

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Employment Committee
Date:	18 th June 2026
Subject:	Deep dive on Learning and Development
Chief Officer:	Will Tuckley: CEO MD Commissioner Ian O'Donnell: Interim Chief Operating Officer
Contact Officer:	Katie Penn: L&D manager
Ward(s):	All
Exempt:	NO
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Generic Pathway

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 At the previous Employment Committee a deep dive report was tabled, allowing committee members to understand notable areas of progress since the launch of the strategy. At this meeting, there was a request to understand the progress made against learning and development.

Recommendations:

- 1.3 To note the progress of Learning and Development and note ambitions for 26/27.

Commissioner Review

Commissioners have reviewed this report. Their feedback has been incorporated into the body of the report and agreed it can be considered by the committee.

2. Report

Introductory paragraph

- of the strategic objectives of the broader strategy and the degree to which these programmes do (or could) contribute.

The work of the Learning and Development team is pivotal to ensuring the Council creates a high performing workforce as set out in the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027. Notable areas of focus are to develop ways in which our staff can access:

1. Career development; both within role and role progression
2. Secondments; across the council
3. Access to talent schemes

4. Focused development on individuals as leaders (in addition to the basics of line management)

The Workforce Strategy supports us to achieve this by offering the roadmap by which HR delivers its function and expects to be held to account. A key element of the workforce strategy is creating opportunities for staff learn and develop.

Further to the last Employment Committee and the request for further information on our learning and development (LD) offer for all staff, the following paper is a deep dive into the LD offer for 25/26 and the focus for 26/27.

Career Pathways

The Pathways project was launched on 6th October 2025 following a summer of scoping and co production i.e. HR now collaborates with its diversity networks and Our People Forum to shape all key deliverables.

As part of their End of Year Review staff were asked to confirm if they had undertaken any of the learning or development opportunities offered as part of the pathway. A total of 239 people (33%) of those completing an End of Year Review confirmed that they had.

The generic pathway split staff into 3 sections (aligned to the LGA grades); Grade 2-7 (mostly non-managers), Grade 7-10 (Managers) and Senior Managers. Staff were then set learning to complete over 6-18 months, which were aligned to the core domains which are used to assess behaviours as part of recruitment:

Core Domain	Definition
1. Seeing the Bigger Picture	Understands how your work connects to SBC's goals and improves life for Slough residents
2. Delivering Excellence	Providing high-quality services that meet public expectations while ensuring value for money
3. Living Our Values	Living SBC's values in everything you do to build resident trust and business success
4. Driving Innovation	Finding better ways to make SBC more effective and efficient
5. Leadership	Inspiring others to deliver great results for residents and achieve SBC's business objectives
6. Building Capability	Developing skills to help SBC succeed as an organisation
7. Communicating & Influencing	Conveys information to others in a clear, honest and enthusiastic way in order to build trust.
8. Working together	Collaborating across teams and with partners to deliver for SBC's success

The generic pathway (as covered in appendix 1) is a road map of training and development that is applicable to most staff, regardless of role or grade. It includes ensuring someone has attended the Corporate Induction Day and completed all mandatory training, as time progresses it offers the opportunity to build up to the leadership and management training for manager grades.

In addition to the generic pathway, the LD team has partnered with business area to build specific workshops to support development.

The aim of these workshops was to offer staff an overview of different areas of the organisation. The workshops are available to all staff but are of particular interest to new starters and those who are interested in learning about other areas of the organisation with a view to lateral moves as well as promotion.

Evaluation has indicated these workshops (notably Working for a Council and Introduction to Project Management), have been very informative and valued by staff. There are plans to introduce further workshops including Property Services and DDaT.

Workshop held 25/26	Occurrences	Attendees
Environmental Services	1	8
Customer Services	1	7
Working for a Council	2	17
Transformation	1	4
Introduction to Project Management	2	33

From our recruitment analysis, 11 people who attended a project management workshop or working for a council pathway workshop have either been promoted or pursued a lateral move within the council.

In 26/27, the team will be working with each business area to design bespoke career pathways for specific roles; these target areas which are hard to recruit or have high turnover. These pathways will help someone who is recruited into the entry level role to understand the development and learning they would need to undertake to progress within their ED area. Our work in this space has already partnered with Adults, Dem Services, Finance and Customer Services.

