

18 January 2016		ITEM: 6
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Investors in People 2016		
Wards and communities affected: None	Key Decision: No	
Report of: Jan Cox - Strategic Lead HR & OD		
Accountable Head of Service: Jan Cox - Strategic Lead HR & OD		
Accountable Director: Jackie Hinchliffe - Director of HR,OD and Transformation		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

This report outlines the feedback from the Investors in People assessment that took place 12th – 28th July 2016. The Council retained Gold status and received a continuous improvement plan from the assessor; work has been undertaken to build this plan into the new People Strategy and use the Investors in People standards as a key theme for developing our people over the next four years. The report will also outline next steps on the journey of continuous improvement.

1. Recommendation(s)

Members to note and comment on:

- 1.1 The achievement of reaccreditation of Investors in People Gold**
- 1.2 The analysis being undertaken to identify the benefits to the Council of moving forward with the Generation 6 Framework requiring a potential re-assessment in 2019 and a number of formal progress meetings throughout 2017/18.**
- 1.3 The incorporation of the Investors in People continuous improvement plan into the key actions within the new People Strategy**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Since the launch of the first Organisational Development Strategy in 2010 the Council has been committed to external assessment and validation of its practice and progress as an employer.**

- 2.2 The Investors in People (IiP) accreditation is an international standard for people management recognised in over 75 countries. The standard reflects leading workplace trends and has been developed to describe organisations capabilities whilst also highlighting improvements and steps to achieving and maintaining excellence. The framework provides a pathway to future progress and demonstrates through meeting the indicators that the Council is an organisation that consistently outperforms their peers, is an employer of choice and an organisation that can compete in the business marketplace.
- 2.3 The cost of the external accreditation is based on time spent on site carrying out the assessment and number of assessors required linked to amount of staff employed. Thurrock's costs were £13,500 for 2016 based on 15 days on site and was managed by one lead assessor, with some days covered by a support assessor in order to meet all staff interviews and observations within the timeframe.
- 2.4 IiP Gold is held by only 3% of organisations nationwide and is the highest accolade achievable within the current framework.
- 2.5 Research shows that IiP accredited organisations are:
- More profitable
 - More sustainable
 - More optimistic about the future
 - Report significant organisational benefits such as increased staff satisfaction in employee engagement surveys and greater participation in staff forums
 - Supported in transforming business performance through their people
 - Able to enhance their employer brand with a positive effect on recruitment and retention
- 2.6 The IiP Framework contains ten indicators to assess performance framed around a model of Plan, Do, Review, these are:
- 1) Business Strategy
 - 2) Learning and Development Strategy
 - 3) People Management Strategy
 - 4) Leadership and Management Strategy
 - 5) Management Effectiveness
 - 6) Recognition and Reward
 - 7) Involvement and Empowerment
 - 8) Learning and Development
 - 9) Performance Management
 - 10) Continuous Improvement



3. IIP Assessment 2016

- 3.1 The plan for the 2016 accreditation was to ensure that we demonstrated areas of continuous improvement as outlined in the 2013 report demonstrate where we met the indicators and provide good examples of where we felt work excelled. A project group was established to deliver the work required by IIP; the project sponsor for Directors Board was Jackie Hinchliffe.
- 3.2 Each standard is looked at from the perspective of our Top Managers (DB and Leadership Group), Line Managers and People and evidence is obtained through a variety of groups meetings, one to one interviews and attendance at key events. In addition we completed a self-assessment portfolio of evidence as a reference tool as well as case studies, as time on site and spent with employees was limited, given the size of the organisation, our multi sites and variety of services.
- 3.3 There is a minimum of 165 evidence requirements to be accredited Gold in Investors in People spread across the 10 Indicators - in 9 of these we achieved all, or most of the requirements.
- 3.4 The assessors met with over 120 staff including:
 - 5 part time staff
 - 3 new starters
 - 5 rising stars, which have been supported to develop by the Council through CPD and other opportunities
 - apprentices
 - 2 from ASYE academy
 - At least 3 staff who were interviewed last time
 - 10 middle managers (band 8 and above)
 - 5% of team leaders- band 6/7
 - The oldest and youngest members of staff
 - The Leader of the Council
 - The Chief Executive

3.5 The assessors attended Directors Board, People Board, and The Corporate Workforce group, met the Corporate Staff Forum Chairs, trades union's representatives and spent a day off site at Oliver Close.

3.6 The outcome of the project was the successful retention of liP Gold; achieving 176 out of a potential 196 indicators and more than the 165 indicators required to achieve gold. The assessor stated:

“As well as maintaining (Gold) they have changed and improved structures, business and people processes. They clearly recognise the benefits of a well trained workforce to deliver services in a more cost effective and productive manner whilst maintaining high levels of motivation and job satisfaction. This is an organisation that punches well above their weight and fully recognises just how important their people are. From being an organisation recognised as 9ct Gold in 2013, Thurrock can consider they are now an 18ct Gold organisation in 2016”.

3.7 Compared to the 2013 assessment there was improvement in evidence across most indicators for 2016 however there does remain some key areas that need a particular focus in order to improve:

- Indicator 6 Recognition and Reward - 11 out of a potential 19 evidence requirements being met.
- Indicator 5 Management Effectiveness – reduced by 2 evidence requirements compared to the 2013 assessment.

3.8 The 2016 Improvement Plan is attached at Appendix 2 – a key point to note is there are twenty suggested improvements which have been analysed to inform actions and activities within the new People Strategy (currently in draft form and out for consultation);.

