
Workforce Strategy 2019-2023

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Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
0.1	25 March 2019	Change format and increase focus on apprenticeships and EAS results	ROR
0.2	21 May 2019	To add items after CB discussion on 07/05/19	ROR
0.3	21 June 2019	Changes to wording on three tier working following CB on 19/06/19	ROR
0.4	6 August 2019	Added commitment to report to OB on pros and cons of reintroducing scoring in appraisals. which might then amend the Workforce Strategy	ROR

1. **Introduction**

1.1 West Berkshire Council (WBC) has approved this Workforce Strategy for the four year period September 2019 to August 2023 to sit alongside the Council Strategy. A Workforce Strategy is a way to tie together various policies and activities that affect the workforce. This avoids the danger of sending contradictory messages to employees and allows the Council to present a coherent 'employer proposition' to prospective and existing employees.

1.2 The Council has kept a clear focus on its workforce for over ten years: gathering and analysing data; keeping ahead of legislative changes affecting employees; providing training and development; tackling recruitment and retention issues; dealing with organisational change; and listening to the views of employees.

1.3 The Workforce Strategy does not seek to improve an unsatisfactory position, but rather to maintain the existing stability and productivity of our workforce. There are some areas where the challenges we can see over the next four years (as set out in the Council Strategy) mean that changes are needed. These challenges and changes are set out below.

2. **Context**

2.1 The Workforce Strategy builds on the existing strengths of the workforce. The workforce is supported by a comprehensive range of HR policies and procedures which are subject to consultation with managers and trade unions. All HR policies and procedures are available to employees on the intranet. These policies and procedures are developed and updated regularly by the HR Service and command widespread support for their fairness and integrity.

2.2 The picture of the workforce is one of stability and productivity. Employees have a 'can-do' attitude; are willing to 'go the extra mile' for the sake of clients and customers; and value the public sector ethos (which is exemplified in the values which staff have helped to craft: *Customer Focus, Integrity and Fairness*). This is illustrated by the results of the Employee Attitude Survey in June 2018 which had positive scores for employee engagement (higher than the average for local government).

2.3 The Council does not have a strategic aim to increase or decrease the number of employees. The number will fluctuate according to circumstances – it increased when the Council took over Birchwood Care Home and it decreased when staff in the Countryside Service were transferred to the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxford Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).

2.4 The Workforce Strategy will be delivered by leadership from elected members and senior managers; by managers in services; by employees 'going the extra mile' and living the Council values of *Fairness, Integrity and Customer Service*; and by the efforts of the HR Service. Governance in the form of a Workforce Board will be put in place to monitor progress on the Workforce Strategy.

2.5 WBC has many people working and volunteering who are not covered by this Workforce Strategy: our teachers and support staff in schools; our foster carers; our library and other volunteers; our contractors; and our agency workers. These people provide a

very valuable part of the overall productive effort of the Council. However, the Workforce Strategy focuses on the 1,486 (at 31 March 2019) employees who are directly employed by the Council.

3. Challenges

3.1 The Council faces financial challenges common to all unitary and upper tier local authorities in that an ageing population is increasing the percentage of total Council expenditure spent on Adult Social Care (ASC) year on year. This means that the key challenge for the Council is to meet its statutory requirements, and its objectives set out in the Council Strategy, within its financial constraints. This challenge is addressed in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and it has an effect on the Workforce Strategy. Some of the objectives set out in Workforce Strategy will need to be considered by elected members against other bids for funding (known as 'pressures'). The consideration of pressures is an annual exercise which takes place in the autumn, working on the budget for the following financial year.

3.2 The ASC management team have identified challenges which will affect their ability to recruit and retain staff. These include the near full employment in the district; the competition for staff from other care providers; the rural nature of the district meaning longer distances for employees to travel to clients; and the high cost of housing.

3.3 These challenges also affect recruitment and retention for some other groups of employees paid on the lower grades (for example Civil Enforcement Officers). Longer term forecasts suggest that the number of retired people in West Berkshire will outnumber the working age population and finding people willing to work for the Council will become the number one priority. However, this supposes that people past state retirement age won't want to continue to work and that people from outside the district won't want to commute to work for the Council. Recruitment and retention needs to be closely monitored and creative ideas used to meet staffing shortages as and when they arise. This is discussed in more detail in the 'Recruitment and Retention' section at 4.3 below.

