

For general release

REPORT TO:	SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE 10 SEPTEMBER 2019
SUBJECT:	REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE
LEAD OFFICER:	JO NEGRINI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	JO NEGRINI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
ORIGIN OF ITEM:	A REQUEST FOR AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF SCRUTINY
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	<p><i>The Committee is invited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>i) Note the financial and national context within which we are operating</i><i>ii) Note the progress in system redesign, with services focused on prevention, collaboration and locality based working</i><i>iii) Note the improvements made with Croydon Children's Services</i><i>iv) Note the work undertaken to engage staff in the development of a new Workforce Strategy</i><i>v) Note plans to undertake an external equalities assessment through the LGA</i>

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** The Council has set out an ambitious programme to deliver for Croydon in the Corporate Plan, which was adopted by Council in October 2018. The Corporate Plan outlines the key Council priorities to 2022. The plan is ambitious, building on the successes of the preceding four years, however it is realistic, and costed with an accompanying financial strategy.
- 1.2** Where many councils have reduced services and closed facilities, Croydon has invested in our place and communities. New and improved leisure and cultural facilities have been provided, with the refurbished Fairfield Halls the 'crown jewel' in a new cultural centre at Croydon. Investment has been made in key services, including digital, adult and children's social care, and community safety.
- 1.3** Delivery of these priorities comes at a time of significant challenges facing local government. Austerity and funding reductions are a key element of this, but not the only challenge. Increased demand and higher expectations of public services, changes in government, Brexit uncertainty all bring challenges for the Council.

- 1.4** Continuing as normal, however, is not an option. We are also investing in new ways of delivering services – changing the way that our services respond to needs, recognising local differences and preventing issues escalating. The preventative approach is being delivered with our partners and through greater collaboration within the community.
- 1.5** This approach was pioneered in the Gateway service, with new approaches developed to support residents in need. It is now being embedded across all services. In particular, our children’s service improvements have included a strong focus on prevention, collaboration and locality working.
- 1.6** This requires new ways of thinking and working across our organisation. We have therefore undertaken significant engagement with staff to inform a new workforce strategy. This strategy will set out how we recruit, retain and support our workforce and ensure we have the skills and capabilities we need to deliver services in new ways.
- 1.7** This report therefore provides a summary from the Chief Executive/ Head of Paid Service on the recent work in these critical areas, with updates on:
- Financial context
 - Brexit context
 - Prevention, collaboration and locality working
 - Children’s service improvements
 - Workforce Strategy

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.** I am proud to be the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for Croydon Council. We have the pleasure of serving one of the most diverse communities in the country. This diversity is what makes Croydon an exciting place to live and work.
- 2.2.** Croydon is key to London’s future growth as it is a key gateway between the capital and the south east region. Our population, which is approaching 400,000, makes us the second largest borough in London. We will continue to grow, with the population expected to reach nearly 445,000 by 2031.
- 2.3.** This growth brings opportunities and challenges. We need to grow our place to support our people, delivering affordable housing, infrastructure, employment and leisure options.
- 2.4.** The transformation of our borough is clear for all to see, with development taking place across the borough. Croydon is benefitting from multi-billion pound investment. Ensuring the growth brings benefits to the borough’s residents, communities and businesses is key to ensuring Croydon’s success. Not least as the Council has experienced an unprecedented reduction in central government grant funding.

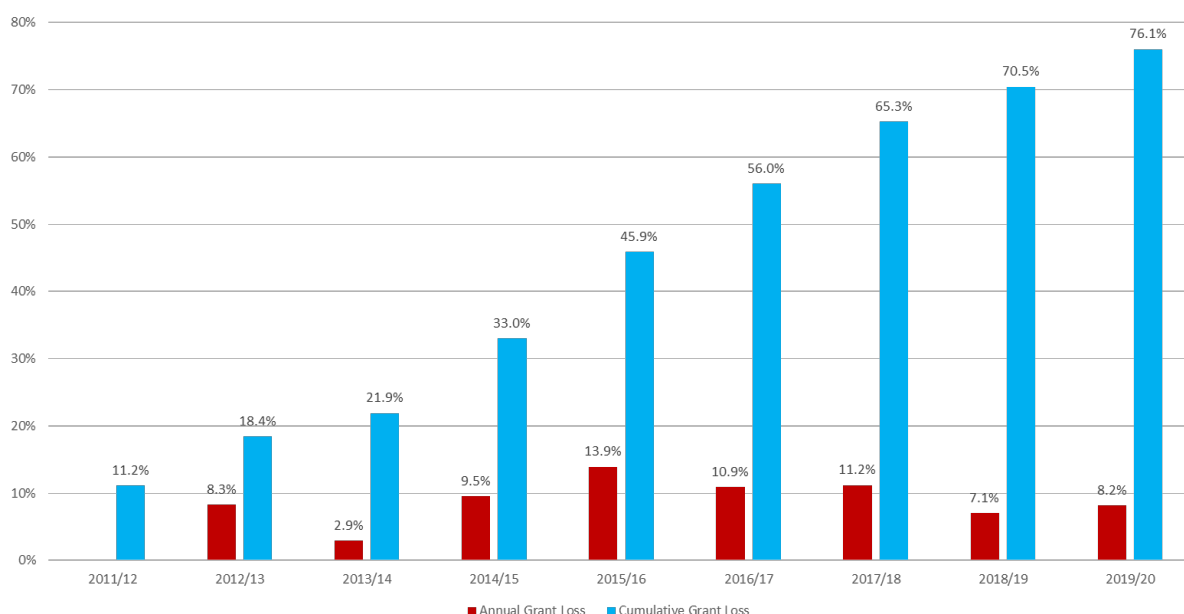
2.5. We also need to deliver good services to a growing population, which is made harder by the financial pressures across local government. Funding and grant reductions on a similar scale continue to be expected from national government in the future, but the Council continues to face rising demand for its services. Our response will require a strong focus on our locality and preventative working, tackling high costs areas and increasing collaboration across services, to reduce costs whilst improving outcomes.

2.6. The next few years will be challenging. Austerity is hitting Croydon hard, and our job is to ensure that this does not impact our more vulnerable residents or the quality of life in our borough.

3. FINANCIAL CONTEXT: BUDGET 2020/21 AND BEYOND

3.1. The Committee will know from previous reports that local government has faced significant reductions in funding over the last decade. Croydon has managed substantial cuts in funding from central government, and further cuts are anticipated over the next three years.

3.2. The chart below shows the scale of reduction in government funding, which as at the end of 2019/20 represents a 76% reduction in government grant, since 2011/12.



3.3. The Council has protected our front line services as a result of strong financial management and diversifying our investment to generate new income streams. Significant savings programmes have also been delivered, but not at the cost of support for our residents or investment in local services and facilities.

