

LBTH Workforce Strategy 2016 – 2021

Forward by the Chief Executive

I have worked for Tower Hamlets for 6 months. As a new employee, albeit the Chief Executive, I've had the same thoughts as many new starters: what will be expected of me? Will I fit in with the culture and values? What will I get out of working here? How can I make a difference?

This workforce strategy explains what we expect from all staff. It tells you where we are heading as an organisation and how we need to work together to get there.

We recognise that to serve our community fully, we need to have a workforce that broadly represents the diverse make-up of our borough.

There's a lot to do. We need to fully embed equality in everything we do and ensure that all staff has an equal opportunity to progress and develop within the organisation. We need to transform our services; ensuring we deliver the best possible outcomes for the borough, whilst spending less money. We need to be transparent about everything that we do and work in partnership both internally and externally to enhance our services. This is a tough ask. To achieve all this we will need a workforce that responds positively to change, is flexible, dependable and committed to the work we do.

This strategy tells you what we will do to prepare us for these changes. You can expect training and support to develop the skills and attributes we need in the future. In return, we expect staff to share our vision, work tirelessly to deliver our priorities and make a difference with everything that you do.

I look forward to working with you to transform the lives of our residents, which, after all, is why we are all here.

What is a Workforce Strategy?

The Workforce Strategy describes our workforce vision and provides a blueprint of how to get there. Essentially, the strategy will ensure that we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time, for the right price.

Why do we need one?

The Strategic Plan describes our priority outcomes for the period 2016-2019. In order to achieve these priorities, the following enabling outcome and strategic objectives are detailed in the plan:

A transformed council, making best use of resources and with an outward looking culture

- Make best use of council resources through effective procurement, exploiting the value and use of assets and maximising income from local growth
- Support an organisational culture based on transparency, trust and effective relationships
- Deliver an organisational transformation programme to ensure effective, responsive front line services and efficient, cost-effective support services, enabled by ICT and including a new civic centre
- Develop an effective workforce strategy, with appropriate skills and representative of the community
- Nurture an outward looking culture, by asserting our place and relationships in London.

The Workforce Strategy sits alongside the Digital Strategy and the Asset Strategy to describe how we will develop the organisation through our people, our use of technology and our buildings.

Where are we heading?

A lot will happen in the next 5 years. Here are some of the headlines:

What will happen?	What does this mean?	Why are we doing this?
Some of our services will be 'Integrated'.	We will deliver services jointly with other organisations, through shared teams and management arrangements.	The government has instructed that councils must integrate their health and social care services with the NHS by 2020. We have already started this work and will take a phased approach to integrating our services over the next 4 years.
We will operate from a new Civic Centre in Whitechapel with a local presence at John Onslow House. These will be supported by smaller offices in the community.	We will work more flexibly by increasing the use of technology, touch down points, staggered hours and home working. This will release desk space and enable us to occupy fewer buildings.	Our lease for Mulberry Place is coming to an end and we need a new building. We have bought Whitechapel Hospital and will be developing this to provide a central facility at the heart of the community, with top quality office accommodation.
We will have a 'mixed market' of service provision.	Some of our services will be delivered by us and some will be managed by us but delivered by the private sector. Others will be delivered by the local community or by third	Our services are measured by the outcome to the community. Outcomes can sometimes be improved by delivering services in a different way; through organisations with a greater level of expertise or with a

	sector organisations, supported by the council.	greater connection to the community. However, one size does not fit all. Different models will suit different services/functions and each area will be reviewed individually.
We will continue to reduce the total workforce expenditure.	We will have a more agile workforce so that resources can be moved between services according to organisational priorities. We will employ less staff and use fewer agency workers and consultants. However, this will be a modest reduction. We do not have a target for staffing reductions and will continue to provide the most competitive salary and benefit package that we can afford.	We need to save another £53m by 2019/20. The majority of this will be made by changing the way we deliver our services, although a proportion will need to be made through workforce reductions. We must provide value for money in all our services and we will continue to look for opportunities to do more for less.
More of our back office services will be consolidated into single teams.	Similar functions that operate separately within directorates will be drawn together to create cross-council teams. This does not necessarily mean that services will be centralised. Teams will be located within whichever directorate is the most appropriate to enable the functions to be delivered effectively.	This will ensure consistency across the council and enable the creation of centres of excellence for specific functions. This will also help to create economies of scale and enable a reduction of management positions.
We will have a flatter management structure.	The number of tiers of management between the top and the bottom of the organisation will be reduced and spans of control will be increased.	This will ensure that a greater proportion of our resource is spent on those whom are delivering the outcomes and improvements in the borough, rather than those managing the delivery.
We will undertake open recruitment for the majority of our positions.	The recruitment process will be streamlined to make it quicker and easier for managers and	This will ensure that the best possible applicants are engaged quickly and effectively.

