

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	AUDIT COMMITTEE	
DATE OF DECISION	March 2024	
REPORT TITLE:	Progress update on the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-2026 and Action Plan	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer, Human Resources and Organisational Development	
LEAD OFFICER:	Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer Email: Dean.Shoesmith@croydon.gov.uk	
LEAD MEMBER:	CLLR JASON CUMMINGS, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE	
KEY DECISION?	No	N/A
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?		Public
WARDS AFFECTED:	All	

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the development and progress of the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-2026 and supporting Action Plan, as requested by the Committee in September 2023. The report gives an overview of the seven pillars within the strategy, outlining the interdependencies across each pillar and how the strategy design enables activities in each pillar to deliver key transformational change as required by the Mayor’s Business Plan.
- 1.2 It outlines activities already achieved, activities underway, alongside plans to continue to change the culture of the organisation to become a council that delivers good quality services in an open and responsive way to residents, underpinned by strong financial disciplines and effective governance. The approach embedded in the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy is predicated on high staff engagement, co-creation, behavioural change and an aligned performance management framework. Key activities in the action plan have been co-created with staff.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report [and its appendices] the Audit Committee is recommended:

- to receive an update on the People and Culture Transformation Strategy 2022-2026 development and action plan; and,
- to note the achievements to date, work in progress, planned actions, and the contents of the report and Action Plan

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1** Audit Committee has requested an update report on the progress of the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-26 and supporting Action Plan covering implementation of the action plan, governance and benchmarking of people and workforce.

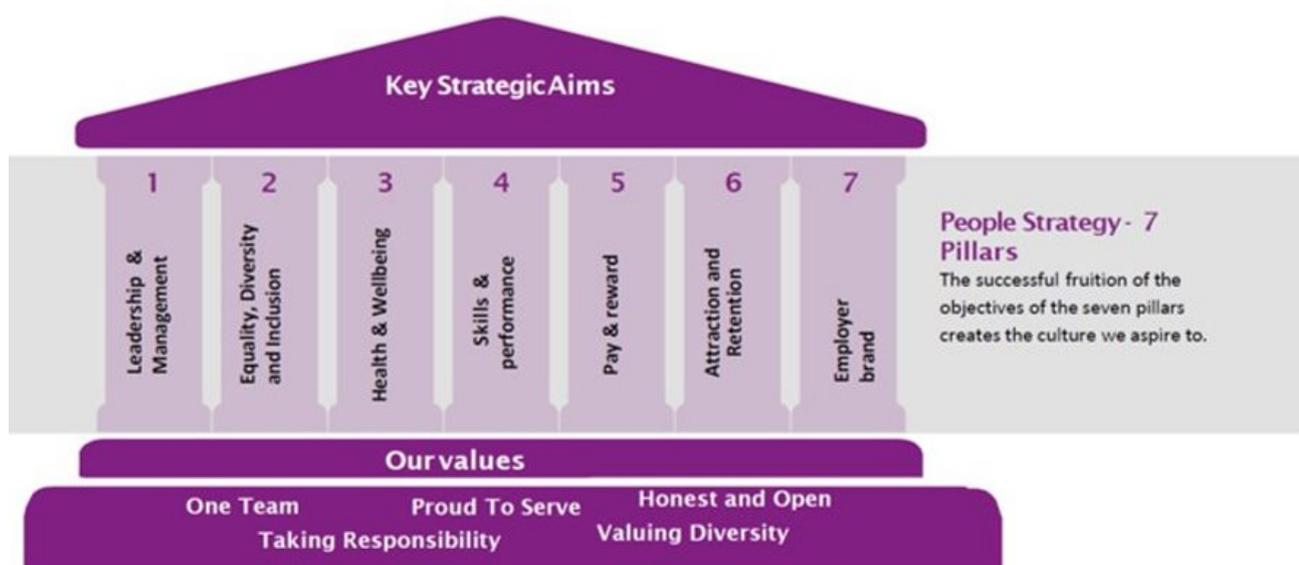
4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

