



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL FUNCTIONS
COMMITTEE**
(Extraordinary meeting)

12 March 2024

6.30 pm

**Rooms 201/202, Town Hall Annexe,
Watford**

Contact

Barry Rennick

democraticservices@watford.gov.uk

01923 278374 or 278376

For information about attending meetings please visit the [council's website](#).

Publication date: 4 March 2024

Committee Membership

Councillor D Walford (Chair)

Councillor D Allen-Williamson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Dhindsa, A Dychton, S Johnson, N Shah and M Watkin

Agenda

Part A - Open to the Public

1. **Apologies for absence/ committee membership**
2. **Disclosure of interests (if any)**
3. **Workforce Monitoring Report 2023, 22/02/2024 Council Functions Committee**
(Pages 3 - 19)

Report of the Executive Head of HR and OD

This report was deferred from the meeting held on 22 February 2024.

PART A

Report to: Council Functions Committee
Date of meeting: 22 February 2024
Report of: Executive Head of HR&OD
Title: Workforce Monitoring Report

1.0 **Summary**

1.1 Watford Borough Council is committed to equality and diversity across the full spectrum of its services and in its role as an employer. This commitment is articulated in its equality objectives and associated action plan, which identifies key actions the council will take to ensure equalities for its workforce and that it reflects the community it serves. Our commitment goes beyond our statutory obligations and reinforces our corporate priority to ensure equality and diversity is at the heart of everything we do.

1.2 The statutory duties are governed by the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, public sector organisations with over 150 employees are required to report at least annually on how their policies and practices affect staff with the following different 'Protected Characteristics':-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Religious or Belief

1.3 The attached statement details the profile of Watford Borough Council's workforce from 01 October 2022 to 30 September 2023.

2.0 Risks

2.1	Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating (the combination of severity and likelihood)
	Non-Compliance with requirements of the Equalities Act	Reputation/ fine	Agree and publish to time	Treat	2

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That Council Functions Committee approves the Workforce Monitoring Report.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Lee Pound, Executive Head of HR & OD on telephone extension: 8133: email: lee.pound@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Lee Pound, Executive Head of HR & OD.

4.0 Implications

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 The Chief Finance Officer comments that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

4.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that it is a legal requirement under the Equalities Act 2010 for the council to publish a workforce monitoring report annually.

4.3 Equalities/Human Rights

4.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered that as this is not a new policy and the data does not indicate any equalities issues that no updated EIA is required.

Appendices

- Workforce Monitoring Statement 2023

_Background Papers

- No papers were used in the preparation of this report

File Reference

None



**WE ARE
WATFORD**

**WORKFORCE MONITORING REPORT
2023**



Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0	LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK	3
3.0	MONITORING DATA	3
4.0	CORPORATE MONITORING	4
5.0	LEGAL GENERAL DUTIES – CORPORATE TARGETS	4
6.0	WATFORD POPULATION STATISTICS	5
7.0	WORKFORCE ANALYSIS	5
8.0	ANALYSIS BY GENDER.....	7
9.0	ANALYSIS BY DISABILITY.....	7
10.0	ANALYSIS BY AGE.....	8
11.0	PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY.....	9
12.0	SEXUAL ORIENTATION.....	9
13.0	MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	10
14.0	ANALYSIS BY RELIGION.....	10
15.0	TRAINING	10
16.0	RECRUITMENT	11
17.0	JOB APPLICANTS	12
18.0	THE WAY FORWARD	14

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Watford Borough Council is committed to equality and diversity across the full spectrum of its services and in its role as an employer. This commitment is articulated in its equalities statement and objectives, which identifies key actions the council will take to ensure equalities for its workforce and that it reflects the community it serves. Our commitment goes beyond our statutory obligations and reinforces our corporate priority to ensure equality and diversity is at the heart of everything we do.
- 1.2 This statement details the profile of Watford Borough Council's workforce from **1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023**.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The statutory duties are governed by the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, public sector organisations with over 150 employees are required to report at least annually on how their policies and practices affect staff with different 'Protected Characteristics'.
- 2.2 Watford Borough Council collects data from its workforce on the following protected characteristics:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Religion or belief