Tiers 1-3 Induction

To address the specific onboarding of senior leaders (Tiers 1-3 or Executive Directors, Directors and Heads of Service) a revised dedicated session is being delivered for these new starters. Within the session the focus will be on the Council's leadership expectations for them. From a workforce perspective this is on the need to reduce the reliance on interims, ensuring we have accurate record-keeping and performance management.

Clarity is included on the financial responsibilities held by the cohort and the current position of the budget and MTFs. The build of the transformation programme is covered with explanations on the necessary governance and lastly there is a section on political leadership within Slough. A regular 6 weekly slot will be timetabled to be utilised for any new senior leaders to SBC.

Apprenticeships

There are currently 42 active apprenticeships in SBC. 27 were enrolled in the 25/26. Of the 27, 8 have either left the organisation or stopped their apprenticeship due to personal reasons (i.e. change of role, finding it difficult to maintain learning whilst meeting work demands), 19 are still active.

Going forward we are working with several apprenticeship providers that offer standards that are in line with our roles, particularly those with experience working with local authority/ public sector learners. We are also aiming to recruit at least 1 entry level apprenticeship into each directorate. We will be targeting Slough residents, particularly young people who are NEET or care experienced. Currently we have 2 roles identified for this pilot (Early Years and Property).

Reverse Mentoring: inviting staff to reverse mentor a member of the CLT

This scheme was launched in the summer of 2025, with a view to pairs beginning the mentoring relationships in the autumn following some training, “chemistry checks” and the agreeing and signing of contracts. This was open to all staff with a Council wide advertising campaign including posters in ALL SBC owned sites. Applications were via MS Forms and QR code was circulated for easy completion.

CLT members were asked to set out what they would be keen to understand from a reverse mentee application and this was then used to match applicants. Of the 7 CLT members invited to participate, 5 engaged with the process and were mostly keen to work with their reverse mentors on building on their cultural awareness. Due to the changes in CLT, this scheme failed to deliver momentum in its trial year. See below for some evaluation and lessons. The scheme will be enhanced to include Directors and relaunched in 26/27.

Evaluation of Programme

- Qualitative success of programme; programme appreciated and Insight from different perspectives highly valued by pairings.
- All the matched pairings enjoyed the concept and the one-to-one discussions once off the ground.
- Appreciated safe space and no barriers for discussions.
- High turnover of CLT recently is the main reason the programme is paused.

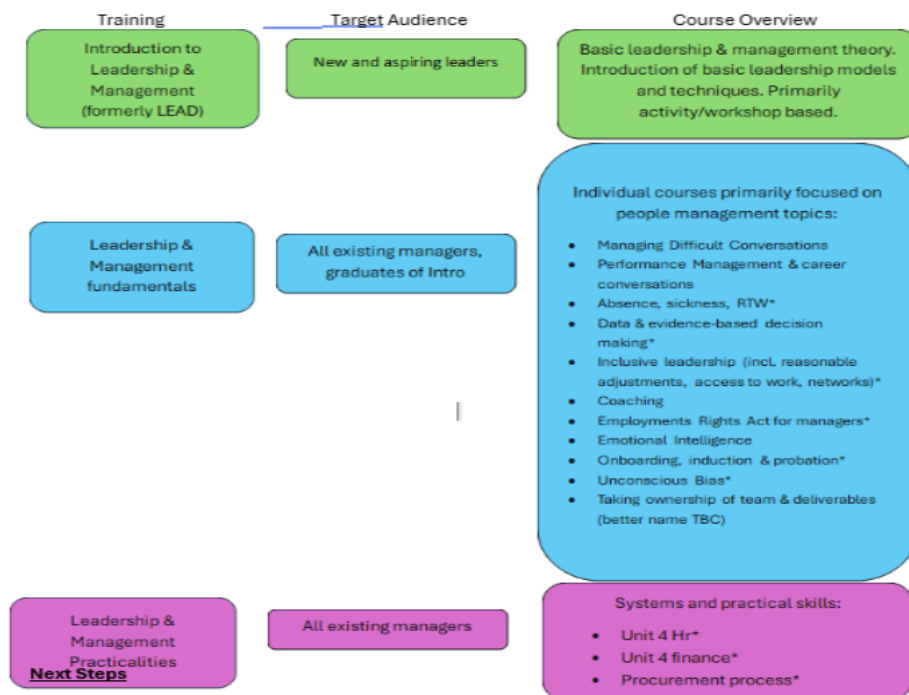
Lessons Learnt

- A larger pool of senior leader / managers with a backup should be identified should someone leave.
- Possibly consider a more structured 6-month programme
- More prescriptive workshop dates, set further in advance to allow CLT clear expectations of the onboarding process and protection of dates.