- 4.1** The People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-2026 (Appendix 1) was developed in 2022 and agreed by the Executive Mayor in Cabinet on 25th January 2023. Pre-decision scrutiny took place via the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 23rd January 2023 and the Chair of Scrutiny and Overview Committee requested a future update on the strategy delivery. The purpose of the strategy and its associated action plan is to provide a framework in which the council addresses its workforce priorities over the next three years, setting out the way in which we will recruit, manage and invest in staff to achieve the transformation required by the Mayor's Business Plan priorities, to ensure that as an organisation the Council is able to deliver good quality services in a financially sustainable way.
- 4.2** The strategy contains seven pillars which interconnect and seek to strengthen leadership and management capabilities, get governance right, improve skills and performance, enhance our health and wellbeing opportunities, as well as ensuring that our brand enables us to attract and retain excellent people who are representative of the communities that we serve.
- 4.3** Whilst the overall owner of the strategy is the Chief People Officer, the delivery of the strategy is owned by the whole workforce. As a people-to-people business, this is to ensure we remain aligned to the wider organisation transformation journey, as well as ensuring our employees can play an active role in our cultural transformation, and our programme is inclusive ensuring that our residents and customers remain at the heart of what we do.
- 4.4** The Council has co-created its action plan (Appendix 2) with staff and key partners across the organisation, through active engagement and consultation to ensure that the employee voice is clearly defined. We are actively engaging with staff on activities that are underway and across the wider council to ensure that the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy is embedded.

- 4.5** Over the course of 12 sessions, more than 250 staff engaged in sharing their knowledge, experiences, and priorities to enable the council on its journey. The staff represented a cross-section of our workforce community and were representative in directorates, grades, careers, and several protected characteristics.
- 4.6** A further eight focus groups with 30 attendees, and 15 Head of Service / Director 1:1s were undertaken in the summer of 2023 to specifically shape leadership, management, and performance requirements, all with an EDI lens. Four focus groups were held to support the refresh of the Equalities Strategy, with 43 colleagues attending and further sessions to engage colleagues around core health and wellbeing actions took place in the summer and autumn.
- 4.7** The progress and governance of the Strategy is overseen by the Workforce Internal Control Board to ensure that we continue to meet the targets outlined and regular reports are provided on our implementation.

Our People and Cultural Transformation Strategy

Strategic objectives 2022- 2026



Seven key strategic objectives have been developed to provide a framework that addresses the council's workforce needs, enabling through organisational development the council to improve services to residents and setting in place a clear, measurable action plan for the next four years.

- 4.8** Each of our seven pillars has its own action plan, with defined milestones over the course of each of the four years of the delivery plan. However, it is important to ensure that the strategy remains adaptive, complementing the council's position and journey and, therefore, these milestones will have some flexibility to ensure they enable the effective delivery of the overall strategy.
- 4.9** **Pillar One** focuses on strengthening our leadership and management capabilities.
- 4.10** **Pillar Two** focuses on building an equality driven, inclusive and diverse workforce. This pillar intertwines with each of the other pillars to provide the foundations of our inclusive culture changes.
- 4.11** **Pillar Three** focuses on prioritising the health, wellbeing and resilience of our staff, where staff can thrive, are engaged and motivated to deliver positive outcomes for our diverse communities.
- 4.12** **Pillar Four** focuses on building our skills and capabilities and optimising our performance to deliver positive outcomes for Croydon's communities.
- 4.13** **Pillar Five** focuses on establishing a market leading pay and reward package.
- 4.14** **Pillar Six** focuses on attracting and retaining talent, responding to skills gaps in the context of a more competitive recruitment market.
- 4.15** **Pillar Seven** focuses on developing an employer brand to attract employees who share the Council's values. There are interdependencies across all the pillars of the

strategy, and it is in the Employer Brand that we see the culmination of wider actions that together make Croydon an attractive place to work.

4.16 Our first-year achievement and priorities are set out below and our current action plan is shown at appendix 2. The action plan provides a clear overview on our approach to delivery over the next three years, including our progression from getting the basics right, to evolving and embedding our new practices and changes, as we transform how we operate and support the direction of business within the organisation.

Our Approach – Our first year priorities, implementation of the action plan and governance.

