Digitalisation of the Council's Human Resources Function

Committee name	Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee

Officer reporting	Suzie Horn, Head of HR, Central Services

Papers with report	None

Ward	All

HEADLINES

This report provides an overview of the Council's Human Resources (HR) Function and the work that is being undertaken to modernise and digitalise the HR Function, whilst upskilling and influencing behaviours of managers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee notes the contents of the report and provides any comments to officers as appropriate.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

New HR Operating Model

In 2022 the operating model of the HR team was restructured. Whilst there was little change with the L&D team and the HR Operations and Payroll team, there was significant change with the HR Advisory Team and Recruitment Team.

The skillset of Employee Relations (ER) and Recruitment are very different and in most businesses are acknowledged as such and therefore they are usually separate teams. Previously in the Council this was not the case. The restructure changed this, creating a recruitment team which had expertise in attraction and retention and a HR Business Partnering Team which had generalised HR expertise along with ER capabilities.

These changes ensure that managers have centres of expertise that they can go to for their varying employee needs.

Systems

There are opportunities to improve and develop the existing HR systems to support managers in their day-to-day work, through self-service activities and data analytics, as well as to deliver more efficient ways of working.

The L&D (Learning and Development) system will be going through an upgrade, part of which is

to create an integration between Learning Pool (our Learning Management System) and Resource Link (our HR and Payroll System). Once implemented, user data will be maintained and updated automatically, while also generating new user accounts. Single Sign on will also be implemented, allowing Council employees to login with one click, removing the need to remember multiple passwords. ICT are currently working with Learning Pool to enable this update.

The refreshed system will also allow us greater ability to create programme learning paths specific to job families, enabling enhanced monitoring and reporting of compliance and programme completion. This enhanced function will enable Managers to monitor their team training activity and promote learning programmes to support their staff members' development.

Currently, L&D are reviewing all courses available to staff and managers to refresh and expand the offer of generic or specialist courses available to employees, to include programmes on offer and funded through the Apprenticeship Levy. Managers are being asked to provide identified training needs to L&D, as discussed during appraisal meetings, to support the creation of a Corporate Training Calendar.

The Applicant Tracking System (ATS) is currently Talent Link. This system does not interface with Resource Link. Again, this creates inefficiencies in processing new starters and does not provide a seamless process for candidates. The Council is reviewing options to address these issues.

Through Resource Link all modules which are available as part of the system enable the HR Operations and Payroll Team to be streamlined and remove inefficiencies. The aim is to enhance manager and employee self-service which removes the need for forms or emails to be sent to the HR Operations team and processed from there. This means the manager or employee will be able to update information or process a request instantaneously resulting in systems not being out of date. This does require a change in culture from employees and managers alike. For example, in March and April 2023 there were over 40 queries raised from employees regarding annual leave. All these queries needed to be responded to; however, over 90% of the queries could have been resolved through self-service.

These enhancements will also offer other, smaller benefits such as being able to send anniversary emails to employees on their work anniversaries, welcoming employees back from maternity leave, asking employees for feedback when they are leaving our employment and reminding managers of probation dates. Through maximising the capabilities of the system, it will drive efficiencies through the team allowing them to undertake value add activities around talent and development as well as providing officers with valuable HR data.

Recruitment

A fundamental part of LBH's People Strategy is recruitment. Whilst attrition is a steady figure of c.14% there is a need to recruit around 30 people per month for permanent, fixed term or casual contracts. There are several parts to the talent acquisition strategy that need to be developed over the coming 2 years. The timeframe is longer due to key system changes that need to happen first due to expiring contracts.

As mentioned above, Talent Link is not a suitable ATS system for the Council as it does not

interface with Resource Link, which automatically creates inefficiencies. Due to the date of the expiry of the contract, this was renewed for 1 year. However, during that period a new ATS system will be identified and implemented that will interface with Resource Link.

For the future, the Council will be investing in the value-add recruitment strategies such as social work recruitment page, employee value proposition and more focus on talent attraction. In addition, in this time, a change of name for recruitment to talent acquisition modernises the team and brings the terminology in line with HR structures. Again, changing the terms to talent starts to change the value of our employees; they are talent in our organisation rather than recruitment.

HR Operations and Payroll

The HR Operations and Payroll team is particularly involved in maintaining systems. This team is also the front end of queries being raised by employees. In order for this team to have more capacity to do value-add activities, it is key that a reduction in queries from employees is achieved. This is happening through support and communications to change behaviour from both employees and managers, requiring them both to be more self-sufficient.

Efficiencies have already commenced with the move for all employees to access online payslips. Using our online employee self-service portal is saving money and time, as well as providing opportunities to promote company messages to employees.

In addition to this, the use of integrated systems will have a positive impact on volume of work for the team.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Staff Wellbeing

Equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) are important considerations. As such, to not only have a workforce which is reflective of the many diverse communities in the Borough, but to remain competitive in the recruitment market and ensure that every employee feels valued, ED&I must be at the heart of people strategies.

The Council needs a comprehensive ED&I strategy with the aim of creating an inclusive culture to remain competitive. A culture where everyone feels that they belong, they can be themselves and the values of the Council are lived.

When employees feel that they belong, are heard and seen for who they are, they will be more engaged, perform better and are less likely to be absent from work[1]. One way of doing this is by creating networks that provide safe spaces for staff from different groups to share their experiences of working for the Council and where they can also suggest ways we can be more inclusive in our policies and practices.