Leadership & Management Programme

SBC began leadership and management training in 2025 with a 4-session programme written and delivered by Bucks Academy. This was a basic introduction to leadership and management that was designed to allow all managers to establish a base line of knowledge.

60% of managers have completed this programme (a further 20% completed a portion). In addition to theoretical training, we are updating the content to include practical and systems-based training to broaden the skills of SBC managers.



Work will start in early May to create an outline plan that will be circulated to stakeholders for consultation. This will be followed quickly by the start of coproduction of the Introductory management training (Formerly LEAD) to ensure this is ready for launch in early July.

Alongside this, comms will begin in June to advertise the launch – starting with a focus on those managers who did not start or complete the LME/LEAD version of the course. Our delivery timeline includes co- production with staff networks over May and June, with a relaunch for July 6th.

Other Training courses:

ACAS Courses

- In response to the Staff Survey, the Workforce Strategy identified instilling Trust and confidence across workforce through appropriate provision of support across all levels
- 3 x one day courses commissioned externally

Uptake of Course so far :

Name of Course (In person)	Date of Course 2026	Max delegates for course	Attended	Sickness on day	No show on day	Attendance
Mediation in Practice	10 Feb	12	10	1	0	83 %
Mental Health Contact	24 March	12	9	0	3	75%
Speak-up Guide	Tbc	12	5 registered	n/a	n/a	n/a

Success of Programme so far – still running

- 75 % and above attendance
- Interest across all directorates
- 74% of interested applications wish to learn new skills as they have no experience in this area

Next steps:

Learning and Development will remain a key part of the next iteration of the workforce strategy with a focus on:

- Leadership behaviours and accountability
- Performance Management
- Career pathways.
- Inclusion: focus on unconscious bias.

There will also be continued investment in CLT coaching, in addition to supporting all statutory learning requirements per Executive Directorate area.

Alongside this, there is an ambition to develop two development courses to support female and ethnic minority staff. These have been requested by our staff network and each year; we will build this out for other protected characteristics.

Key matters for Committee to consider:

HR and its senior team have formed a professional view based on needs of the organisation as expressed in staff working groups, network feedback and recent staff survey results. These are set against objectives of recovery, transformation and political priorities.

Link to Statutory Equality Objectives

The Council uses a robust and comprehensive set of employment data to inform its workforce strategy and management practice.

As part of meeting its statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council has developed and published 6 equality objectives. There are 2 objectives that are specifically related to the workforce:

Objective 4: The Council uses a robust and comprehensive set of employment data to inform its workforce strategy and management practice, as well as benchmarking and sharing best practice

Objective 5: The Council actively ensures that the profile of its workforce (including the profile of major commissioned services) reflects the community it serves/local labour market.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 There are no decisions with financial implications in this report. All the activity set out in the report is managed within existing budgets.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 The effect of the Public Sector Equality Duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 is noted below.

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 Currently the Corporate Risk register details a risk regarding our 'Failure to Attract, Retain & Engage with Our People', the Workforce Strategy supports HR focus on workforce and cultural initiatives to address this in a more detailed and transparent way.

3.4 Environmental implications

None

3.5 *Equality implications*

3.5.1 The Council is committed to being an inclusive employer and meeting its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 including s.149, the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The investment in line management training will ensure a module on Inclusivity is present to further enhance our managers skills on how to build a inclusive workforce.

3.6 *Workforce implications:*

3.6.1 This information is vital to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and an equivalent set of HR MI is presented at a monthly DLTs, allowing for a discussion on whether deliverables remain right for the desired culture.

4. Background Papers

None