3.4. However, the Government’s austerity is creating significant financial pressure in the years ahead.

- 3.5.** Increasing demand for services is also creating financial challenges for Croydon. This was demonstrated in the 2018/19 outturn, where demand exceeded budgets in both Children's and Adults services.
- 3.6.** This is compounded by uncertainty regarding future funding allocations. 2019/20 is the final year of the local government funding settlement. The Spending Review is due to be announced in September, although it is not known what level of detail will be provided at this stage. Financial planning for 2020/21 is therefore taking place based on informed assumptions, but this uncertainty creates significant risk.
- 3.7.** In addition, Croydon faces unique exceptional costs in a number of areas.
- 3.8.** Firstly, the Home Office immigration service, based in Croydon, means that we support a larger number of asylum seekers than other areas, with particular pressure from Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).
- 3.9.** We proudly support these vulnerable people and help them feel at home in Croydon. However, the Government funding to support this service falls significantly short. A recent UASC funding review saw additional funding for almost every local authority. However, no additional funding was provided for Croydon.
- 3.10.** The Council faces a shortfall of £70 per night, per UASC. This has created a deficit of £17m in the last 2 years alone.
- 3.11.** Secondly, the Council is facing exceptional increases in demand for special needs support within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is driving a deficit within this budget that is unsustainable. Croydon Council is not alone in facing deficit pressures within the DSG, and an action plan to resolve the deficit has been developed. We are also working with other councils through the LGA to lobby for increased funding from Government in recognition of the increased demand for services.
- 3.12.** A refresh of the Council's Medium term Financial Strategy has been initiated in order to manage these financial pressures and exceptional costs. Three key objectives have been agreed for setting the 2020/21 budget:
- Stronger budget control during 2019/20 and beyond – saving money now will ease the budget challenge later and this must start by ensuring we remain within agreed budgets.
 - Redesign our organisation and services to ensure financial sustainability going forward, and in doing so, solve the budget gaps in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 with a combination of accelerating our prevention and locality working with partners and income generation.
 - Increase reserve balances to support future ambitions and exceptional costs.
- 3.13.** The review is being led by myself and Lisa Taylor (S151 Officer), with support from the entire Corporate Leadership Team. We are clear that the budget is everyone's responsibility.

- 3.14. A series of 'sprint' sessions have been arranged with the Corporate Leadership Team to take place in September, where key savings and income generating opportunities and ambitions will be worked through to develop deliverable options.
- 3.15. These options will be presented at the Cabinet Away Day on 30th September. High priority areas being explored are children's, older adults, sustainability for all age disability, housing and homelessness, the effectiveness of the corporate centre, how we shift behaviours in the environment, and how we create a resilient community.
- 3.16. The budget gap will be closed through a combination of generating more income from a wide range of sources (including commercial activities, investment and fees) and reduction in spending as a result of service redesign.

4. BREXIT CONTEXT

- 4.1. As set out in the context, and like all local authorities across England, Croydon is facing significant uncertainty in relation to Brexit. Not least due to the unprecedented state of affairs, in addition to the lack of information from central government.
- 4.2. There is now gathering momentum about the likelihood of a General Election in the coming months.
- 4.3. There is a lack of clarity over the nature of our departure on the 31st October 2019, and therefore all options remain a possibility to the UK. To prepare effectively, the Council is therefore working on the assumption of a 'no deal' scenario, recognising that this would present the most change and uncertainty.
- 4.4. The Council is committed to supporting residents, businesses and our workforce to navigating through the uncertainty that exiting the European Union brings.
- 4.5. Following the recent change in leadership in central government and announcements for local government by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, no further clarity is currently available. However councils have been asked to nominate a Brexit lead for all communications moving forward.
- 4.6. In order to prepare effectively therefore, the Council has been working continuously since the Article 50 was triggered in March 2017, and has therefore introduced several measures across key services to ensure the Council, and more importantly our residents, are as prepared as possible.
- 4.7. Preparations to date have included:
 - Production of the December 2018 Cabinet Report on "Brexit Preparations for Croydon" which provided an overview on the implications of Brexit on Croydon, informed the Council's approach to managing Brexit and provided a formal Council response;

- Creation of a comprehensive Brexit Action Plan responding to numerous concerns, across several key service areas;
- Regular communications with central government departments including MHCLG and the Home Office to share feedback and guidance;
- External communications for residents, businesses and organisations including webpages that offer assistance, critical information and signposting to further support;
- Arrangement of regular Brexit Board meetings attended by senior staff from across the Council;
- Regular updates to the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors;
- The appointment of the Executive Director of Resources as the Council's Brexit lead to manage preparations,
- Communications for staff offering guidance on how to prepare for Brexit;
- Inclusion of Brexit as a corporate risk entry on the risk register since 2017;
- Regular communication with key partners about their issues, actions and preparations including the police, Croydon University Hospital, voluntary and community groups via the Local Strategic Partnership, local businesses and residents.

4.8. A further report will be taken to Cabinet in September 2019 which will detail progress against actions taken by the Council and our partners.

4.9. Central Government have so far allocated a total of approximately £40million to local councils across the country support their Brexit plans. Councils received £20m 2018/19, and £20m 2019/20 to be spent on planning for Brexit, and strengthening resources.

4.10. In August 2019 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced they were increasing the allocation for the financial year 2020/21 from a total of £10m to £20m which equates to receipt of £104,000 for Croydon. Croydon's funding allocation will be used to boost our Brexit preparations and provide support across the borough.

5. PREVENTION, COLLABORATION AND LOCALITY WORKING

5.1. At a time of funding reductions, and increasing demand and expectations for public services, the Council remains committed to supporting our residents. However the previous approach with 'one size fits all' services is not sustainable. Local government services are often complicated, fragmented, overly centralised and frequently fail to meet local needs.

5.2. The current arrangement of public services is increasingly unable to meet the pressures and demands. These pressures drive services to focus on acute needs – treating problems, rather than tackling the causes.

5.3. Whilst financial pressures mean some councils are reducing services to the 'core' statutory requirements, we are more ambitious for our residents. Croydon is ideally placed to design a whole system model for the long term - changing the way we deliver services, and focusing on meeting different local needs, which is driven by strong evidence and a focus on prevention. This new model for service delivery is set out in the Corporate Plan.