3.4 The Council has a challenge with succession planning as the majority of its senior managers are approaching, or have passed, the age of 55 when they can retire and access their pensions without needing the approval of the Council. Therefore there is a risk of losing key staff with long experience and knowledge over a relatively short period of time.

3.5 The Council is giving £210,000 per year (excluding schools) in contributions to the government's Apprenticeship Levy. This money is kept in a 'digital fund' and each month's contribution is lost to the Council after two years if it is not spent on providing apprenticeships. This provides a challenge to the Council to ensure that the Apprenticeship Levy funding is spent on apprenticeships and not lost to the Treasury.

3.6 Employee feedback for the Employee Attitude Survey and the 'Let's Chat' employee workshops provides a challenge to the Council in a number of areas:

3.6.1 Need to invest in and make time for staff development – make staff feel valued and ready for opportunities when they arise and the Council will benefit from skilled employees. Ensure that employees feel that they have a fair opportunity to access relevant training and development.

3.6.2 Use apprenticeships where possible. Also take a creative approach to staff development – e.g. shadowing, coaching, mentoring, secondment, ‘lunch and learn’ sessions and peer to peer learning.

3.6.3 Management training, especially for newly promoted managers, would improve consistency. Improve the consistency of managers in how they approach ‘people management’ issues at work.

3.6.4 Job uncertainty and staff having to pick up more work has an impact – need to focus on developing staff resilience.

3.6.5 Provide employees with opportunities for career development using shadowing and secondments (because the traditional ‘promotion ladder’ has been adversely affected for employees as posts have been merged or deleted to meet savings targets).

4. **Rising to the Challenges**

4.1 **Apprenticeships and Skills Development**

4.1.1 The main area of activity in skills development over the lifetime of the Workforce Strategy is the Council’s active engagement with the Apprenticeship Levy (£210,000 p.a. excluding schools). Budget Board funded a part time post of Apprenticeship Co-ordinator to increase the number of apprentices. This has been successful and the Council has reached its public sector target (2.3%) for apprenticeship starts of 114 in 2018/19 (includes schools). This figure is above most other Councils to date (from LGA data). The challenge is to keep this momentum up over the next four years.

4.1.2 The Workforce Strategy states that when a role becomes vacant, if it is a Grade F or under, the default is that it is advertised as an apprenticeship to encourage more new apprentices.

4.1.3 The work undertaken on apprenticeships is reported quarterly to an Apprenticeship Steering Group made up of elected members and managers from each directorate.

4.1.4 Every service is looking at the emerging Apprenticeship Standards to see when apprenticeships will come on stream for their professional areas. In Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children & Family Services (C&FS) there are Workforce Development Plans already in place which have been created to “grow our own” social workers. This is both from recruitment (which is discussed below) and from identifying existing non-qualified employees who are willing to undertake the required period of study. Leadership skills will also be addressed by apprenticeships (which is discussed below).

4.1.5 There are some areas of skill development which cannot be addressed by apprenticeships because the period of learning is under 12 months (apprenticeships must last for 12 months or more). There is a need to develop skills in both Commercialisation and Digital Skills. The Commercialisation Group has funding to purchase Commercialisation Skills training for relevant staff. Digital skills training is less developed and this needs further work building on the successful ‘Digital by Design’ day at Shaw House in March 2019.

4.1.6 Since 2010 the strategic direction of learning and development has been to move away from classroom courses if possible and to increase the quantity and quality of e-learning resources. This is to reduce costs and to make the training more accessible to part time and remote staff. However, this has led to concerns about the accessibility of e-learning courses for some employees with disabilities. HR will ensure that all employees have access to the learning, by providing bespoke face to face training where required to meet the needs of employees with disabilities (rather than modifying the e-learning).

4.1.7 The Let's Chat staff workshops in spring 2019 showed a desire to access quality learning and development and some concern that budget reductions has led to an uneven amount of training resources at service level. HR and Finance will work together to examine the training budgets at service level and to produce an amount per employee for each service. This analysis will allow the organisation to see if there is an even playing field for employees seeking learning and development opportunities; and, if anomalies have crept in, to seek through a pressure bid to correct the situation.

