Report for:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 12 February 2026
Item Number:	9
Title:	Strategic Workforce Data, Planning and Wellbeing
Report Authorised by:	Dan Paul, Chief People Officer
Lead Officer:	Dan Paul, Chief People Officer
Ward(s) Affected:	All
Report for Key/ Non-Key Decision:	N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 The purpose of this report is, at the Committee's request, provide information on the Council's workforce, strategic workforce planning and employee wellbeing.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To note the report and ask questions.

3. Background information

3.1 Workforce Data

3.1.1 The Council holds a considerable amount of data on its workforce, and a summary is reported to every meeting of the General Purposes Committee in the form of a People Report, which can be found on the public committee pages of the Council's website. The latest summary data is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

3.1.2 The Council's total workforce (employed plus agency) has grown substantially in recent years, to a headcount of 4083. This is only slightly down on the high point reached in March 2025 (headcount 4166). The directly employed workforce continues to increase quarter on quarter. Between March and September 2025 this was more than offset by decreases in the agency workforce. There are three main reasons for the increase in the directly employed workforce:

i) The Council's decisions to insource services, most notably Homes for Haringey (June 2022, c.750 employees), and Fusion (October 2023, c.120 employees).

ii) A concerted effort to reduce agency staff, from a high point of c.770 to the September 2025 headcount of 375.

iii) General growth in the workforce to deliver Council services.

3.1.3 A low number of employees leave the Council by reason of redundancy, as can be seen at Appendix 1. This trend has not changed over recent times. The number of current restructures that are projected to result in significant redundancies (i.e. where the opportunities for suitable alternative employment by creating posts or filling vacancies are significantly outweighed by the number of posts deleted) are low. The first port of call where reductions are required is reducing agency staff.

3.1.4 The Council's financial challenges are likely to mean that this position changes in the future, but the exact scale and scope of that is not currently defined. Despite the fact that the Council's current draft budget contains a limited amount of new savings, there remain a substantial amount of pre-agreed savings to deliver, and it is likely that this will impact upon the workforce in future.

3.2 Strategic Workforce Planning

3.2.1 As part of the delivery of the Workforce Strategy, agreed by the Council in July 2024, Human Resources have devised a comprehensive workforce planning process, culminating in a Workforce Action Plan.

3.2.2 This process is facilitated by HR through a series of workshops with the relevant Director and their management team, and supported by a data pack which gives the current workforce statistics in detail. Workshop activities include:

i) Analysis of the external environment and horizon scanning
ii) SWOT analysis of the current internal position
iii) Service planning
iv) Finances available and the MTFS
v) Identifying key stakeholders
vi) Workforce management information e.g. turnover, age profile etc.
vii) Identifying critical roles, hard to fill roles, roles that take a long time to train for.
viii) Planning for workforce requirement and availability in terms of skills as well as numbers.
ix) Workforce performance in terms of delivering service outcomes - workforce optimisation
x) Emphasis on growing skills internally and increasing flexibility/resilience of existing employees, this mitigates risk of not finding skills externally.
xi) Looking at how you replace leavers from a job group.
xii) Considering workforce planning on different timelines to address short term and long term needs.
xiii) Ensuring workforce plans link to practical action in recruitment, development and deployment in people and service/work design.

3.2.3 A small number of services have been through the full process as a pilot, and the process has then been refined and is ready for implementation in all Directorates.

3.2.4 This work will be rolled out alongside Service Planning and financial planning in Autumn 2026, as the Council develops a new Corporate Delivery Plan following the May 2026 elections. It is considered best practice to develop service, financial and workforce plans in tandem to ensure a joined up approach.

3.2.5 In the short term, and in order to support immediate financial and workforce priorities, the Corporate Leadership Team have agreed the following key areas of focus:

a) Sickness absence management
b) Establishment accuracy: addressing long term secondments, acting up, honoraria and fixed term contracts
c) Restructures; practical support on business case writing, ensuring best structure and moving to formal launch at pace
d) Agency review- getting to the heart of the issues and reducing agency reliance

There will also be specific people-based training sessions in Spring 2026 which will enable managers to maximise the efficiency of their workforce through effective people management in challenging financial circumstances.

3.3 Workforce Wellbeing

3.3.1 Despite the workforce data, employees are likely to be feeling the effects of the Council's financial position as communicated to them, and anticipating (probably correctly) that there are substantial staffing reductions to come in future. This will naturally impact upon stress levels and wellbeing as employees are concerned for their future. The Council has a dedicated wellbeing hub with support and resources available on the intranet, and a comprehensive employee assistance programme and occupational health service and free counselling available to assist employees and their families.

3.3.2 The Council provides resources, policies and support to managers and supervisors to help them deal with employee wellbeing, as well as stress and mental health, and absence.

3.3.3 Officers discuss these issues with Trade Unions on a regular basis, and it comes up frequently in the consultation stage of restructures.

3.3.4 Sickness levels are on a downward trajectory, reducing from 10.6 days per FTE in March 2025, to 8.8 days per FTE in September 2025. This statistic is measured on a rolling year basis, to remove seasonality. The reduction has come almost entirely from a reduction in long term sickness and has reduced the cost of absence to the Council by an annualised £860k.

4. Use of Appendices

4.1 APPENDIX 1 – January 2026 People Report appendix, presented to General Purposes Committee on 26/01/2026.