3.9 The rationale for building the improvement plan into the new People Strategy is to ensure this key work is joined up with the main people development activity of the Council. Also given that five suggested improvements had already been identified prior to this assessment via staff forums and other internal reviews, it's vital that development areas already being addressed are viewed as 'business as usual' and embedded into the way we work. Going forward there is also a major change in the structure of IIP programme that will require us to evidence the delivery of our People Strategy under a new framework (this is explored further in Section 3.7).

3.10 In their summary the assessors noted;

“There is much innovation, energy and enthusiasm to tackle challenges often having to make difficult decisions to meet their priorities of clean it, cut it and fill it strapline and much more in securing their future.”

3.11 The assessors fed back under the two main areas;

Area 1: Changing personality of the Council, continuous improvement and pursuit of excellence/high performance - where they noted:

- “The Council undertook an LGA Corporate Peer Review in February 2016 to get an objective, external opinion on their plans and strategies”
- “They cannot achieve the best for Thurrock on their own. Working with partners, the Council wants to drive growth in their role as community champions for the place and as local system leaders to maximise opportunities to attract inward investment.”
- “All of this requires significant cultural shift for 2,000 staff particularly the 400 employees who were TUPE transferred back to the council in December 2015 following the termination of the strategic Services Partnership with Serco. Operation Welcome was a great success”
- “An open and engaging culture permeates the council, with a strong emphasis on staff consultation and open communication routes from the Chief Executive’s intranet blog to internal e-newsletters, regular management conferences”
- “They now boast a 21st century forward-looking council, using modern management methods, leading and empowered workforce to deliver entrepreneurial services with partners and communities”

Area 2: Staff involvement, empowerment and motivation processes. Leadership, management and maintaining gold recognition; where they noted:

- “This without a doubt is a learning organisation where learning is an everyday activity. They continue to demonstrate improvements in health and wellbeing, equality, Occupational Health, reward and recognition, recruitment, Applicant Tracking System, exit interviews, special interest forums, regional benchmarking, inform, oracle, Employee Assistance Programme and staff survey”
- “People think it is a great place to work and many are long serving and promoted internally. They have a great apprenticeship programme with nearly 200 apprentices trained over the last three years”
- “Since the 2013 liP accreditation, Thurrock has taken additional approaches to engaging and working with staff in decision making. The Corporate Workforce Group (CWG) was set up by the Chief Executive in 2015 .The group is made of directorate representatives from front line staff and front line managers. The model has been replicated across directorates and in a short time the CWG has provided input to the staff survey question development, provided feedback on key

issues and set up a Meet and Eat area for staff. Representatives of CWG now attend People Board.”

- “Learning and development continues to be a key priority for Thurrock. As both employers of choice and IIP Gold holders the way people learn and develop is central to the ethos of the Council.”
- “Learning e-Management is now part of the Oracle Self-Serve and as such allows each individual to access information about learning activity and to book places which are sent automatically to the manager for approval”
- “Off-site workers are able to record the details of their learning needs which take place during Job Chats and are recorded on a specifically designed form.”

3.12 The assessors also noted key strengths of the organisation:

“During the review we spoke to a wide range of people across the organisation covering all the major functions of the Council. Those that we spoke to were generally very positive about working for Thurrock Council, and many recognised that as local residents they were contributing to the improvement of their own area and the prospects of its citizens. We have therefore provided a sample of the comments we were given in the interviews:

- “There are lots of stresses and strains but we’ve refocused and tightened up.”
- “I am proud to work at Thurrock.”
- “I am trusted and have a definite sense of pride in working for the Council.”
- “The new Chief Executive is visible and takes an active interest in the staff.”

They also noted:

- “The Council continues to test its performance through peer reviews and staff survey”

These comments provide a flavour of the assessment and our experience which was very positive for all involved. The objective of undertaking external scrutiny to assess our investment in our staff through the delivery of our organisational development strategy was achieved.

4. IIP Generation 6

4.1 IIP Generation 6 launched in 2016, it follows a different framework and assessment which all organisations would have to now work to for reaccreditation in 2019. Further analysis of these changes is required to understand the impact of putting ourselves forward for this new Framework and exploring the benefits to us. The specific differences are:

- Change of focus on assessing our abilities in Leading, Supporting and Improving
- 2 new indicators – Structuring Work and Creating Sustainable Success
- Additional reviews with assessment at 12 and 24 months rather than just one at 18 months
- 20% liP online staff survey
- Committing to a ‘Context session’ with liP assessors to plan lines of enquiry mapped to framework
- Assessment focused on “observe and record” rather than paper based evidence led
- 4 Performance levels, Developed, Established, Advanced and High Performing
- Changes to the cost structure of the assessment.

5 Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 To advise the committee of the actions taken and planned in response to the 2016 liP Assessment.

6. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

6.1 None

7. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

7.1 There is an impact on corporate policies and people priorities which will be addressed as the work continues. As plans for the workforce are developed our policies and priorities will be reviewed in line with the agreed focus for our workforce. We will ensure that full impact analysis is undertaken as each area is considered, once the People Strategy is agreed.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Management Accountant, Corporate Finance

No financial implications.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Monitoring Officer

No legal implications.

8.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities
Manager

Although there are no direct implications from this report, the work to embed Gold IIP positively impacts on all aspects of supporting equality and diversity across our workforce.

8.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder) None

9. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

10. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – IIP Framework Summary
- Appendix 2 - IIP Improvement Plan, Response and progress update

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