- 3.9. The final version of the workforce strategy will include example programmes of work and be accompanied with an annual action plan and measures.

4. Implications

4.1. Financial Implications

- 4.1.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.2. Legal Implications

- 4.2.1. The Workforce Strategy seeks to integrate the important principles of diversity and inclusion. This supports the Council's public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which requires the Council to have due regard to the need

to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

4.3. Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

4.3.1. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

4.4. Equalities Impact Assessment

4.4.1. The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

4.4.2. The Equality Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves;

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate where their participation is disproportionately low.

4.4.3. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report, because EQIA screening tool identified that the improvements set out in the workforce strategy should have a beneficial and desirable impact on people with identified protected characteristics.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1. The workforce strategy sets out the ambitions for the council's workforce and contains a set of draft strategic priorities. Feedback from the committee will assist the officers in finalising and implementing the strategy for the benefit of our workforce and ultimately our residents.

Appendices:

- Draft Workforce Strategy – Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Final report clearance:

Signed by: David Hodgkinson

Corporate Director of Resources

Date: 24/5/23

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Our Workforce strategy 2023 – 26

We have brought together all our future work plans and the outcomes we are aiming to achieve for our colleagues, under four strategic priorities.

1. Employee experience
2. Equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion
3. Organisational, team and individual development
4. Wellbeing and resilience

Employee experience

We want to be an employer of choice. To have the highest quality employee experience for all staff, no matter where they work or where they are in their career journey with Islington Council. We aim to have the best systems, governance, and processes to enable staff to do their job to a high standard, as part of a modern, flexible, and responsive workforce. We want to make sure our colleagues feel rewarded and recognised for their outstanding contributions to our staff and residents. Employees should be engaged and involved with our organisation, with opportunities to have the voices heard and influence change.

Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have a modern, inclusive, and effective approach for each stage of the employee lifecycle through which staff are able to achieve their potential: (Attracting, Recruiting, Onboarding, Developing, Retaining and Separating).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have a modern, inclusive, and effective model for staff to find HR related information quickly and easily. Staff can access information and support, self-sufficiently.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We can improve the futures of our care leavers and residents through employment opportunities. Having a variety of ways into work experience or employment and being a local employer of choice. Local schools and anchor institutes know the value of promoting our opportunities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All our staff and managers feel safe, confident, and empowered to use our HR policies to effect change within our organisation. Our Union colleagues champion using our policies to deal with issues quickly and effectively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff feel safe and respected when any change to their way of working or structure is proposed. They feel as though we have their back and will do all we can to protect their employment.

Equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion

We want to continue to build a diverse and inclusive culture by ensuring that there is fairness, transparency, and equity at all stages of the employee lifecycle (from before people join us to when they leave), where staff feel valued for their individual differences and are treated fairly with dignity and respect. We must build a culture of psychological safety, where staff have the confidence to be authentic and to express their thoughts, ideas, and challenges. We will collaborate with colleagues from staff forums and other staff groups to advance equality of

opportunity and foster good relationships between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our staff work in an organisation where they feel safe, valued for the diversity they bring and feel that they are treated with dignity by colleagues and the Council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our staff feel able to actively participate and get involved with our staff forums and with our other Challenging Inequality workstreams, no matter where they work. They feel as though they can effect change and openly collaborate with us as an employer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have easily accessible data that we can analyse data for our workforce to share with Directorates and staff groups, to help make evidence-based decisions about anything that affects our employees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our staff feel confident that they will be treated in an inclusive way as a result of the council wide focus on developing Equality, equity, diversity and inclusion skills and knowledge.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a diverse workforce who understand the inequality and disproportionality experienced by our residents and can act to improve their outcomes

Organisational, team, and individual development

We want staff to have equal access to development opportunities and to have the right skills, knowledge, and experience to be able to progress their career, making sure that the council has learning and development opportunities in place to help staff reach their full potential, driving high performance and delivering excellence for our residents and staff. In the same way we must work hard to make sure the organisation, teams and the cultures that exist in our Council develop and evolve. This means our processes, policies, data, and systems must all enhance our ability to perform and lead change. Our internal talent pipeline and how we plan for developing future skills is vital for the growth of our organisation. The development of our leaders and managers is at the centre of this priority.

Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our staff can access the learning and development they need to succeed in their roles using a variety of mechanisms to suit their working style. They know how to develop the skills they need to progress in their career in Islington. Staff own their careers and take personal responsibility for their development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our staff live our values (Collaborative, Ambitious, Resourceful and Empowering) every day. They fully understand what our values are and how they impact their individual role, teams and service delivery.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our staff feel confident with how their performance is measured. They can have meaningful Check Ins (our performance development model) with their managers, which result in improvements in their performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a talented, highly skilled and inclusive team of managers and leaders across the Council. Who are diverse and equipped with all the skills and knowledge they need to manage and lead our workforce with care (staff understand the skills required to do their jobs, currently and to support lateral moves and promotion).

Wellbeing and resilience

We want staff to feel supported at work, ensuring that our health, safety, and wellbeing responsibilities are at the core of everything we do, taking a proactive approach to providing appropriate and effective support to staff. Using our data to help guide and target our wellbeing and resilience work.

Outcomes

- Our staff feel safe at work and have options to participate in several health and wellbeing initiatives. They know that long term health conditions and disability will be made a priority for receiving relevant support.
- Our staff have a sector leading benefits package, covering both physical and mental health support, along with cost-of-living support.
- Our staff feel safe at work and have options to participate in several health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Our staff know that long term health conditions and disability will be made a priority for receiving relevant support.