- 5.4. This approach recognises that with a population as diverse as Croydon's, services need to adjust and respond to the different needs across the borough. The aim is that the Council delivers place-based, integrated services that help residents to find the information and support they need within their local community and which are tailored to local need.
- 5.5. This approach is evolving and adapting as we build and strengthen networks with partners and communities. Through these community based networks we are aligning existing activity taking place in localities. This locality focus also allows the Council to identify any gaps in provision in geographical areas, working with services and community groups to consider how local organisations can best align and adapt approaches to improve outcomes for residents.
- 5.6. Hazel Simmonds, Executive Director for Gateway, Strategy & Engagement is leading staff across the organisation to embed this approach. This includes driving corporate changes to data sharing, performance framework and staff development to support the new localities approach.
- 5.7. The Council identified three initial areas of focus to pilot the localities approach. The selection of the pilot areas was based on a number of factors including geographical spread, inequality and the existing or planned activity taking place in these areas. The three areas that form the initial focus are North Croydon (specifically Bensham Manor, West Thornton and Thornton Heath wards), New Addington and South Croydon.
- 5.8. The locality approach started by looking at the physical assets within an area, the current services/ activity being delivered there and the data and the intelligence held about the residents requirements within the area.
- 5.9. Analysing these datasets allows us to build a rich profile on localities, from which the Council can determine the initial areas of focus and the services that will be required in those areas. The focus of the pilots is therefore different in each area, based on the intelligence.
- 5.10. The Council has employed a Locality Manager for each of the pilot areas. The primary purpose of the role is to bring together the Council, partners and voluntary and community sector organisations to ensure that there is greater collaboration and alignment between these services. They identify opportunities and design new ways of delivering services in the locality. They will also play a key role in monitoring and measuring the impact that this work has on outcomes for local residents.

North Croydon

- 5.11. The first pilot to be considered, and therefore most developed, was North Croydon. Analysis identified the need to strengthen and align those preventative services for children and families that we know require additional support. Early Help services will play a key role in this, but other services also have a crucial part to play in supporting these families, on issues such as health and well-being, employment and skills, housing, and welfare and income maximisation. We are also considering the requirements of the wider

population in that area, and therefore identify opportunities to prevent any issues from becoming problems.

- 5.12.** The Community Connect offer, delivered by the Council's Gateway Services Team in partnership with a number of voluntary and community sector partners, provides wrap-around services from the Parchmore Community Church. This targets residents who are most significantly impacted by welfare reform changes.
- 5.13.** The range of services offered includes:
- A Food Stop, where a targeted group of residents can access fresh food and groceries worth £15-20 at a cost of £3.50 per week.
 - Support with challenges associated with the welfare reforms, which can include around health and well-being, employment and skills and income maximisation.
- 5.14.** Significant work has been undertaken to build and develop the networks in North Croydon. Over 60 frontline staff (Council and partner organisations) working in the area have attended awareness events, providing a chance to hear about the new model, discuss opportunities for greater collaboration and build networks. This is supported by a weekly email with key information.
- 5.15.** An Operational Managers' group has been created in North Croydon which meets monthly to discuss key areas of work, explore opportunities to collaborate around certain issues and promote events that are occurring across the area. The Locality Manager also attends the Thornton Heath Multi-Agency Neighbourhood Meeting, where local priorities, activities and events are discussed. The approach ensures all of the organisations are clear on the offer that is available to residents, and thereby enhances the effectiveness of signposting residents to services.
- 5.16.** A number of drop in sessions and events have been held in North Croydon supporting residents with a number of varying issues. This includes monthly drop in sessions at Thornton Heath Library delivered Croydon Works, Landlord Licensing and Housing and Tenancy.
- 5.17.** A number of one-off events have also been held across North Croydon, including health and well-being and community engagement sessions. This included a housing information and advice event in one of the Council's high rise residential blocks in North Croydon. This ensured that those residents were aware of and accessing the wide range of support available to them, including opportunities through social prescribing so that they are supported to live independently and happily. Future events include support for older people with disabilities, community clean ups and community gardens.
- 5.18.** We are seeking to maximise the use of local community assets, so that more services, information and advice can be accessed closer to home. In Thornton Heath Library, this will include providing access to Council officers at specified times, who can offer support and advice on multiple issues such as welfare, income maximisation, skills and employment, health and wellbeing, housing and benefits. Investment was made in the library to support this, including the

installation of 'pods' to allow one-to-one discussion and the refurbishment of the Community Space.

New Addington

- 5.19.** We have completed the draft strategic approach in New Addington. This has identified the need to focus on prevention for vulnerable families and children, and that residents receive advice and information on services.
- 5.20.** The launch event for the New Addington locality approach will be held on the 24 September 2019 at Goldcrest Youth Centre.
- 5.21.** The Gateway service has already established a strong partnership with the voluntary and community sector in New Addington, which will support a focus on early help, employment and skills, health and wellbeing.
- 5.22.** With a focus on health and wellbeing outcomes for some residents, it will be important to work closely with the Integrated Community Network and community based organisations in that area, to understand the current and planned activity in relation to health and well-being and how the locality work can best support that.
- 5.23.** A housing led drop in event was held in May 2019 at New Addington Library. Twelve residents attended the event and four went on to see more than one service, and the feedback was very positive. A further event was held in late August.
- 5.24.** In partnership with Croydon BME Forum, we have identified a need to develop a mentoring programme for fathers/ men which will include a focus on their wider needs around employment and training. We have also identified a need for a tailor-made parenting programme to support the work being done by partners regarding positive parenting. The programme will be designed with Early Help and will be delivered over three months. Again, the programme will also look at the wider needs of the family.
- 5.25.** We know, from the data, that domestic abuse is under reported in New Addington. As part of raising awareness, the Family Justice Centre will deliver a workshop for staff and volunteers focusing on coercion and control. This will be followed up with a workshop for residents.

South Croydon

- 5.26.** Eight wards make up the 'South' for the purposes of locality working, from Selsdon down to Old Coulsdon. Data has been analysed to a granular Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) level for those wards, to understand where different types and levels of deprivation exist within a part of the borough that is assumed to be more affluent.
- 5.27.** The evidence has highlighted pockets of economic and social deprivation where residents have high needs across multiple areas; but also that there are localities in which specific, more singular needs are high, and these needs leave residents at greater risk of isolation and exclusion.

- 5.28. The proposed starting point is Old Coulsdon LSOA. The planned model of delivery is to extend some activities and events to other locations in the South based on the individual area characteristics the evidence has shown us.
- 5.29. We are already working with key council services to identify activity which can be extended to Old Coulsdon LSOA/ South and are identifying suitable venues for this activity. For example, we are working with Croydon Works who would like to run a regular drop in session at the Tollers Lane Community Centre in Old Coulsdon.
- 5.30. We are building relationships with key voluntary and community sector partners who are already active, or seeking to extend activity into, the South.
- 5.31. Following engagement with local councillors, the model will be formally launched in autumn, by which time it is intended that a number of the above activities will have commenced.

6. CHILDREN'S SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

- 6.1. A key priority for the entire organisation has been improving the services we provide to our Children and Young People. Significant investment has been made into the service, and an improvement plan is being delivered with a strong clear focus on our Corporate Plan outcome: "Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential".
- 6.2. We successfully recruited a permanent Executive Director, Children, Families and Education, (Rob Henderson), and Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care (Nick Pendry). Both have now been in post for just over 6 months.
- 6.3. They are providing excellent leadership to the service as we deliver our improvement plan ahead of an anticipated Ofsted re-inspection in late 2019/ early 2020. This is demonstrated by the feedback from the most recent Ofsted monitoring visit in July:

In a relatively short period of time, the new Executive Director and the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care have improved morale, raised the visibility and impact of leaders and managers, started to embed a practice model and created the conditions that are enabling steadily improving practice and outcomes for children.