	<p>applicants. Vacancies will be open to internal and external candidates simultaneously, allowing the best candidate to be recruited straight away.</p>	<p>The government has intimated that future guidelines/legislation will be introduced to restrict the use of closed recruitment (internal applicants only) in the public sector.</p>
<p>Our workforce will have the skills to deliver public sector services in the future.</p>	<p>Corporate training will reflect where we are heading as an organisation and provide the skills that will be required. Staff will be developed to become more agile, resilient, commercially minded and partnership focussed.</p>	<p>We cannot provide high quality services for the future unless we invest in our staff and provide the skills required to drive our services forward.</p>
<p>Apprenticeship placements will form part of our service structures</p>	<p>Apprenticeship placements will be included within our structures to be filled by apprentices whilst they undertake their training. These will be temporary placements and, once each apprentice has completed their training, the placements will be filled by the next cohort of trainees.</p>	<p>The Government has set a target for 2.3% of the workforce in public sector organisations to be made up of apprenticeships. We need to accommodate this within our structures and ensure that we provide excellent opportunities for young people to start their careers.</p>
<p>Improvements in digital technology will change the way we engage with our customers</p>	<p>We will do more of our business through the internet, text messaging and other digital resources rather than face to face contact. A Digital Strategy is being produced to explain how will be use this technology to enhance our services and make it easier for staff to work flexibly, work from different locations and conduct virtual meetings.</p>	<p>We need to move with the times. Technology has developed at such a pace over the past few years that we are in danger of being left behind. We must offer our residents the service that they would expect from any large organisation.</p>

How will we get there?

Our vision for the workforce is simple. We want:

- Great people
- Great performance
- Great place
- Great partnerships

The following sections describe, for each element, what great looks like, what we will do to get there and how we will measure our success.

GREAT PEOPLE

People are the driving force behind any organisation. We need to recruit and retain the best people, ensuring that they have the skills to move the council forward and provide the best possible outcomes for our community. Developing our existing staff is important. We must continue to nurture our talent and provide opportunities for people to progress within the organisation. However, it is equally as important to recruit new people. New members of staff bring with them skills and experience that we may not already have within our workforce. They also bring a fresh pair of eyes and knowledge of new approaches or improvements that may have been introduced in other organisations.

This means that we need to create a better balance between internal promotion and recruiting new staff. A key measure of our success will be our voluntary turnover of staff. For organisations to be effective it is generally considered that the voluntary turnover (the number of voluntary leavers as a percentage of the number of permanent staff) should be approximately 12%. In March 2016 our voluntary turnover was 8%. Increasing our voluntary turnover does not mean that we should value our workforce any less. It is a reflection that we should nurture our outward looking culture; as stated in the Strategic Plan objectives. We can do this by providing opportunities for staff to undertake training and development alongside colleagues from other boroughs or local companies. We can also encourage external mentoring, secondment and project opportunities for staff to gain experience of other organisations and different approaches.

Our staff are committed to serving the borough. We need to encourage and harness this public service ethos. It is this drive to make a difference that will ensure we deliver quality services for the public.

Where do we want to be?

- The best calibre of staff will be recruited and retained from a wide and diverse field of applicants.
- Our total benefit package will be competitive, attractive and appropriate.
- Our workforce will have the skills and attributes to deliver effective public services in the future.
- All staff will be versatile, agile, innovative and resilient.

What will we do to get there?

Year	Activities
2016/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and streamline our recruitment processes to reduce the time taken to recruit and increase the ability for the wider community to access employment within the council. • Join the national graduate development programme (NGDP) to encourage new talent and fresh approaches into the workforce. • Undertake a full review of learning and development, identifying training packages linked to organisational need for different categories of staff. • Review and amend our employee benefits offer as appropriate, working with other London boroughs to get the best value for money • Review the use of recruitment and retention payments for professional and hard to recruit positions.
2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the principles used to govern internal/external advertisement of positions to ensure appropriate use of closed (internal) recruitment practices.
2018/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and strengthen the induction and probation processes to ensure that new starters understand and are committed to the council's values, expectations and performance culture. • Review the mentoring scheme and open up mentoring opportunities in other boroughs. • Implement a talent management programme, in partnership with other boroughs, to develop the attributes of a 21st century public sector worker • Review senior manager salaries and job evaluation scheme as part of the wider London human resources group to ensure we remain comparative within the sector.
2019/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase apprenticeship opportunities and create trainee posts within service structures.
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and maintain a workforce skills matrix to identify skills gaps and enable greater movement of resource to accommodate changing priorities.