3.0 MONITORING DATA

- 3.1 The statistics are taken from the Human Resources and Payroll information system, iTrent. iTrent provides us with comprehensive reporting allowing a full analysis of our workforce data to be undertaken.
- 3.2 Although we have the capability to undertake reporting, we are dependent on individuals disclosing their personal information to us, so that meaningful reporting can be undertaken. Where employees have chosen not to disclose this information, there are gaps in our data. We recognise the limitations of this system, which relies on individuals disclosing their personal information to us, and we have introduced some measures to remind staff to update their details:

- With the introduction of iTrent, we have asked all employees to check the information held on the system, make sure it is correct and add any further information under the equalities section.
- We regularly request via All Staff Communications and In Touch that staff review their personal information to ensure it is captured and correct, explaining the importance of having a full a set of data as possible.
- We regularly ask Executive Directors/Heads of Service and line managers to remind staff of the request to update their information.
- We engage with our Staff Ambassador Group, which is made up of employees from all levels of the organisation and seek their input into how we can encourage more employees to disclose their personal information.

3.3 We anticipate these initiatives, along with our continuing on-going requests to our employees to update their records, should help with future reports and provide a greater degree of accuracy on the makeup of our workforce.

4.0 CORPORATE MONITORING

4.1 The council is committed to ensuring it achieves equalities objectives. Equality issues are overseen by the Corporate Equalities Working Group, and through the monitoring of performance indicators on equalities. Information on the council's performance on equalities can be found on the council's website at www.watford.gov.uk.

5.0 LEGAL GENERAL DUTIES – CORPORATE TARGETS

5.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, there is also a general equality duty, meaning the council must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

5.2 Due regard involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups, where there are different needs of other people.

5.3 This general equality duty replaces all previous duties specified under previous equality legislation and applies to the council as an employer as well as a provider and enabler of services.

6.0 WATFORD POPULATION STATISTICS

- 6.1 The council receives local population details and projected local population growth through government released population data and Census information.
- 6.2 This report identifies the council's current employee profile and how that profile matches local population statistics taken from Census data. The report also indicates the targets the council sets through a series of Human Resource Performance Indicators.

7.0 WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

- 7.1 **Table 1:** Analysis by Ethnicity (Ethnic composition of council employees on 30 September 2023 compared to 30 September 2022 and compared to the current local population):

Ethnic Origin Description	No of Employees 2022/23	% of Employees 2022/23	% of Employees 2021/22	% of local population
Asian British: Bangladeshi	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.40%
Asian British: Indian	8	3.39%	3.31%	5.50%
Asian British: Other	6	2.54%	3.31%	4.40%
Asian British: Pakistani	1	0.42%	0.83%	6.70%
Black British: African	4	1.69%	1.65%	3.50%
Black British: Caribbean	2	0.85%	0.83	1.70%
Black British: Other	0	0.00	0.00%	0.60%
Mixed Ethnic Group	6	2.54%	2.89%	3.40%
Other Ethnic Group	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
White: British	75	31.78%	32.23%	61.90%
White: Irish	3	1.27%	1.24%	2.30%
White: Other	5	2.12%	2.89%	7.70%
Prefer not to say / not stated	126	53.39%	50.83%	0.00%
Total	236	100.00%	100.00%	

- 7.2 **Table 2: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Group (BAME).**

BAME	2022/23		2021/22	
	Total Employees (Headcount)	% of Employees	Total Employees (Headcount)	% of Employees
Yes	27	11.44%	31	12.81%
No	83	35.17%	88	36.36%
Prefer not to say / Not stated	126	53.39%	123	50.83%
Total	236	100.00%	242	100.00%

- 7.3 The total number of employees who declare they are from a Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background for 2022/23 is 11.44%. The council's target has been increased to 27.1% from 13.0%. The figure this year is below the council's target. 53.39% of employees have not provided this information. As noted in 3.2 above, we continue to make efforts to address this by on-going requests and reminders to our employees to update their records and the importance of providing the information. The most recent request was in August 2023. HR Business Partners also regularly raise the matter with managers in management meetings to urge their employees to complete the on-line form.
- 7.4 The community population for those from a Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic background is 38.12% (2011 Census). We have not received the community information from the 2021 census and will update this information when it has been published.
- 7.5 The target percentage for top 10% of earners being from the BAME group was 13.0%, with a failed to meet exceeded result of 8.33% (2 of the 24 most senior posts in the council are occupied by employees from a BAME group).
- 7.6 **Table 3: BAME's within the council's grading structure.** Figures for 2021/22 are shown in ():