- 6.4. There have been significant achievements within Children's Services and Ofsted has confirmed we are making sustained progress under strong leadership, with pace accelerated and consistently better practices for children.
- 6.5. Our investment and improvement plan has delivered significant results for our children and young people. Over the past six months performance in key areas has been steadily improving. In May 2019:

- 98% of children looked after had an up-to-date care plan
- Children looked after visits within timescales were above target at 96%
- There was a 22% increase in the number of young people aged 16-18 with an up-to-date Pathway Plan
- 78% of children in our care had an up to date PEPs, (15% in January 2019)
- Visits within 4 weeks to children on a Child Protection plan were only 1% below target of 95%
- 98% of ICPCs took place within 15 days of the Strategy Discussion – the highest level since April 2017
- The number of re-referrals in the month fell below 400 for the first time since September 2018

6.6. Some indicators have been a challenge to shift including children in need work, case supervision and missing children. Plans have been agreed for each of these areas and some progress has been demonstrated to date.

Early Intervention and prevention

- 6.7.** We have invested an additional £6.6m transformation funding for our Destination 2021 plan which outlines how we will transform services over the next two years, reducing the numbers of children on child protection plans, in care proceeding and becoming looked after, through investing in early intervention, lower caseloads and high quality practice. Heads of Service are creating their own service improvement and development plans which include actions to transform their services in line with our overall proposals and principles. A further £1.3m has been invested in early help this year.
- 6.8.** As a result, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of contacts that move from SPOC to early help (from 5% in January to 23% (144) by June 2019).
- 6.9.** We are integrating the youth engagement team in the early help service and developing specialist provision in relation to domestic violence and adult substance misuse and mental health.
- 6.10.** Croydon has a higher proportion of children in the care system compared to similar councils elsewhere. In part this is evidence of the high needs and demands that our service is facing. However, we also recognise that we may not have the right balance and need to work with families more to provide support. This approach has seen care proceedings reduced from 123 in February 2019 to 81 in June 2019.
- 6.11.** We have rationalised and promoted our parenting courses across the borough, working with the localities managers to target this support most effectively and work with community networks to offer wider support.
- 6.12.** We have also established entry into care and high cost placement panels to ensure we are doing all we can to keep children and young people living safely within their family and community.

Delivering through Localities

- 6.13.** Dedicated workshops were held with around 180 staff to engage and consult on our locality plans. This has helped develop the locality model for all children, families and education services that is being implemented between June and December 2019.
- 6.14.** Six locality areas have been identified in line with the Council's new ways of working. Services will be delivered at a locality level, across multiple localities, or at a borough level – whatever approach is most appropriate. This adaptability is critical to delivering the best outcomes for our children and families.
- 6.15.** There are a number of locality based improvement actions being undertaken:
- Locality based meetings with head teachers are scheduled to start from September 2019.
 - We have secured a new drop down community space in the heart of New Addington, a high priority area.
 - We are piloting a think family programme in 2 localities from September involving children, adult and housing services, targeting the top 100 most complex families.
 - We are launching partnership and community networking events in all six localities from November 2019.
- 6.16.** We are developing Community Led Support, building on the strengths within families and communities to deliver better outcomes. The focus is on ensuring people receive support quickly, before crises occur. The support they receive is different, based on good strengths based conversations rather than assessment and eligibility processes.
- 6.17.** The approach is individual as well, identifying what matters most to the individual and family, and focusing on that. The approach supports people to build on their own skills, assets and abilities, those of their friends and family, connecting people with people and with local communities. It is a place based approach that recognises every community is different and there is not a “one size fits all” response.
- 6.18.** Our Integration of Health and Social Care journey in Croydon continues. We are building on the successes of our One Croydon Alliance established in April 2017, which has delivered improved outcomes for our over 65s and has now committed to extending the scope of the partnership and integration for people of all ages.
- 6.19.** The One Croydon partnership between Croydon Council, the local NHS and Age UK Croydon, is launching a plan now to transform the health and wellbeing of local people. The Croydon Health and Care Plan outlines a new vision for how health and social care will be delivered to support Croydon residents to stay well for longer and, for those with the greatest need, to make services more easily accessible in the heart of their communities. In particular the plan emphasises three clear priorities:

- **Focus on prevention and proactive care:** supporting people to stay well and manage their own health and maintain their wellbeing by making sure they can get help early
- **Unlock the power of communities:** connecting people to their neighbours and communities, who can provide unique support to stay fit and healthy for longer
- **Develop services in the heart of the community:** giving people easy access to joined up services that are tailored to the needs of their local community.

6.20. The One Croydon Localities Development programme will develop and provide Integrated Community Networks Plus to bring together a complete social care, clinical and health professional community, integrating GPs, mental health and community nurses, social care, pharmacy and the voluntary sector to proactively manage and support people with health and care needs at a local level.

Building Trusting Relationships

6.21. An outstanding and sustainable Children's service cannot be achieved alone. If we want to build effective teams around the child and family, we need to work with key partners, the community and families themselves. Our improvement journey recognised that we needed to do more to build trusting relationships, based on strong support and challenge.

6.22. Building relationships requires time and capacity. We have therefore focused on reducing average caseload levels, and ensuring that these are maintained.

6.23. Further investment has been made to improve the level of high quality interventions, with 2 dedicated teams now working with children in need. Investment has also been made in 13 assistant team managers to improve team resilience, add management capacity to develop high quality relationships with practitioners, and ensure supervision is more reflective.

6.24. A Single Point of Contact system has been introduced and is starting to send children and families on the right trajectory. This reduces the need for multiple handovers, which in turn improves the quality of service and relationship with the family – the key focus being to have the right professional, and get it right first time.

6.25. Our adolescent services are now undertaking the whole journey for young people at high risk including when they become children looked after, minimising disruption and maximising their opportunities to build strong, trusted relationships.

A Skilled Workforce

6.26. If we are to build strong, trusting relationships with families and partners, we need a skilled and motivated workforce. We are reducing our use of agency staff, particularly in management positions (with 8 out of 9 Heads of Service now permanent). There is a clear focus on permanent recruitment and developing staff internally.

- 6.27. Recruitment within Children’s Service remains challenging. This is a national problem, but is compounded here in Croydon by our Ofsted rating. However, we are seeing progress, recognising the investment and improvements we are making. We have also invested in a Systemic Practice Service Lead and 7 clinical therapists, plus 2 trainees to build our own recruitment pipeline.
- 6.28. We have relaunched our Social Care Academy and have 2 Frontline pods starting in September, a full ASYE programme with additional assessors to ensure we support and develop these staff in Croydon, and a Step Up to Social Work programme.
- 6.29. Our Learning and Development offer has been refreshed for 2019/20 and continues to be a high quality one, enthusiastically appreciated by staff. We have provided additional training budgets to enable all staff to undertake systemic practice training over 1 year to an accredited level, starting with leaders and managers.
- 6.30. A stronger performance management approach has been implemented across our children’s services. There have been senior management changes within the service and support is being provided to all managers to ensure any performance issues are dealt with fairly and effectively.
- 6.31. Ofsted have confirmed that staff report feeling valued and well-supported and caseloads have reduced to a manageable level. Staff have confidence in the senior leaders and speak very highly of them, describing them as visible, available and acting on feedback.