How will we measure our success?

Performance indicator	2015/16 performance	2016/17 target	2017/18 target	2018/19 target	2019/20 target	2020/21 target
Average number of applicants per job advert	New measure					
Voluntary turnover of staff						
Percentage of learning and development programmes evaluated as good or excellent						
Average cost of learning and development per employee	New measure					

GREAT PERFORMANCE

Great performance is not just about outcomes and performance indicators. It is also about our behaviours, our culture, our leadership and our management style.

We have gone through a significant period of change and uncertainty over the past few years. This has had an impact on our culture and behaviours and has started to change the way we work as an organisation. Over the next five years we will see bigger changes with a wider impact on the workforce. However, we now have a permanent Corporate Management Team and a determined approach to transformation. We need to refresh our organisational culture and values to reflect this vision; focusing on the future, whilst learning lessons from the past.

Our senior leaders and managers must become role models for our values and ensure a consistent application of our policies and procedures. They must also inspire, motivate and enable all staff to perform to the best of their ability.

Where do we want to be?

- Managers will have the skills, abilities and information to enable them to effectively manage their human resources.
- Senior leaders will be visible, credible and visionary; providing effective role models for the organisation.
- Our organisational culture and core values will be clear and fully embedded in all our activities.
- All employees will perform to a high standard; meeting and exceeding their operational objectives on a regular basis.

What will we do to get there?

Year	Activities
2016/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with staff to review and develop our core values and organisational culture. • Review and refresh the HR ICT system specification to enable the procurement of efficient software, providing accurate and accessible management information. • Review all HR policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure effective and consistent application and ease of use. • Introduce 360* appraisals for senior managers and create individual development plans. • Implement a process for monitoring and evaluating the return on investment in learning and development across the council.
2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the PDR process, including a numerical assessment for each employee to chart progress and identify excellent performers across the council. • Automate all workforce activities to provide management notifications to undertake upcoming actions. • Implement a comprehensive management training package, including action learning sets, networks, shadowing and mentoring

	<p>for new and existing managers in the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce leadership development training, in partnership with other boroughs/organisations.
2018/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our performance management approach including options for performance related pay. • Redesign and update the HR pages of the intranet with easy search facilities and legible routes to information. Include a managers' area to share knowledge and information. • Review our performance management approach
2019/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the employee appeals process, ensuring consistency with other boroughs and industry best practice. • Review and strengthen the leadership and management competency framework
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a framework for outcome based performance management, reviewing appraisal systems and objective setting.

How will we measure our success?

Performance indicator	2015/16 performance	2016/17 target	2017/18 target	2018/19 target	2019/20 target	2020/21 target
Percentage of annual PDRs and 6 month reviews completed						
Percentage of eligible managers undertaking leadership development training	New measure					
Percentage of staff that feel senior leaders are visible, credible and visionary (staff survey question)	New measure					
Total number of employee investigations						

GREAT PLACE

Tower Hamlets is a great place to work. Our staff are proud to work here and are extremely committed to both the council and the borough. However, we can make it even better.

We continue to be recognised as a 'positive about disability' employer and are currently ranked as number 30 in the Stonewall Index of the top 100 best employers for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff. We have been accredited as Silver by Investors in People (IiP) and will be aiming to achieve Gold accreditation in our next assessment in 2017. When comparing our senior management teams to other London Boroughs, we have the fourth highest proportion of our top earners that are disabled. We also have the third highest proportion of our top earners that are black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME). We recognise that to serve our community fully, we need to have a workforce that broadly represents the diverse make-up of our borough. We review this every year in our workforce equalities report along with other measures to

ensure we have a fair and equitable workplace and that we are meeting our equalities obligations as a public body.

We operate a number of healthy lifestyle and health awareness interventions in the workplace, yet the average number of days absent through sickness has risen steadily over the past few years. We must improve the way we deal with sickness absence. This can be achieved by reviewing our workplace interventions to ensure that we are providing the right support in the right areas. It can also be achieved by strengthening our sickness procedures, ensuring that short term patterns of sickness are tackled effectively and quickly.