Pay Band	Broad Description	No of BAME Employees	% of BAME employees	% of all employees
Band 5 and below	Most front-line jobs	4 (6)	14.81% (19.35%)	1.69% (2.48%)
Band 6 to 8	Senior officers, team leaders, supervisors / technical specialists	15 (19)	55.55% (61.29%)	6.36% (7.85%)
Band 9 to 11	Professional grades / Managers /Service Delivery Leads	8 (6)	29.63% (19.35%)	3.39% (2.48%)
Corporate Management Board	Chief Executive/Executive Directors/Group & Executive Heads of Service/Associate Directors	0 (0)	0% (0.0%)	0% (0.0%)
Total		27 (31)	100.00%	12.81% (14.73%)

- 7.7 The majority of the BAME population are employed in front line and Senior Officer/Supervisory roles in the council.
- 7.8 Small fluctuations will have a disproportionate effect on percentages due to lesser numbers of staff.

8.0 ANALYSIS BY GENDER

8.1 **Table 4: The council's gender profile on 30 September 2023.** Figures as of 30 September 2022 are shown as ():

Gender	Total no of employees	% of employees
Female	150 (151)	63.56% (62.4%)
Male	86 (91)	36.44% (37.6%)
Total	236 (242)	100.00%

8.2 63.56% of the workforce are female. This is above the local population demographics which show that 50.41% of the working population (2016 mid-year population estimates) are female.

8.3 The target for the top 10% of high earners is 50% for females. The actual total was 54.17% (13 of the 24 most senior posts being occupied by females).

8.4 The council uses the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme to ensure equality of pay between genders. This protects the council's continued robustness on all aspects of "equal pay for work of equal value" principles.

8.5 **Table 5: Female post holders within the council's grading structure.** Figures for 2021/22 are shown as ():

Pay Band	Total No of Female Employees	% of Total Female Employees
Band 5 and below	42 (38)	28.00% (25.17%)
Band 6 to 8	66 (71)	44.00% (47.02%)
Band 9 to 11	37 (37)	24.67% (24.50%)
Corporate Management Board	5 (5)	3.3.% (3.31%)
Total	150 (151)	100.00%

8.6 This demonstrates the council's commitment to career opportunities for women.

9.0 ANALYSIS BY DISABILITY

9.1 A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to perform normal day-to-day activities. 'Substantial' means more minor or trivial and the effect of the impairment will have lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months.

9.2 The council fully supports the Disability Confident employer scheme. This means that all applicants who declare a disability and demonstrate in their application form that they meet the criteria detailed in the person specification are guaranteed an interview.

9.3 The council makes reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of employees who have a disability, in accordance with the 'Disability in Employment' Policy.

9.4 **Table 6: Council employees declaring that they have a disability.** Figures for 2021/22 are shown as ():

Disability	Total no of employees	% of employees
No	94 (102)	39.83% (42.15%)
Yes	7 (8)	2.97% (3.31%)
Not Stated	135 (132)	57.20% (54.55%)
Total	236 (242)	100.00%

9.5 The target percentage of all employees declaring that they had a disability was 5.00%, with an actual figure of 2.97% (7 out of 236). 57.20% of employees have not provided this information. We continue to make efforts to address this by on-going requests and reminders to our employees to update their records.

9.6 A high percentage of employees have not stated whether they have a disability or not, limiting a detailed analysis. This has been a historical issue at the council and steps have been taken to reassure and encourage employees to provide this information via the iTrent self-service system, including revised guidance on why we need this information.

9.7 The Council has a dedicated internet hub designed to look after health and wellbeing and are proud to have signed the Time to Change Employer Pledge. There is a thriving Health and Wellbeing forum and trained Mental Health Champions and Mental Health First Aiders. Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy also focuses on raising awareness of certain disabilities across the organisation by periodically organising campaigns on agreed topics.

9.8 The current Mental Health First Aiders have completed a two-day Mental Health First Aid Course. The same course is offered on-line by the provider in a 15-hour workshop which we can offer to employees who want to become MHFAs to be consistent in the training going forward.