7. WORKFORCE AND ENGAGEMENT

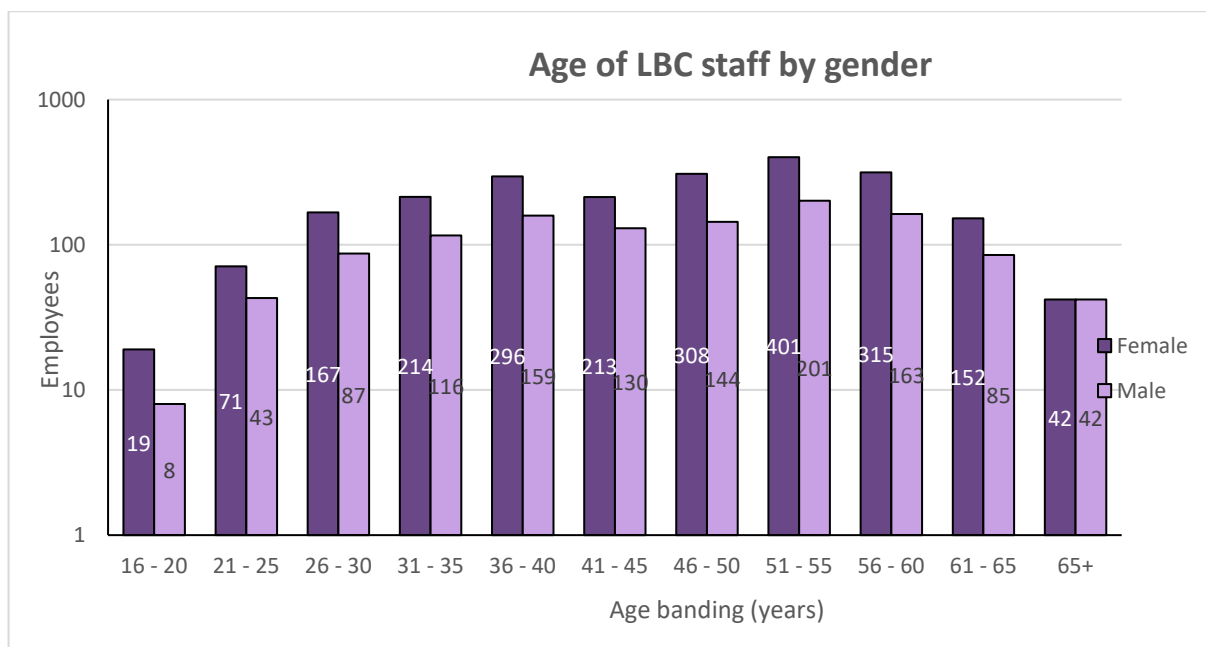
Workforce profile

- 7.1. The summary of the declared workforce profile for the last four years in comparison with the 2011 resident census data is attached at Appendix A. This shows a clear representation of our community within our workforce. However we are clear that Croydon’s population will have changed since the last census and therefore know that we have more to do to increase representation of Croydon’s community within the Council.
- 7.2. Appendix B provides further analysis of our workforce data as at 31st July 2019. This provides breakdown of workforce profile by the organisation’s top tiers of management. Analysis indicates disproportionate representation at management levels.
- 7.3. In contrast, the Council’s Executive Leadership Team has been highlighted in an independent review, as being one of the most diverse in the country. Statistics through declared data of the representation of this team is shown below.

Workforce analysis

Gender - female	66.6%
Ethnicity - BAME	40%
Sexual orientation - gay or lesbian	50%

7.4. Sixty-five percent of our workforce is female, which is a typical profile for local government. The age profile is reasonably reflective across age ranges with a skew to an older workforce with 41% of our workforce being over 50. This is consistent with London and places us close to the average for London authorities.



7.5. 43% of our workforce has positively disclosed as BAME which is a small increase of 0.5% since 2018. It should be noted that non-disclosure rates, whilst improving, are still at 30% so more work is needed to improve this data.

7.6. 9% of our workforce has positively disclosed as disabled which is slight increase from last year, so remains relatively consistent. Non-disclosure rates whilst having improved are still high at 33%, which do impact on the figures.

7.7. 5% of the workforce have declared a sexual orientation which is a small increase from last year. Non-disclosure rates remain high at 33%, and as sexual orientation has not been part of the census data collection, it cannot be tracked against the Croydon population.

7.8. The importance of self-disclosure of protected characteristics continues to be highlighted as an area for improvement to ensure our data analysis is as accurate as possible. Two internal communication campaigns have been run, both of which were endorsed by the trade unions and the staff network forums but it is recognised that a regular drive is required.

Headcount and turnover

7.9. Total headcount as at 31st July 2019 is 3,387 which is an increase of 8% from 2018.

7.10. Turnover has increased by 1% to 4% on the last 4 four quarters but this is still relatively low for local government. Further detail can be seen in the table below.

Period	Category			
	Staff	Starters	Leavers	Turnover
31-Oct	3265	121	97	3.0%
31-Jan	3171	132	94	3.0%
30-Apr	3296	169	159	4.8%
31-Jul	3382	188	135	4.0%
Average	3278.5	152.5	121.25	3.7%

