

**Report for:** Staffing and Remuneration Committee, 27 June 2022

**Title:** Workforce Wellbeing Strategy

**Report authorised by:** Andrew Meek, Head of Organisational Resilience

**Lead Officer:** Daria Polovina, BECC Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** None

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** Non-Key

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

The issue under consideration is the wellbeing of the Council's workforce and the Workforce Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025.

The vision of the Workforce Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025 is for Haringey Council to be a compassionate, respectful and inclusive workplace where staff wellbeing is protected, promoted and supported.

The strategy focuses on five key priorities developed from the London Healthy Workplace Award and from academic literature around wellbeing:

- Corporate support for wellbeing
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Physical health and wellbeing
- Economic wellbeing
- Interpersonal and community wellbeing

The Strategy address six key challenges for Haringey's workforce, as developed through engagement and consultation with our staff:

- Flexible working
- Wellbeing as part of our workplace culture
- Engaging with community-facing staff
- Equalities, diversity and inclusion
- Current sickness absence levels
- Value for money

The Strategy has been developed through extensive engagement and consultation with the Council's workforce (as detailed in Section 6) and with reference to quantitative and qualitative literature and research related to wellbeing, and wellbeing at work.

**2. Recommendations**

This report asks the Staffing and Remuneration Committee to approve the implementation of the Workforce Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025.

**3. Reasons for decision**

Haringey Council as an employer has a duty of care for its workforce, and it is therefore important to support the wellbeing of everyone who works at Haringey.

A good Workforce Wellbeing Strategy has several benefits for both the workforce and the organisation, namely:

- A culture that's healthier and more inclusive
- A workplace with improved performance, development, productivity and success
- An organisation which attracts new people and engages, motivates and retains current employees
- A workplace with lower sickness absence

A good Workforce Wellbeing Strategy is one key way for Haringey to achieve its Borough Plan outcome to be a 'healthy and resilient workforce' and achieve its commitment to:

- 'Endorse a healthy work life balance where staff feel supported and wellbeing is improved across all services
- Develop a culture where staff feel supported to respond and adapt positively to change'

A good Workforce Wellbeing Strategy enables the Council to be an exemplar of good working practice in the Borough and indeed among other local authorities. The Council could therefore encourage other employers, within the borough and beyond, to consider and broaden their wellbeing offer and support to their employees.

#### **4. Alternative options considered**

##### **Alternative option 1: Not to develop a Workforce Wellbeing Strategy**

This option was rejected. The Council has a clear duty of care towards its staff. Having no Workforce Wellbeing Strategy for the coming years would signal that the Council has no interest in taking its duty of care obligations seriously, nor in addressing the wellbeing concerns of its staff.

No Workforce Wellbeing Strategy could also be seen as a reputational risk and open the Council up to claims of being a 'bad employer'. This in turn would affect our ability to recruit, retain and motivate the staff we need to serve our residents.

##### **Alternative option 2: Developing an interim Workforce Wellbeing Strategy focused on the three pillars of the London Healthy Workplace Award (LHWA) (corporate support for wellbeing; mental health and wellbeing; healthy lifestyle promotion).**

This option was rejected. The Council has engaged with, and continues to value the London Healthy Workplace Award, which is a scheme led by the Mayor of London. The Council achieved 'Excellence' in 2018 under this scheme. Given the maturity of the Council's efforts in relation to wellbeing, an 'interim' Workforce Wellbeing Strategy focused solely on the three pillars of the LHWA taken as an 'off the shelf' wellbeing agenda is not longer suitable. The proposal in this report builds on learning and approaches within the LHWA but considers

our local context and the priorities and issues identified through engagement with our workforce.

## 5. **Background information**

The World Health Organisation defines wellbeing as a state in which an individual can:

- Realise their own potential
- Cope with normal stresses
- Work productively
- Contribute to their community

Our wellbeing can be influenced by many factors. Each of our individual wellbeing priorities, challenges and needs are different. They can, and often do, change over time. Measuring wellbeing from a workplace perspective is challenging. An individual's wellbeing at work, and outside of it, is influenced not only by their own characteristics, but also by those of the job and the workplace in which they are employed.

Workplace wellbeing tends to be higher when people have:

- Variety in and autonomy over their work, and clarity about what is expected of them
- A supportive environment and opportunities to develop skills
- Positive interaction with managers, co-workers and customers or clients
- A perception of fairness in the workplace, both in terms of how the employee is treated themselves and also how their co-workers are treated, and confidence in disciplinary and grievance procedures
- A sense of safety and security – including physical security and the safety of work practices as well as good pay, job security and clear career prospects
- A sense of significance in their job and its value to society and to their organisation
- A sense of inclusion and belonging within their workplace

The Council's most recent strategy related to workforce wellbeing was the [Workforce Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2018](#). The strategy proposed three main priorities: reducing obesity, improving healthy life expectancy and improving mental health and wellbeing. It greatly contributed towards the Council's achievement of the Workplace Wellbeing Excellence Award in 2018.

In 2019, work started on a new workforce wellbeing strategy. This strategy was near completion just as the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Given the Council's pandemic-related priorities at that time, this work was put on hold in order to be able to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

Work on the Workforce Wellbeing Strategy was then picked up again in September 2021. By this point, given the disruption that COVID-19 had created in people's everyday life, it was clear that the council's workforce had a new set of wellbeing challenges and priorities.

Our new Workforce Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025 aims to build on the success of the work done in 2018 to achieve Excellence via the London Healthy Workplace Award (LHWA). Indeed, we are keen to measure our success via

the LHWA once again, and have incorporated elements of the LHWA three pillars (corporate support for wellbeing, mental health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyle promotion) in our conceptualisation of wellbeing.