4.17 Having co-designed our action plan with our workforce, we are at different stages of delivery in the 2023/24 year, with work already in train before the Strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2023. Some areas have already been achieved, some are in design or delivery mode, and others will roll out over the coming months. Progress updates are shown in parenthesis in the table below at 4.18.

4.18 In summary, our first year focuses on the following areas of delivery: -

Leadership and Management	<p>Through working with senior officers to create a compelling new vision, purpose and target operating model which utilises skills, systems and strategies supported by data from externally verified audits, we will lay the foundations for our culture change vision, incorporating previous programmes of work such as Crossing the Threshold.</p> <p>The following initiatives will be rolled out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to the Floor sessions – visible leadership and resolutions (in design) • Utilising the change management framework to enhance delivery of transformation and service improvement (in progress) • Adopting a leadership framework (in design) • Rolling out core programmes on inclusive and change leadership (being commissioned) • Rolling out core developmental programmes for middle managers on aspiring managers, management foundations and stepping into leadership (being commissioned) • Promoting and utilising community of practice programmes to support embedding (at research stage)
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We established an EDI Board operating in February 2021 to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place to improve the representation of protected characteristic groups in the workforce profile to be as representative of the community we serve as possible as outlined in the refreshed our equalities strategy (achieved) • We have responded to feedback on our reasonable adjustments processes and put new processes in place to ensure more timely equipment is provided where needed. (in progress) • We continue to develop our Anti Racism assessment approach to embed across the business (in progress)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to deliver staff engagement sessions which allow a safe space for us to hear, support and respond to the voice of Launching positive action leadership programmes such as: • Launched three cohorts of 'Black on Board' programme' offered by Olmec for minoritised employees, especially colleagues in entry / front line roles (started from October 2023, with excellent feedback from participants) • Reciprocal Mentoring Pilot with front line and operational colleagues with CMT and wider senior leaders Allyship programme for all levels of staff. (launch sessions in progress) • We have recruited and are trained over 120 people across all Directorates to ensure we have a strong pool of diverse interview panel members (achieved) and we have developed data monitoring dashboards on representation numbers that are regularly reported to EDI Board to measure impact and ensure effective governance
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed an action plan, with priorities being identified with the workforce over the summer as part of the stop, pause and re-prioritise work. A range of initiatives will be rolled out, set out below (achieved) • We have undertaken a 'make time to take time' campaign to change some of our habits and behaviours around how people work, including sharing principles to allow for better meetings, work breaks and time to think (achieved) • We will be reviewing our policies to ensure that they are fit for purpose (in progress – new employee relations policies to go live in September) • All staff will undertake mandatory e-learning in mental health and wellbeing (in progress) • We have established and are rolling out a health and wellbeing passport (achieved) • We have re-invigorated The Guardians Programme (achieved) • We have become an accredited menopause friendly employer, and have implemented a clear menopause policy together with access to educational and outcome-based workshops, supported by guidance, top tips and case studies (achieved)
Skills and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have created a Workforce Internal Board which provides oversight and governance (achieved) of workforce matters and delivery of the People and Cultural Transformation action plan • We have refreshed our induction offering and will be rolling out a new induction experience and manager experience (stage 1 online programme achieved, stage 2 in-person induction in development) • We have launched an interim user-friendly solution for appraisals to promote quality conversations (achieved) • We will be delivering core skills and base line training for all managers on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer service ○ Digital skills ○ Change management ○ Managing diverse teams for managers (all in progress)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have launched our 'A spotlight on ...' programme of mandatory training refreshers to ensure organisational compliance (achieved)
Pay and reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During our first year we will be establishing and sharing information to improve experiences in job evaluation, and co-creating principles in pay and reward, understanding what is important to employees, recognising that depending on your current career timeline, requirements will vary (in design) Develop and raise awareness on total reward statements through a range of campaigns. And utilise this information better in our recruitment stages (initial design agreed by Workforce ICB – work in progress with the communications team) Reviewing options on informal and formal recognition programmes for staff (Staff Awards to go live April 2024) and Long Service awards reinstated from November 2023 (achieved)
Attraction and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have been actively reviewing and streamlining our recruitment processes and practices to increase our brand, promote better opportunities for our internal staff and attract new staff to join the council (in progress) We have developed recruitment videos to promote our staff voices and experience (achieved) We are looking to develop our relationships with other local services and providers and work with local colleges on talent management (in progress) We welcome 7 new graduates to the Council in the Autumn as part of our continued participation in the National Graduate development Programme reporting on progress to March EDI Board (achieved) We are developing apprenticeship and work experience opportunities for local young people by working with Palace for Life, the charitable arm of Crystal Palace Football Club (achieved). As part of governance control, we have reported to EDI Board on progress with the council's apprenticeship programme (achieved) We are developing links with Croydon University Hospital to develop a wider public sector recruitment and attraction proposition across health and social care (in progress)
Employer Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising that our brand is developed based on several areas outlined above and ensuring that we actively promote the opportunities and share experiences as part of our recruitment processes (in progress, with new recruitment landing page content achieved) That we retain are our London Living Wage status and progress to excellence-level in the Good Work Standard, as well as begin our pursuit of other accreditations, such as Investors in People accreditation if appropriate and cost effective (in progress – we are awaiting a decision on our 'excellence' application for the Good Work Standard)