Pay gap analysis

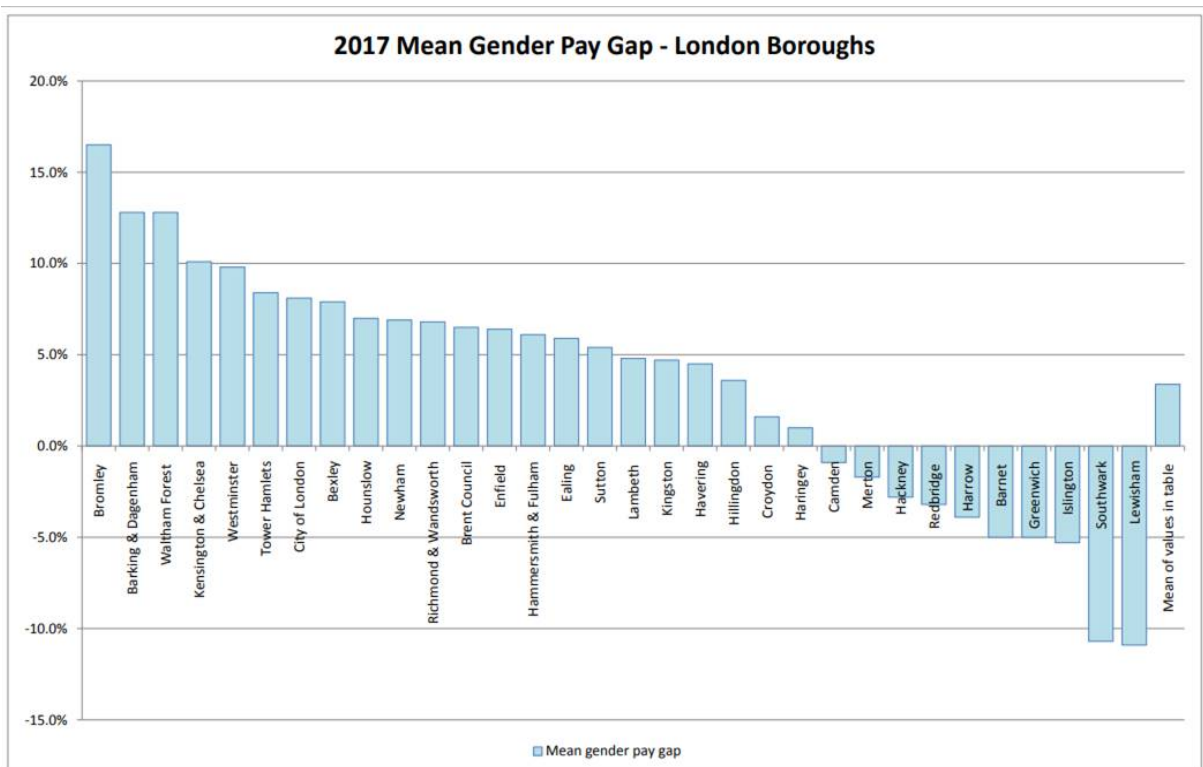
- 7.11.** Since 2017 the Council has been required to report on our gender pay gap and in addition the Council has calculated the ethnicity and disability pay gap.
- 7.12.** Equal pay calculations compare the average pay of staff undertaking equal work or doing the same job or on the same grade.
- Male and female employees
 - BAME and white employees
 - Disabled and non-disabled employees
- 7.13.** Croydon is ahead of the majority of organisations, who only complete the statutory pay analysis. As a result, it is not possible to compare the ethnicity or disability pay analysis, either regionally or nationally.
- 7.14.** As well as our pay strategy, pay gaps are impacted by the grade profile of different groups including ethnicity and disability. This can be positively influenced by equal treatment in:
- Recruitment
 - Progression through grades
 - Performance management
 - Learning and development
 - Maternity return rates
 - Equal use of flexible working and parental leave
 - Inclusive leadership and culture
- 7.15.** We are committed to profiling our workforce on an annual basis to assess the representation of all protected characteristics and acting on this information to assess progression in the areas highlighted above.
- 7.16.** We are only able to report on declared rates which mean that gender is accurate as we have a 100% disclosure. However the non-disclosure rates for ethnicity and disability will impact our analysis.
- 7.17.** The results show pay that our gender pay gap remains good and amongst one of the lowest in local government. For BAME, noting that we do not have full disclosure, data suggests that there is a higher proportion of BAME employees in lower pay quartiles. For disabled employees the data shows that on average non-disabled employees are occupying a slightly higher proportion of the upper pay though the representation of disabled employees in the top pay quartiles has decreased from 2017-18 which has contributed to the rise in pay gaps.

Comparisons across groups for Croydon Council pay gap data 2018

Hourly pay gap (data as at : 31 March 2018)	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability
Mean ordinary hourly pay gap	1.6%	9.7%	2.7%

Gender pay gap – London Comparison

Average pay gap 2018	Croydon	London	Inner London	Outer London
Mean ordinary hourly pay gap	1.6%	3.4%	1.4%	4.7%



Negative GPG values indicate women's average hourly pay-rate was greater than men's.

How we are improving our diversity

- 7.18.** Croydon Council is committed to improving our diversity. To support this aim we have continued to provide a leadership offer targeted towards aspiring BAME managers called 'Realising Your Potential'. This programme was launched in 2016.
- 7.19.** The aim of the programme was to increase the number of BAME managers in the council with the objective of being more representative of our workforce and community. There was greater demand than initial supply and further programmes have been provided from 2016 onwards.
- 7.20.** To date five cohorts have been delivered for 78 BAME participants. Of these, 75 BAME aspiring managers have completed this programme. This is a 96.15% completion rate. Of the 75 participants, 25 have secured a promotion, secondment or interim role. This is a 33.67% success rate. Some people have had multiple secondments. One person gained a secondment and then

a secured a permanent role. Two participants have gained some supervisory duties in their current role.

- 7.21.** As of March 2019 14% of employees at Head of Service level and above are declared BAME. During 2018-19 BAME women were appointed to two Directorial roles.
- 7.22.** As of March 2019, 12% of employees at Head of Service level and above are declared disabled. Croydon Council achieved Disability Confident (Employer) status in 2017. In 2017 and 2018, candidates with learning disabilities were supported with work experience and traineeships opportunities within the council. This will continue in 2019.
- 7.23.** We have supported employees to develop staff diversity network groups that support all protected characteristics including gender, disability and ethnicity.
- 7.24.** We offer two several equality learning modules specifically aimed towards line managers and general staff. All staff have undertaken this learning. Additionally, unconscious bias training has also been undertaken by all our employees and is continuing to be undertaken by new employees within their induction period.
- 7.25.** We have clarified in job advertisements that flexible and agile working options can be discussed at interview and agreed from the start of employment for all new employees.
- 7.26.** We now have a number of family friendly policies and other initiatives to support employees including:
- The ability to buy additional leave
 - The ability to take unpaid and sabbatical leave (up to 12 months subject to eligibility).
 - Shared parental leave options
 - Paid additional leave options for employees when dealing with premature birth; parental bereavement leave (for bereaved parents of children under 18); and options for caring responsibilities.
 - Guidance on supporting women in the workplace during the menopause
 - The commitment of our council to enabling flexible and agile working for all staff wherever possible from the start of employment (subject to business needs)
- 7.27.** Our [commitment to equality outlines our aim to create](#) a workplace where all employees can be themselves.
- 7.28.** Over the coming years we aim to:
- Actively encourage higher levels of disclosure from employees. We have already seen increases in disability, religion and sexual orientation disclosure rates from June 2018 – February 2019. However we are continuing to focus on increasing all rates of disclosure including ethnicity.
 - Ensure all our HR policies are inclusive
 - Continue to improve our performance management system

- Monitor progression up the grade structure by employees' protected characteristic
- Encourage men as well as women to use our range of flexible working options,

Agency staff

- 7.29. As at 30th June 2019 the percentage of reported agency cover against established funded posts in the council was 13.8%. There will be some additional agency spend on supernumerary/ project and or grant funded posts. The table below shows the agency cover by department.

Department	Percentage of Agency covering funded roles
Children's Families & Education	21.05%
Gateway, Strategy & Engagement	11.86%
Health, Wellbeing & Adults	12.05%
Place	18.67%
Resources	5.83%

- 7.30. At present it is not possible to report on unfilled vacancies, so the vacancy rate will be higher. In April 2019 a new integrated Finance and Human Resources management system was implemented. The next stage of development is to design integrated workforce and financial reporting and this will show budgeted staffing and vacancies which will be a significant enhancement.