4.1.8 Not all skills or knowledge development is undertaken using a formal training method. Employees have asked for more opportunities for work experiences in other parts of the Council or with partnership organisations. This can be an excellent way to build cohesion and co-operation across 'silos' and can help employees with career development. Therefore the Workforce Strategy will set up a 'clearing house' system run by HR to co-ordinate work experience for employees who would welcome such opportunities. Some services already encourage 'learning days' as part of the learning and development discussion at the annual appraisal. This practice will be rolled out across the Council and the number of work experience events will be increased year on year. The employees who volunteer for this type of career development experience will be matched by HR with a mentor – a manager from a different part of the Council who will provide expert advice and guidance on leadership to help the employee gain as much as possible from the experience of working in another part of the Council. The mentor listens to the challenges the employee is facing and offers advice and support based on their own career history and experience.

4.2 Leadership

4.2.1 The Council has consulted on a new leadership structure consisting of a Chief Executive, three Executive Directors (People, Place and Resources) and seven Service Directors. This is an emergent structure which will be put in place by the end of 2021 and is a response to the Council's financial challenge and the succession planning challenges mentioned above. The elected members support a more strategic approach to the top tier of the Council to tackle the financial issues over the lifetime of the Workforce Strategy. It represents a move away from service specific 'Heads of Service' to fewer, more generalist and strategic/corporate senior roles. The service knowledge will be placed at a lower 'Tier 4' level with the appointment of "Service Leads" where required. There is a need for HR support to put in place arrangements to move towards the new structure, normally as natural turnover/retirement occurs. South East Employers (SEE) have advised on the remuneration levels of the top 11 posts in the structure. The successful implementation of the new 'top tier' structure is an important objective of the Workforce Strategy.

4.2.2 In 2018, HR held a series of “Management Consistency” workshops for all managers with three or more direct reports. The aim was to ensure consistency of approach across a range of HR policies following feedback from employees regarding inconsistent approaches to ‘people management’ issues (i.e. managers being either too harsh or too lenient). The workshops showed that a number of managers find the ‘people issues’ associated with management the most difficult part of their role. WBC has a set of competencies for all employees and extra ones for managers set out for discussion in the annual appraisal form. These are shown below. HR will run annual workshops from April 2020 for all new managers based on the management competency framework (which is set out in the appraisal form), together with discussion of the Council’s values of *Customer Focus, Integrity and Fairness* to improve management consistency.

	Leaders of people
When working with people	<p>Understand stakeholders’ motivation and objectives</p> <p>Be a skilled influencer (communicate the vision and objectives, inspire and motivate, develop buy-in and trust)</p> <p>Expect, encourage and support high standards of performance from team members</p> <p>Use a range of leadership styles appropriate to individual team members and the situation</p> <p>Develop team working and a sense of common purpose; manage conflict</p>
In relation to learning and development	<p>Actively develop the team to meet current and future challenges</p> <p>Encourage team members to reflect on experience and learning; actively encourage transfer of learning</p> <p>Seek feedback on own performance to improve self-awareness and own development needs</p>
In their approach to work	<p>Be a role model (demonstrating drive, purpose, integrity, fairness, enthusiasm, openness, resilience)</p> <p>Adapt to change, taking prompt and appropriate remedial action where required</p>
When managing performance	<p>Set/agree clear objectives, and quality and performance measures (for tasks and staff)</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate budgets, staff performance, and objectives</p> <p>Recognise good performance, and challenge underperformance and conduct</p> <p>Develop and empower team members to make decisions (coaching)</p>

More general leadership training is available through the ILM (Institute of Leadership & Management) apprenticeship route. This course is popular with ambitious managers and is available at level 3 and 5.

4.2.3 The competencies for 'Leaders of People' refers to coaching to develop and empower team members to make decisions. However, coaching successfully is a highly skilled process and many of our managers have not been trained to coach their employees. HR have therefore submitted a pressure bid for resources to run coaching courses for managers from 2020 to 2023 with professional follow up support from a coaching expert. Coaching is a leadership skill that should be used by line managers in leading their team members.