4.19 We recognise the pillars have interdependencies and, therefore, some timelines will be more fluid to allow for embedding and adapting to ensure that we gain the most from the changes that we implement. In addition, we also accept that if change is

required to deliver the required impact, we will adapt our approach to ensure that we support the Council's wider vision and goals.

4.20 Benchmarking – workforce data

- 4.21 We have developed a comprehensive data dashboard that includes key metrics covering a range of workforce measurements and benchmarks, providing data, period reporting comparisons, trend analysis council-wide, and directorate dashboard drill down data. The dashboards are produced quarterly. This enables good governance via the Workforce and EDI internal control boards, and also at DMT-level with the directorate drill down data. This enables oversight of key workforce metrics that allow monitoring of actions and impact taken via the People and Cultural Transformation action plan.
- 4.22 A copy of the most recent dashboard which was reviewed by Workforce ICB on 15 February 2024, is attached to provide Audit Committee members an illustration of the dashboard and data reviewed. In addition to internal data benchmarking we are a part of the London Councils benchmarking collaborative, known Human Capital Metrics. This enables external benchmarking with the other 32 London Boroughs.
- 4.23 We ask that Audit Committee members receive this update of the progress on the development, design and delivery of the People and Culture Transformation Strategy and we commit to providing regular updates.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 All employees were invited to attend workshops and presentations on the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy and provide their feedback on the content to help shape and develop the overall action plan.
- 5.2 Over 250 employees and Union colleagues attended the workshop/presentations and have contributed to, and commented on, the proposals. Additional consultation has taken place on specific elements of the strategy, including leadership, management, appraisals, careers, EDI, and Health & Wellbeing. Focus groups to help with the Equalities Strategy refresh were also held, with 43 colleagues contributing.
- 5.3 The People and Culture Transformation Strategy has been presented to the ACE DMT, CMT, MAB, (see glossary of terms section 10) Scrutiny, as well as to Cabinet.
- 5.4 Whilst the action plan identifies programmes for change across the council to support and underpin how we transform our service delivery, there is no public consultation requirement.
- 5.5 It is proposed to continue to involve staff representatives throughout the continued review of the action plan implementation, as well as setting up employee groups to shape and implement specific deliverables, role modelling an inclusive culture through this co-design approach.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 No other options were considered.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

7.1 The People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-2026 aligns to the Croydon Renewal programme and the priorities outlined in the Mayor's Business Plan, particularly Priority 5: Develop our workforce to deliver in a manner that respects the diversity of our communities.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 Current finance implications are being met within existing budgets. Where additional resources will be required to support the delivery of some initiatives, now and in the future, funding bids will be made as appropriate following the Council's governance processes.

8.1.2 Comments approved by Lesley Shields, Head of Finance for Assistant Chief Executive and Resources on behalf of the Director of Finance. 23/02/2024

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 This is a report to update the Audit Committee on the progress of the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-2026 and the implementation of the supporting Action Plan in place.