Sickness absence

- 7.31. As at 30th June 2019 the reported sickness absence rates were as detailed below:-

Department	Permanent Staff (FTE)	Number of sick days: 1 April – 30 June 19	Sick days per FTE: 1 April – 30 June 19 (one quarter)
Children's Families & Education	566	968	1.74
Gateway Strategy & Engagement	486	398	0.85
Health, Wellbeing & Adults	458	200	0.44
Place	852	699	0.84
Resources	877	633	0.72
Average across Council			0.60

- 7.32. More detailed reporting is under development with the introduction of the new Human Resources Management system.

7.33. According to the 2018 CIPD survey, the average public sector employees had 8.4 days of absence over the last year. The Local government workforce survey 2017-18 (published June 2019) suggested that an average of 8.8 sickness days per FTE employee. By comparison for Croydon our outturn for the year ending 31st March 2019 showed our average absence days as 7.35.

Grievances and disciplinary

7.34 The number of cases logged between April and June is 17, broken down between 10 grievances and 7 disciplinaries. This rate is comparable with last year which showed 44 complaints and 25 disciplinaries in 2018/19 as a full year summary.

7.35 The current reporting system does not support case time tracking but we plan to work with digital services to enhance case recording to include this facility. The intention is to put in place a KPI measure of 12 weeks to complete a formal case, as recommended by the independent review that has formed a baseline for the development of the workforce strategy as referenced later.

Leadership Development

7.36 Since 2015, Croydon Council has introduced 4 different leadership development programmes, 1 generic, 2 levels of BAME and 1 Women's, designed to support the changing needs' of leadership and the cultural priorities of the organisation.

7.37 These are:-

- Leading The Croydon Way for people managers up to Heads of service
- Leadership effectiveness and Career development for BAME Staff
- Women's Leadership Development Programme
- Realising your potential and career development for aspiring BAME Managers

7.38 During 2018/19, an additional 110 participants graduated, taking a rolling total since 2015 to 334 graduates, representing 10.7% of Croydon Council's workforce, according to the Workforce Profile 2017-18 report.

7.39 In total for 2018-19 the leadership programmes we ran comprised of:

- 2 cohorts- Leading the Croydon way (25)
- 2 cohorts- Realising your potential and career development for aspiring BAME managers (26)
- 4 cohorts-Women's Leadership Development Programme (59)

7.40 Of the 2018-19 graduates:

- 54 are of BAME ethnicity (48% of total graduates). This is a positive BAME representation of +6% when compared to Croydon Council's workforce profile. Of the 54 graduates of BAME ethnicity, 26 attended BAME-only programmes.
- 8 have a recorded disability (7% of total graduates); this is a slight under-

representation of -0.4% when compared to Croydon Council's workforce profile.

- 96 are female (87% of total graduates). This is a positive female representation of +10% when compared to Croydon Council's workforce profile. Of the 96 female graduates, 59 attended women-only programmes.
- 14 are male (13% of total graduates). This is – 20% representation when compared to Croydon Council's workforce profile.
- During 2018, an organisation-wide consultation took place to align Croydon's Leadership Behaviour Framework to reflect current and future capabilities. A new Inspiring leadership programme for managers has subsequently been designed and will be launched in late September 2019.

Workforce Strategy

- 7.41** This section of the report provides an overview of the work undertaken to develop a comprehensive Workforce Strategy (2019-2024).
- 7.42** Croydon is ambitious for its public services and its communities and so will need to be able to draw on the talents of the workforce to deliver this. In order to deliver the commitments set out, we must ensure that we have an aligned workforce strategy that is developed to recruit, retain and invest in a skilled and well-trained workforce.
- 7.43** In the last three years, the council has created the conditions to support and retain its workforce talent, demonstrating an inclusive culture. However, there is more that can be done. Analysis (as set out below) highlight that we need to do more to demonstrate inclusivity and improve staff engagement. Building a more engaged workforce means our staff will be more receptive to change and drive higher performance which in turn drives better outcomes for local residents.
- 7.44** Digital technologies are driving up both quality and customer expectations, and therefore our digital strategy and workforce strategy must be closely aligned, to build capacity and deliver digital systems, whilst ensuring the right people are in place to deliver different customer services. Interactions and ways of working with both partners, and residents are therefore being transformed. There is therefore a need to develop the skills of our workforce to meet the needs and raised expectations of our residents, in addition to the changing requirements of the council.
- 7.45** The workforce itself is also changing. There are different expectations and aspirations regarding work, career and life, while retirement has changed and evolved for many.
- 7.46** This is why a workforce strategy to 2023 is being developed to set out the council's commitment to its workforce. The strategy will support the commitments in the corporate plan and will provide a clear promise to our current and future workforce to make the experience of working for us a collaborative, inclusive, productive and happy one.

7.47 The strategy is being created around a framework for our commitment to:-

- How we support our staff and their health and wellbeing
- How we pay & reward staff and offer career pathways
- How we engage and involve our staff and act upon their feedback
- How we develop the skills and capabilities of our staff
- How we reflect our values and organisational culture through our workforce

Intelligence led

7.48 Underpinning these themes is our commitment to an inclusive and representative workforce and our ambition to embrace new ways of working and the digital environment.

7.49 To ensure the strategy is developed from an informed basis, a baseline review was commissioned. The review was conducted in two phases of quantitative analysis and overview of our workforce data, followed by qualitative exploration to test and provide insight into workforce experience.

7.50 This work involved an independent advisor who is highly regarded in both central and local government, who looked at our data, headline themes from last year's staff survey and then met with a cross-section of staff.

7.51 Over the last six months, the Council has seen a positive change in the profile of its leadership, this is a visible demonstration of our changing culture, as more inclusive. However, more needs to be done to achieve positive representation across all levels in the organisation and ensure our workforce reflects our diverse population.

7.52 Key areas of impact highlighted by this review will be to:

- Improve the recruitment process to positively support further change in levels of black and ethnic representation at senior and middle manager levels.
- Focus on building managers accountability to increase levels of staff engagement and inclusivity, whilst developing their skills and confidence in implementing the council's core values.

Engagement

7.53 The baseline work gave a valuable insight to the core principle of inclusion and the recommendations from the review will be reflected in the council's strategy and action plan. It was important to build upon this insight and to create an open dialogue with our staff to find out what they wanted Croydon Council to be.

7.54 A five week period of staff engagement activity was organised to capture staff views. In order to ensure a broad reach, face to face engagement sessions were offered. Sessions were held in multiple venues across the borough to ensure that the whole workforce, whether based at Bernard Weatherill House or other satellite office, were offered an opportunity to engage in the

development of the strategy. In addition, an anonymised online survey was offered to encourage wider participation.