4.2.4 The Council will support a cohort of five to seven managers at Tier 4 to undertake the new Masters course in Strategic Public Management and Leadership which is funded by the apprenticeship levy. One delegate from HR is on the course in 2019 to provide guidance and advice to potential delegates in 2020. The delegates must hold a first degree and be interested in promotion to Service Director level in the future. Corporate Board will provide mentoring for the delegates including arranging for shadowing and short secondments to match work experiences with the course.

4.2.5 South East Employers run a full day management development 'game' called the Local Government Challenge each April. WBC has taken part in 2018 and 2019 and the feedback is that it is a good learning exercise for the senior managers who attend (as they meet teams from other local authorities and learn new skills). However, the feedback also shows that WBC does not invest time in supporting our team before they attend the Local Government challenge and there is limited organisational learning from their experience. To overcome these drawbacks senior managers will mentor the participants before and after the day to embed the learning at individual and organisational level. Mentoring will also be encouraged across the organisation to help with career development.

4.3 Recruitment and Retention

4.3.1 Recruitment to the majority of posts across the Council is successful. The HR Service identifies areas of recruitment difficulty and reports these to Corporate Board (CB) twice a year. In recent years job roles which have proved difficult to recruit to include social workers (for both children and adult services); residential child care officers; occupational therapists; Civil Enforcement Officers; and registered general nurses (RGNs).

4.3.2 HR currently work closely with managers recruiting to these roles to provide specific support and guidance to improve the success of recruitment, both in terms of numbers and quality of applicants. Recent approaches have included increased use of social media, dedicated webpages and amended recruitment processes. In addition, through the relevant workforce development groups, HR are creating a recruitment strategy for roles that are hard to recruit to, so there is a clear progression path and qualifications for the role can be funded via the Apprenticeship Levy. The approach to recruitment for hard to fill posts will often be to see whether the post could be converted into an apprenticeship leading to a career path for candidates without specific experience of the type of work.

4.3.3 The Council will increase its investment in accepting candidates for work experience, especially from disadvantaged groups. This will act as a 'stepping stone' to allow the candidates to apply for apprenticeship posts with the Council.

4.3.4 One of the interesting features of the Employment Attitude Survey which the Council undertakes every three years (next one will be in 2021) is that the majority of employees feel that their pay is too low but also say that they will still be working for WBC in 12 months' time and would recommend the Council to their friend and family as a good employer. Classic HR theory would suggest that if an employer pays below the market rate the employees will leave and turnover will be much higher than average. However, for West Berkshire that is not the case – turnover is steady at 13%. How can this be explained? The answer partly lies in the Council's approach to flexible and mobile working which suits the work/life balance of many of its employees. So one aspect of recruitment and retention which will be emphasised in recruitment advertising in future is the 'non pay benefits' of working for the Council: part time and job share work; flexible hours and up to 13 flexi-days; working from home some days (if a 'Flexible Worker'); generous annual leave; excellent pension scheme; and employee discount scheme. The LGA recommends this approach in its 'return to social work' advice so this approach to recruitment and retention will be discussed with managers in ASC and C&FS to try to overcome possible managerial resistance to job shares for social worker posts.

4.3.5 Despite the relative overall stability of recruitment and retention (R&R) there are some 'hot spots' where turnover is high and it is difficult to recruit which can lead to a high percentage of agency staff. A request for funding for a bespoke recruitment and retention package can be put to the Executive by services which have acute recruitment problems. Corporate Board (CB) is kept up to date on recruitment and retention challenges through a regular 'Recruitment Hot Spots' report.

4.3.6 Recruitment and retention of the 11 most senior managers in the new top tier structure has included a review of remuneration for market forces and the weight of the new roles. South East Employers (SEE) has undertaken detailed work and produced a report on salaries. A report on senior management remuneration will go to the Executive in January 2020. The Executive has already approved the salary recommended by SEE for the newly created posts of Executive Director (People) and Executive Director (Resources).

4.3.7 Market supplements were abolished some years ago because they could no longer be justified. Most of the recipients of market supplements are still working for the Council which demonstrates that the market supplements then in force were not needed. The maintenance of a fair market supplement scheme is difficult because market pressures change over time. However, a new market supplement scheme may need to be considered during the lifetime of the Workforce Strategy if recruitment and retention problems become more widespread. HR will continue to monitor the recruitment and retention situation through its regular 'Recruitment Hotspots' report to CB.