However, our new strategy also recognises that wellbeing has dimensions to it beyond mental and physical health – the two dimensions most readily associated with wellbeing. Our new strategy also looks considers economic wellbeing and community / interpersonal wellbeing as key dimensions of wellbeing.

The Strategy has been developed through a broad range of engagement and consultation with Public Health, staff equality networks, unions, HR, Homes for Haringey (prior to their insourcing move), Library Service Stakeholders Group, and other teams and colleague across the Council.

Where possible, the Strategy has made use of the Council's Employment profile data and other published evidence (from think tanks, academic literature, the ONS) to substantiate its recommended approach to workforce wellbeing.

The strategy also outlines a high-level corporate action plan to support the implementation of key wellbeing activities across the organisation.

The Strategy clearly outlines the organisation's wellbeing vision and where we want to be. Corporate outcomes and measures have been defined but corporate-wide data regarding wellbeing is not yet quite robust enough to support detailed measures. However, the intention is for the Corporate and Directorate Wellbeing Action Plans (once the latter are developed) to be flexible enough to allow for appropriate adjustments and iterations to our wellbeing outcomes and measures as and when relevant new data is available (e.g. staff census, HSE stress survey).

The strategy is envisaged to be delivered collaboratively through an internal steering group to play a coordination and leadership role, with contributions from HR, Corporate Health and Safety, Communications, Public Health, Active Travel and others. Implementation will be the responsibility of directorates, ensuring that the delivery fits with the needs of our diverse and varied workforce.

A small budget exists to fund training initiatives, with further resources coming from the directorates, who will be supported to commission any support required. We will also use the Council's extensive local partnerships and networks – for example encouraging NHS engagement with our workforce, as the largest employer in the borough.

As we work through the strategy further funding needs may be identified to tackle particular issues, which will be dealt with through the Council's financial management systems.

## **6. Contribution to strategic outcomes**

The Workforce Wellbeing Strategy is linked to the Borough Plan outcome to be a 'healthy and resilient workforce' and the Borough Plan's commitment for Haringey as an employer to:

- 'Endorse a healthy work life balance where staff feel supported and wellbeing is improved across all services
- Develop a culture where staff feel supported to respond and adapt positively to change'

## **7. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

### **7.1 Finance**

The recommendation of this report does not give rise to any financial implications as activities will be funded by existing budgets.

### **7.2 Strategic Procurement**

Strategic Procurement note the contents of the report and that the report does not require a procurement decision.

### **7.3 Legal**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **7.4 Equality**

The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not

The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

The strategy explicitly considers issues related to wellbeing from an equalities, diversity and inclusion perspective. It makes the commitment that our wellbeing offer needs to be relevant to our workforce profile while at the same time considering what opportunities exist to address disproportionalities through our wellbeing offer.

The Wellbeing Strategy further outlines particular wellbeing challenges related to age, disability, ethnicity, sex and gender reassignment, and socio-economic background, and commits to ongoing engagement through the Staff Networks to address these issues.

## **8. Use of Appendices**

## 9. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Background documents:

- London Healthy Workplace Award Overview: [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/lhwa-overview-2021\\_version.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/lhwa-overview-2021_version.pdf)
- [ASSESSING MULTIDIMENSIONAL WELLBEING: DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE I COPPE SCALE \(miami.edu\)](https://www.miami.edu/campus-life/assessing-multidimensional-wellbeing)
- World Health Organisation and Wellbeing: [Mental health: strengthening our response \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/mental-health-strengthening-our-response)
- [Worker wellbeing and workplace performance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/worker-wellbeing-and-workplace-performance)
- Council Employment Profile – December 2021: [https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/hgy\\_council\\_employment\\_profile\\_-\\_dec21.pdf](https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/hgy_council_employment_profile_-_dec21.pdf)
- Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: The Report – March 2021: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/974507/20210331\\_-\\_CRED\\_Report\\_-\\_FINAL\\_-\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974507/20210331_-_CRED_Report_-_FINAL_-_Web_Accessible.pdf)
- Sewell report ignores 'well-documented' evidence of structural racism in the NHS, says BMA – July 2021: <https://www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/sewell-report-ignores-well-documented-evidence-of-structural-racism-in-the-nhs-says-bma>
- TUC: institutional racism exists in the UK labour market and society: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/tuc-institutional-racism-exists-uk-labour-market-and-society>
- Government report 'gaslighting' Black Asian Minority Ethnic workers and communities – March 2021: <https://www.gmb.org.uk/printpdf/2664>
- Structural racism in health outcomes for people with MS – March 2021: <https://www.mssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-people/our-commitment-equality/sewell-report-and-structural-racism-health-outcomes>
- Race Report: 7 Things That Contradict The Claim that Britain Is 'Not Institutionally Racist' – March 2021: [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/britain-institutionally-racist-report\\_uk\\_60644d94c5b6fd3650dbdcca](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/britain-institutionally-racist-report_uk_60644d94c5b6fd3650dbdcca)
- State of the Borough – December 2021: [https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/state\\_of\\_the\\_borough\\_final\\_master\\_version.pdf](https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/state_of_the_borough_final_master_version.pdf)
- TUC: Disability and employment: a social model study of the employment experiences of disabled people in Great Britain, with a focus on mental illness – 2015: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/DisabilityandEmploymentReport.pdf>
- ONS: Women shoulder the responsibility of 'unpaid work' – 2016: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/womenshouldertheresponsibilityofunpaidwork/2016-11-10>
- Men and mental health: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/m/men-and-mental-health>
- Stonewall: LGBT in Britain – Work Report 2018: [https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt\\_in\\_britain\\_work\\_report.pdf](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_work_report.pdf)

- Sexual orientation, UK, ONS, 2018: [Sexual orientation, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/sexualorientationandgender/articles/sexualorientationintheuk/2018)