8.2.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (27/02/2024)

8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 The Council has a statutory duty, when exercising its functions, to comply with the provisions set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council must, in the performance of its functions, have due regard to its duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 8.3.2** The People and Cultural Transformation Strategy is key to the council's transformation and has been developed to have a positive impact on the lived experience of all staff and the improvement of services delivered to residents. This is supported by the focus on health and wellbeing in pillar 3.
- 8.3.3** An EQIA was produced in December 2022, which was updated in August 2023 which highlights a number of key initiatives within the seven pillars of the strategy that have a positive benefit to women, the Global Majority and other minoritised groups such as LGBT+, disabled staff and younger staff. Each intervention is based on clear evidence such as workforce data including pay gap data, staffing profiles and qualitative data such as staff co creation sessions and staff feedback from whole workforce interventions such as Crossing the Threshold.
- 8.3.4** Interventions outlined in relation to equality characteristics include: positive action training for the Global Majority and other racialised groups, disabled staff and women. Other positive action interventions include reciprocal mentoring and a Black on Board leadership programme to address the under-representation of Global Majority staff at grade 15, and above.
- 8.3.5** The strategy will also improve the lived experience of disabled staff by establishing a central budget for reasonable adjustments along with management information to support socialisation of disabled staff at work including those with neurodiverse conditions.
- 8.3.6** The apprenticeship strategy and the establishment of the Croydon Young Staff Network group will support the aim to encourage a younger workforce and rebalance our work profile with regard to younger employees.
- 8.3.7** A recent request for volunteers to be trained to sit on recruitment panels has resulted in over an additional 100 volunteers from all protected characteristics within the council. This will support our aim to ensure that all recruitment panels are diverse.
- 8.3.8** The strategy also seeks to further embed work within the Council to become an anti-racist organisation, building from our participation in the London Councils' Tackling Racial Injustice programme.
- 8.3.9** The strategy will also enable the directorate to consider and explore emerging equality issues such as intersectionality to identify where staff may be more likely to be impacted by plans and changes.
- 8.3.10** The EQIA is a live document and will be updated when further data and evidence is available.

Approved by Helen Reeves, Head of Strategy & Policy (22/02/2024)

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.4 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- The People and Cultural Transformation Strategy will have a positive impact for staff in supporting and delivering a range of transformational activities which will assist in enhancing their employee journey, improving health and wellbeing opportunities, and enabling change in connection with pay and reward and learning opportunities.
- There is no direct impact on headcount.
- Approved by: Dean Shoesmith Chief People Officer. (Date 15/02/2024)

8.5 HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- Implementing our People and Cultural Transformation Strategy has the potential to positively impact the health of our workforce (circa 60% of whom are residents of the Borough) by, for example:
 - enhancing the training and employment prospects of our workforce and local residents
 - reducing stress and anxiety whilst enabling more resilience and adaptability to change
 - strengthening control over colleague's lives and fostering empowerment

Approved by: Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer (Date 15/02/2024)

8.6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.6.1 A Risk register is in place for the delivery of the People and Culture Transformation Strategy with any risks or issues being raised and managed via the Workforce Internal Control Board
- 8.6.2 Risks include the delay to the design of the Target Operating Model may impact on timelines for delivery or change the delivery dates, however contingency plans around consultation and design are in place to mitigate the risk. Approved by: Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer (Date 15/02/2024)

8.7 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.7.1 Whilst the overall programme has several components that will require the collection / holding of personal data of individuals this will be collected/held for specific purposes only and individuals will be aware of this through the workforce data privacy notice and the reasons for capturing the data and the processing that will be undertaken. Processing of any personal data or sensitive data will purely be for the delivery, monitoring and impact of the strategy and will only be undertaken in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

8.7.2 A DPIA will be considered for each individual area of work where we gather personal information and we will work with our existing policy [Workforce Data Protection Policy - Final.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Approved by: Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer (Date 15/02/2024)

9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 *People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-2026*

Appendix 2 *People and Cultural Transformation Strategy Action Plan*

Appendix 3 *Workforce ICB data dashboard January – December 2023*

10 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate Management Team (ACE DMT)
- Corporate Management Team (CMT)
- Mayor's Advisory Board (MAB)