4.3.8 Some managers and the recruitment team in HR are interested in exploiting the potential of social media to recruit into hard to fill posts. This can be combined with social media ratings sites such as 'Glass Door' to make the digital approach to recruitment feel easier and more modern for prospective employees. However, the traditional emphasis on equalities in recruitment in local government means that, for example, the Council maintains a 'no CVs' approach which mitigates against slick social

media recruitment. Data protection regulations mean that prospective candidates are not contacted again regarding other vacant posts. HR will convene an “Improving Recruitment” day with recruiting managers; members of the recruitment team; and digital experts to explore how progress can be made in this area.

4.4 Organisational Development

4.4.1 Organisational development (OD) is a planned change that affects the workforce, and which uses some OD activities to implement the change. The most common form of OD activity is to consult the affected staff before making a change which will affect their working lives. This is the normal OD practice at the Council, together with consulting the recognised trade unions.

4.4.2 In addition to consultation there are a range of OD techniques which seek to change the culture of an organisation and build active support (rather than passive acceptance) of change initiatives. A current example of OD activity is the use of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) workshops with teams in the New Ways of Working (NWOW) programme of service reviews. The HR resource available to support OD activities is limited at the moment and will need to be increased if major change initiatives are planned which affect the workforce in the lifetime of the Workforce Strategy.

4.4.3 The culture at West Berkshire is summed up by its values: *Customer Focus, Integrity and Fairness*. The Council invests in listening to its employees by running an Employee Attitude Survey every three years and holding ‘Let’s Chat’ workshops with randomly selected employees every 18 months. The ‘Let’s Chat’ workshops allow employees to discuss concerns and ideas with the Chief Executive and the Leader (or Deputy Leader) of the Council. They have proved popular with employees. The future Let’s Chat staff workshops in autumn 2020 and the EAS in June 2021 are included in the action plan below.

4.4.4 The culture of any organisation is resistant to change. However, because the current culture at WBC supports its objectives there is no pressing need to make a change to the culture. However, Executive Members identified ‘aspirational values’ which might underpin future changes. These are as follows: *dynamic/innovative; empowering; learning; entrepreneurial; transformational; self-critical; and celebrates success*. If the Council wanted to change the culture to reflect these ‘aspirational values’ it would need to invest in OD activities to make the change(s) succeed. The change that is most likely to require more OD resource is the move to a ‘three tier working’ where this is identified as improving effectiveness and efficiency through the New Ways of Working (NWOW) review of services. Three tier working means that activities are digitised and automated where possible; generalists deal with queries which are the same over time using ‘scripts’; and experts deal with unusual or complex issues. The number of expensive experts required reduces as the three tier working is introduced. This change meets the aspirational values of being transformational, dynamic/innovative and learning. OD techniques can help staff to embrace rather than resist the introduction of digitisation and three tier working where this is deemed appropriate after a NWOW review. This would be progressed in conjunction with colleagues in the Digital Services and ICT.

4.4.5 OD techniques are often used to change an ‘unhealthy’ organisation. Unhealthy in this context can mean higher than average sickness absence; higher than

average grievances; too much conflict; etc. In WBC, the indicators of a healthy organisation are constantly monitored by HR and the organisation is in a healthy state; sickness is normally at the public sector average; grievances are few; and employee engagement is above the benchmarked average for local government. It is important that HR continues to have the capacity to monitor the indicators of organisational health during the Workforce Strategy. However, sickness absence has drifted upwards in 2018/19 so HR will hold workshops for managers on using the Sickness Absence Procedure (an example of an OD intervention).