Where do we want to be?

- We will provide a healthy and effective workplace and will encourage and support healthy lifestyles for our staff.
- We will provide effective and efficient use of resources in all our workforce activities.
- Knowledge and skills will be retained in the organisation when key people leave.
- We will promote and celebrate the equality and diversity of our workforce, ensuring we are recognised internally and externally as a diversity friendly employer.

What will we do to get there?

Year	Activities
2016/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the sickness procedure, guidance and interventions to ensure that we have robust and best practice processes for tackling short and long term sickness absence. • Fully embed the whistleblowing charter and process within the organisation.
2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an Investors in People (IIP) assessment with the aim of reaching gold status. • Undertake an audit of healthy lifestyle interventions undertaken by Occupational Health, Public Health and other partners to identify the impact, resource implications and any opportunities for joint delivery models. • Sign up to the Healthy Workplace Charter, undertaking necessary activities to increase health and well-being within the workplace. • Undertake a Best Companies staff survey to identify areas of organisational strength and weakness.
2018/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review terms and conditions of employment to ensure that we are consistent with other comparator organisations that have modernised their workforce. • Develop an effective process of knowledge transfer and succession planning.
2019/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement flexible hiring and an action plan to gain accreditation as a Timewise employer.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the council's position on restrictive covenants and settlement agreements.
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an Investors in People (IIP) assessment with the aim of maintaining gold status and building towards platinum status. Review and implement a suite of organisational design principals.

How will we measure our success?

Performance indicator	2015/16 performance	2016/17 target	2017/18 target	2018/19 target	2019/20 target	2020/21 target
Percentage of staff that are proud to work for Tower Hamlets (staff survey)	New measure					
Average age of the workforce						
Average length of service of the workforce						
Agency workers as a percentage of the establishment						
Total number of employees + agency headcount						
Sickness average per FTE (days)						

GREAT PARTNERSHIPS

Great partnerships relates to our working relationships between council services, between officers and elected members, management and trade unions and managers and staff. It also relates to how we work with other organisations and residents.

Increasingly, the future of public sector working will rest on the ability to build strong and effective partnerships. Delivering more for less means that we need to work collaboratively to ensure we achieve positive outcomes for our residents. This may mean that we will integrate services, for example health and social care services will be integrated with the NHS. It may also mean that we provide services through different partnership delivery models, for example shared service approaches, mutuals, arm's length management organisations or contracted services. This will mean that staff will need a different skillset to be able to identify partnership opportunities, negotiate joint outcomes and effectively manage relationships.

Our internal partnerships are equally, if not more, important. It is crucial that staff feel empowered and engaged to provide their views and drive the organisation forward. We need to review our existing approaches to staff engagement, including engagement through trade unions, to ensure that staff understand their views are vital to the transformation of the organisation.

Where do we want to be?

- We will operate a best practice, collaborative approach to industrial relations.
- Staff will be engaged and empowered; concerns will be addressed and meaningful consultation will be undertaken.
- We will deliver our services using the most appropriate delivery method to achieve effective outcomes and value for money.
- Staff will have the tools and techniques to initiate and develop effective partnerships with all stakeholders.

What will we do to get there?

Year	Activities
2016/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a full review of staff engagement systems and processes to ensure effective opportunities to consult and engage staff. • Undertake an independent review of industrial relations practices to identify opportunities for greater collaboration and best practice approaches.
2017/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce partnership working, client management and employee relations training for all relevant staff.
2018/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map reciprocal training agreements currently in place with other organisations, initiate additional agreements, where relevant, and maximise the mutual benefits of all agreements. • Create alumni of previous employees to act as critical friends, provide mentoring opportunities and share learning/experience.
2019/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a framework and toolkit for maintaining flexible working whilst delivering services through a variety of partnership arrangements. • Create a HR and managers toolkit to define the process, considerations and timescales for establishing different service delivery models
2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce job families and role profiles to increase generic working and movement between teams.

How will we measure our success?

Performance indicator	2015/16 performance	2016/17 target	2017/18 target	2018/19 target	2019/20 target	2020/21 target
Percentage of staff that feel we work effectively with external partners (staff survey)	New measure					
Percentage of staff that feel we work effectively between internal services (staff survey)	New measure					
Percentage of formal consultations concluded within 6 weeks	New measure					
Number of reciprocal training agreements in place with other organisations	New measure					