7.55 Upon analysis, several key themes emerged from our conversations with the workforce primarily focussed around the following topics:

- Flexible, agile working
- Pay, performance and benefits
- Recruitment, development and involvement
- Collaboration and partnership working
- Leadership and management
- Working environment
- Health and wellbeing

7.56 In total, over 800 staff participated in the activities. Over 5,000 comments were captured and the analysis that has followed is being used to help shape the strategy and will directly feed the resulting actions plans that will deliver it.

7.57 Our recognised trade unions have been involved in the engagement activity through invitation and attendance at both the baseline workshops, including a specific session for the trade unions and in the wider staff engagement workshops.

7.58 They are kept updated on the progress and outcomes through the formal consultation framework meetings, which include the Corporate Staff Partnership Panel (CSPP), which is where elected members, trade union representatives and officers meet; and at the regular Corporate Staff Consultation Forum (CSP) which is a meeting between officers and union representatives. Both forums are an opportunity for debate and discussion.

Next steps: developing and implementing the strategy

7.59 The workforce strategy is being developed through strong staff engagement to create a clear mutuality of expectation between us an employer and the workforce. Following on from the initial period of engagement we will be testing the final strategy with key workforce groups over the next couple of months but will continue to progress key activities that develop the conditions and environment to support our vision to become a high performing organisation.

7.60 In the immediate term (2019-20) we will focus on the following activities in that endeavour.

7.61 We are setting expectations by:

- Ensuring Diversity and inclusion objectives form part of the new performance management processes
- Establishing a behavioural framework linked to our values
- Identifying and equipping our managers with core skills for effective people management

7.62 These expectations will be brought to life through policies and processes and we will :-

- Revise our performance framework and appraisal processes to reflect the diverse needs of organisation, and supports assessment and development through both objectives and behaviour
- Revise our induction/on boarding process that ensures that the first 100 days of engaging with the council, from application to acceptance, reflects our brand and commitment to an inclusive workplace
- Introduce a set of recruitment standards and practice to attract, select and enhance our aim to have a representative workforce across our organisation
- Conduct a holistic HR policy review for currency and effectiveness in light of our equalities, fairness and transparency agenda. Our organisational design principles and change management processes will be transparent, fair and we will continue to invest in our current and future leaders through:-
 - The continuation of our aspiring and Inspiring leadership programmes
 - Supporting positive action leadership programmes (e.g. BAME, Women's)
 - Ensuring consistency of behavioural expectations and feedback through our 360 assessment/development tool

8 EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (EFLG)

8.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of our delivery for residents. Our ambition is to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all, in addition to ensuring that our workforce is representative of the communities we serve.

8.2 The Equality Framework for Local Government is a process, accredited by the Local Government Association (LGA), through which local authorities are able to better understand the importance of equality, and evidence that its policies, processes and leadership are developing better equality and inclusion outcomes.

8.3 In addition, the process is used as an assessment tool that helps local authorities to identify what it does well and where it can make improvements to and deliver better equality outcomes for staff, residents and service users.

8.4 The Council will be undertaking the Equality Framework for Local Government assessment in November 2019 to enable us to learn more about our about our organisation in relation to equality policies and process, our partners and our local communities. By drawing together equalities best practice from across the organisation and seeking and listening to our staff and partners, we will be able to make a difference, learn from one another and understand how we can improve practices and relationships.

8.5 Our draft documentation for the EFLG assessment has been assessed by an external independent expert. This has confirmed that the Council is well place to secure 'Achieving' status through the assessment.

- 8.6** The journey through the process is a critical learning tool for the Council which, once completed, will allow the Council to achieve an independent view of equality and diversity practice within the organisation. Gaining an LGA equality accreditation will help the Council demonstrate to staff, partners, service users and the wider community that equality, inclusion and diversity is at the heart of everything we do, the services we deliver and quality standards are in place on matters of equality and inclusion.
- 8.7** The framework also encourages a focus on local issues and prompts learning from, and the spreading of, good practice in regards to matters of equality and inclusion.
- 8.8** It will support the Council's Corporate Equalities Work Programme that aims to embed equality good practice in the services that we provide to customers, in our workforce practices and in our partnership/ procurement arrangements.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Workforce Profile 2019
- Appendix B: Equality Summary 2019

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GENDER	Residents* (2011)	Workforce (2015/16)	Workforce (2016/17)	Workforce (Jul '18)	Workforce (Jul '19)
Female	51.50%	66.57%	65.61%	66.19%	65.11%
Male	48.50%	33.43%	34.39%	33.81%	34.89%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100%

DECLARED ETHNICITY	Residents* (2011)	Workforce (2015/16)	Workforce (2016/17)	Workforce (Jul '18)	Workforce (Jul '19)
BAME	44.92%	39.47%	41.08%	42.63%	43.32%
White	55.09%	60.12%	58.28%	56.56%	55.50%
Prefer not to say	0.00%	0.41%	0.64%	0.81%	1.18%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

DECLARED DISABILITY	Residents* (2011)	Workforce (2015/16)	Workforce (2016/17)	Workforce (Jul '18)	Workforce (Jul '19)
Declared Disability	8.00%	8.78%	8.41%	8.17%	9.0%
No Disability	92.00%	89.67%	90.12%	90.35%	89.19%
Prefer Not To say		1.55%	1.47%	1.48%	1.81%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100%

*Residents of working age as at Census 2011

Equality Summary by tier July 2019

Gender Declared Status Headcount	ELT	Directors	Heads of Service	All Others	Total Workforce
Female	4	9	43	2150	2206
Male	2	6	35	1138	1181
Not Declared	0	0	0	0	0

Disability Declared Status	ELT	Directors	Heads of Service	All Others	Total Workforce
Yes	0	2	16	188	206
No	4	9	57	1960	2030
Prefer not to say	0	0	1	40	41
Not Declared	2	4	4	1100	1110

Ethnicity Declared Status Headcount	ELT	Directors	Heads of Service	All Others	Total Workforce
BAME	2	1	14	1008	1025
White	3	12	50	1253	1318
Prefer not to say	0	0	1	27	28
Not Declared	1	2	13	1000	1016

Sexual Orientation	ELT	Directors	Heads of Service	All Others	Total Workforce
Bi-sexual	0	0	1	14	15
Gay man	1	0	0	29	30
Heterosexual/Straight	2	11	49	1724	1786
Lesbian/Gay woman	1	0	1	16	18
Other	0	0	1	48	49
Prefer not to say	0	0	10	342	352
Not Declared	2	4	16	1115	1137

Religion Declared Status Headcount	ELT	Directors	Heads of Service	All Others	Total Workforce
Buddhist	0	0	0	18	18
Christian	0	6	33	1106	1145
Hindu	0	0	1	51	52
Jewish	0	0	0	5	5
Muslim	1	0	1	75	77
No religion	2	5	19	525	551
Other	0	0	0	89	89
Sikh	0	0	0	8	8

Prefer not to say	1	0	7	261	269
Not Declared	2	4	17	1150	1173