4.5 Employee Wellbeing

4.5.1 The average number of days lost due to sickness in 2018/19 was 9.84 (it was 8.59 in 2017/18). The most common reason for absence was ‘stress/ depression/ anxiety’ which accounted for 25.3% of all absence (up from 21.3%). The Council, particularly through its Public Health and Wellbeing Service (PH&W), has already made progress in the area of stress with Dementia Friends; Suicide Prevention Training; and Mental Health Champions. PH&W promote employee health and wellbeing campaigns through its webpages and social media presence (which are accessible to staff and the public). West Berkshire Council will take a more preventative approach to developing a mentally healthy workplace and building emotional resilience. There is evidence to suggest that focusing on a single risk factor in isolation is unlikely to develop a mentally healthy workplace so WBC will take a broader approach. The Organisational Stress Management Policy has been reviewed and is currently out to consultation. WBC does not have a free, confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - access to counselling is via HR. This is more restrictive than many other councils and HR will prepare a report for Corporate Board looking at the costs and benefits of introducing an EAP.

4.5.2 The Council operates an Occupational Health service through a contractor, (Heales). The Council also provide access to confidential counselling through a list of approved counsellors, funded by services. The Council has a robust sickness management policy. In light of the increase in the absence rate from 2017/18 to 2018/19 HR has introduced training workshops for managers to ensure that the policy is being applied consistently and in a timely fashion.

5. Conclusion

There is a need for a Workforce Strategy which makes the link between the challenges facing the Council as set out in the Council Strategy and the focus of ‘people management’ activities undertaken over the four year period July 2019 to July 2023. Some of this activity will be undertaken by the HR service and some by managers. The activities have been divided into five areas: **Apprenticeships and Skills Development; Leadership; Recruitment & Retention; Organisational Development and Employee Wellbeing.** Some of the activities will be supported by budget pressure bids for increased funding.

6. Action Plan

<i>Action</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Comment</i>
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HR to support implementation of new top tier management structure including at Tier 4.	Support to begin in summer 2019 and end in summer 2021.	Progress will be reviewed annually.
Introduce HR workshops for new managers on the leadership competency framework in the corporate appraisal form; and to discuss how to use the Council's values of Customer Focus, Integrity and Fairness in their decision making.	To start in spring 2020.	Subject to additional resources for HR. The Council has published its competency framework for managers on the appraisal form. However, the challenge of ensuring that managers act consistently in how they manage their employees is on-going as new managers are appointed.
Commercialisation skills training funded from the Corporate Programme for managers with an interest in generating more income for the Council.	To start in summer 2019.	Training provider identified.
ASC and C&FS to continue to build the 'non-pay benefits' message, with HR support, of working for the Council as part of their recruitment campaigns.	To start in summer 2019.	Working with HR recruitment team.
HR to hold an "Improving Recruitment through social media" day for recruiting managers, HR staff and digital experts.	Autumn 2019.	May lead to proposed changes to some HR policies (e.g. 'no CVs').
All vacancies up to Grade F to be considered for apprenticeships.	September 2019.	'Default' will be to assume vacancy can be linked to an apprenticeship in discussion with the recruiting manager.
HR to introduce a new volunteer/ work experience policy.	July 2019	Will act as a 'stepping stone' to help disadvantaged applicants to access apprenticeship vacancies.
HR to organise a cohort of five to seven 'Tier 4' managers to undertake the Masters course in Strategic Leadership and	Cohort to be identified by March 2020 and course to start in September 2020.	The cohort will be mentored and coached by Corporate Board. HR Manager will attend the course from September

Management funded by the apprenticeship levy.		2019 to help with launch in 2020.
HR to present a report to CB considering the pros and cons of introducing an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to assist in the area of Employee Wellbeing.	This report will be presented to CB in autumn 2019 to potentially start in April 2020	An EAP would require a successful budget bid.
Hold 'Let's Chat' workshops for staff employees	Arranged by HR in autumn 2020 and spring 2022.	Subject to be determined by Strategy Board – initial proposal from IEG is to focus on Equalities in 2020.
Hold an Employee Attitude Survey and analyse and act on the results.	June 2021.	Will need to source a new provider or do the EAS in house (as current provider has ceased to do this work).
Finance and HR to produce a report on each service's training budget and the amount of training expenditure per employee and report to CB.	Autumn 2019 as budget is being built for 2020/21.	This analysis will allow CB to determine whether access to training and development is fair across the Council (an issue raised by staff at the Let's Chat workshops in spring 2019)
HR to run an internal 'brokerage' service to match employees seeking career development with services offering shadowing and secondments. HR to find mentors for employees who are seconded.	Ongoing from April 2020	Subject to additional resources for HR. Issue raised by staff at the Let's Chat workshops in spring 2019. Mentors will be managers from a different part of the Council.
HR will continue to ensure that all employees have access to the on-line learning, by providing bespoke face to face training where required to meet the needs of employees with disabilities.	July 2019	The e-learning will not be changed (because that is a disproportionate response). The important thing is that access to the learning is available to all employees.
HR to procure a training provider to provide high quality training on Coaching Skills including follow up support.	Spring 2020	Subject to pressure bid.
HR to work with digital service colleagues to provide OD activities to	2020/21	Subject to pressure bid