ED&I is also becoming more of a focus for funding applications and in assessment frameworks e.g. GLA for regeneration and in the new CQC assessment standards.

Research shows that inclusion is also critical to wellbeing. Employees in inclusive companies are three times more likely to be happy at work[2].

The Council has an extensive benefits and wellbeing offer including a Mental Health First Aider scheme that provides mental health support to staff, and free pain diagnostic sessions, as well as a comprehensive occupational health service and employee assistance programme. These initiatives demonstrate to staff and prospective applicants that the Council takes staff health and wellbeing seriously.

[1] [The Value of Belonging at Work (hbr.org)](#)
[2] [Inclusive Cultures Have Healthier and Happier Workers | BCG](#)

PERFORMANCE DATA

HR Structure:
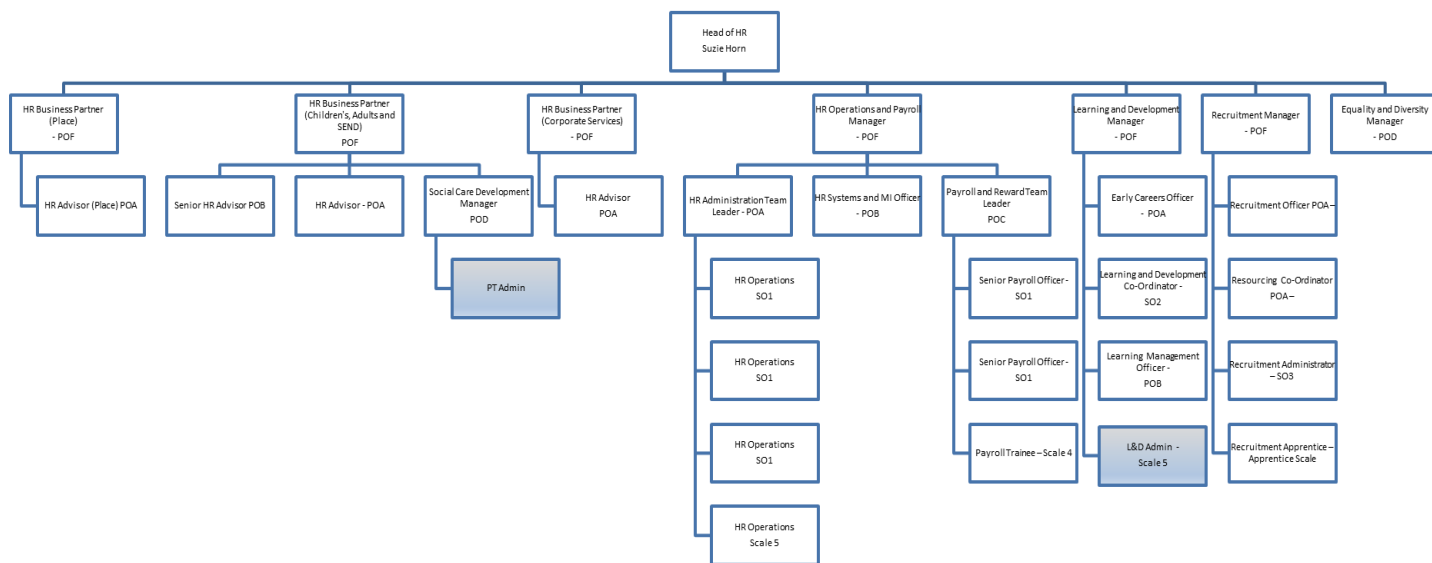
Shaded boxes represent vacant posts being recruited for.

Annual Turnover data for 2022/23:

Directorate	Headcount	TurnOver %	Service Length							
			>1 Year	1 - >2 Year	2 - >5 Years	5 - >10 Years	11 - >15 Years	15 - >20 Years	20 - >25 Years	25 Years or Over
Adult Services and Health	442	73	8	13	15	18	4	6	4	5
		16.52%	0.31%	0.51%	0.58%	0.70%	0.16%	0.23%	0.16%	0.19%
Central Services	384	56	5	9	12	11	5	5	6	3
		14.58%	0.19%	0.35%	0.47%	0.43%	0.19%	0.19%	0.23%	0.12%
Children's Services	329	51	5	8	23	10	2	3	0	0
		15.50%	0.19%	0.31%	0.90%	0.39%	0.08%	0.12%	0.00%	0.00%
Education & SEND	332	52	2	12	21	10	2	2	2	1
		15.66%	0.08%	0.47%	0.82%	0.39%	0.08%	0.08%	0.08%	0.04%
Finance	203	30	0	0	16	7	1	2	0	4
		14.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.62%	0.27%	0.04%	0.08%	0.00%	0.16%
Place	885	117	5	17	37	20	23	6	5	4
		13.22%	0.19%	0.66%	1.44%	0.78%	0.90%	0.23%	0.19%	0.16%
Grand Total	**2567**	376	**25**	**59**	**123**	**75**	**36**	**24**	**17**	**17**
		14.65 %	**0.97%**	**2.30%**	**4.79%**	**2.92%**	**1.40%**	**0.93%**	**0.66%**	**0.66%**

Attrition levels for the last 12 months are in line with expectations. Whilst a high turnover can create issues, similarly low levels of turnover can also create issues. Ideally a focus for the coming year would be to address the attrition in the service lengths of 0 – 2 years to reduce this down.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

Residents will benefit from a digitised HR function as employees that they interact with will have capacity to interact with them. They will be engaged and therefore putting the resident first.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.

APPENDICES

None.