support the successful introduction of 'Three Tier Working' where that is an outcome of a NWOW review of a service.		
HR to run workshops for managers on using the Sickness Absence Policy	To start autumn 2019	On-going for until summer 2020 when sickness figure for 19/20 is known.
Corporate Board to support and mentor the team entered for the next LGA Challenge	Spring 2020	HR to arrange for formation of the team.

6.1 Further actions may be added during the lifetime of the Workforce Strategy.

Background information to Workforce Strategy.

Workforce statistics are published on the Council's website in the Annual Employment Report.

One area that is not addressed in the Workforce Strategy is Pay & Reward. This is because the Council piloted a performance related pay scheme in 2016/17 linked to appraisals and feedback led to the roll-out being halted. The Workforce Strategy may be changed before March 2020 to include a section on reintroducing scoring for performance at appraisals. Operation Board will consider a report from the Head of HR on 5th December on the pros and cons of reintroducing scoring for appraisals which will include views from managers, staff and unions as well as a review of what other local authorities do. This report will also consider the option of training approved at appraisal to be contingent on the employee having an up to date record on all mandatory training. If OB decide to recommend the reintroduction of scoring in appraisals this will go to Personnel Committee for final approval.

Currently the Council retains a traditional local authority approach to pay with grades made up of a number of 'spinal column points' which are incremented after each year's service until they reach the top of the grade. The Council is currently part of South East Employers (SEE) and uses its "E-Pay Check" system to benchmark salaries with other local authorities. The Hay Job Evaluation scheme is used for most jobs (not the top tier which uses SEE) and WBC 'shadows' the NJC national pay award (although WBC is not part of the national pay and conditions framework known as 'the Green Book').

Learning opportunities for employees which are set out in the HR pages on the intranet. These are a mixture of learning which is applicable to all employees and learning which is service or team specific. Much of the learning applicable to all employees is mandatory and is monitored through the corporate performance reports to Corporate Board. Since 2010 the strategic direction of learning and development has been to move away from classroom courses if possible and to increase the quantity and quality of e-learning resources. This is to reduce costs and to make the training more accessible to part time and remote staff. However, this has led to concerns about the accessibility of e-learning courses for some employees with disabilities. HR will ensure that all employees have access to the learning, by providing bespoke face to face training where required to meet

the needs of employees with disabilities (rather than modifying the e-learning). The majority of learning and development across the Council's workforce is funded from devolved training budgets. The Council's training team offers face-to-face and e-learning courses specific to certain areas of the workforce e.g. adult social care, children and young people, and which covers corporate staff as well as other workers e.g. foster carers and support workers.

108 people were enrolled onto an apprenticeship programme in 2018.

There have been several focussed areas of development for specific groups of staff. Examples of these include:

- *Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) qualifications. 150 staff have qualified at different levels. These courses included:*
 - *Certificate in Leadership and Management levels 2 and 5,*
 - *Introductory Certificate in Management Level 3,*
 - *First Line Managers Award in Leadership Level 3.*

- *Collaborative Architects – the Council engaged consultant Manny Gatt to deliver development to senior leaders to foster a culture of collaboration.*
- *Negotiation Skills – senior managers were offered training in negotiation skills, delivered by Scotworks.*
- *Restorative Practice – a large number of staff in the Communities directorate have undertaken training in restorative practice (a particular method of working with people in the community and elsewhere).*
- *Management Consistency - over 200 Council managers attended these workshops. The idea of these workshops came from staff feedback at Let's Chat workshops that there was inconsistency in management decisions on 'people issues' across the Council.*