10.0 ANALYSIS BY AGE

10.1 **Table 7: The council's Age Profile as of 30 September 2023.** Figures for 30 September 2022 are shown as ():

Age Group	Number of employees	% of employees	% of local population (from mid-2016 population estimates)
29 and under	23 (16)	9.75% (6.61%)	38.95%
30 – 39	45 (49)	19.07% (20.25%)	17.56%
40 – 49	61 (67)	27.69% (27.69%)	14.57%

50 – 59	72 (75)	30.51% (30.99%)	11.67%
60 – 64	25 (25)	10.59% (10.33%)	4.24%
65 +	10 (10)	4.24% (4.13%)	13.02%
Total	236 (242)	100.00%	

10.2 The age statistics on 30 September 2023 show a median age of council employees is between 40 and 49 years. The total number of employees under 40 is 68, an increase from 65 last year.

10.3 A range of initiatives have been put in place over the past 12 months to increase the number of young people coming to work in the council. Examples of these include apprenticeships and work experience. As part of the Council's revised OD Strategy, the CSC is developing its Academy role for staff to join and then move on to other services. The Council is also refreshing its role and communications with local schools and colleges about job opportunities and the variety of roles within the Council.

11.0 PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

11.1 During 2022/23, seven female employees took maternity leave.

12.0 SEXUAL ORIENTATION

12.1 The council currently works with the Hertfordshire LGBTQI+ group, advertising events on the Intranet to raise awareness of the support network available for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender employees. More collaborative work is planned.

12.2 **Table 8: Sexual Orientation as of 30 September 2023.** Figures for 30 September 2022 are shown as ():

Sexual Orientation	No of employees	% of employees
Bisexual	1 (1)	0.42% (0.41%)
Gay or Lesbian	3 (3)	1.27% (1.24%)
Gender Reassignment	0 (0)	0.0% (0.00%)
Heterosexual	99 (109)	41.95 % (45.04%)
Not Stated	131 (127)	55.51% (52.48%)
Prefer not to say	2 (2)	0.85% (0.83%)
Total	236 (242)	100.00%

12.3 It is noted that the majority of employees (55.51%) have not completed this section of the Equality Monitoring form. We therefore need to work with employees to increase the collation of this data, to help inform our practice. A recent revision of the Equality Monitoring form with additional explanatory text will hopefully go some way to address this. As noted in 3.2 above, we continue to make efforts to address this by on-going requests and reminders to our employees to update their records and the importance of providing the information.

The most recent request was in August 2023. HR Business Partners also regularly raise the matter with managers in management meetings to urge their employees to complete the on-line form.

13.0 MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP. Figures for 30 September 2022 are shown as ():

Marital Status	No of employees	% of employees
Divorced	8 (12)	3.39 % (4.96%)
Married	62 (64)	26.27% (26.45%)
Separated	2 (3)	0.85% (1.24%)
Single / Never Married or in Civil Partnership	27 (30)	11.44% (12.4%)
Widowed	3 (2)	1.27% (0.83%)
Not Stated	134 (131)	56.78% (54.13%)
Total	236 (242)	100.00%

14.0 ANALYSIS BY RELIGION. Figures for 30 September 2023 are shown as ():

Religion	No of employees	% of employees
Christian	52 (57)	22.03% (23.55%)
Declined to say	7 (10)	2.97% (4.13%)
Hindu	9 (9)	3.81% (3.72%)
Jewish	0 ()	0 (0%)
Muslim	1 (2)	0.42% (0.83%)
No religious belief	36 (37)	15.25% (15.29%)
Sikh	3 (3)	1.27% (1.24%)
Other	1 (1)	0.42% (0.41%)
Not stated	127 (123)	53.81% (50.83%)
Total	236 (242)	100.00%

15.0 TRAINING

15.1 The council has a strong commitment to developing staff within the resources available and the training budget for 2022/23 was £100,270. The Organisation Development team responsible for training delivery also provides training support for Three Rivers District Council.

15.2 282 days of training were provided to staff (this equates to the number of people attending specific courses). For example, 10 people attending a half day training course = 5 days of training delivered. This includes in-house training and external (public) courses.

16.0 RECRUITMENT

16.1 The council operates fair recruitment practices, ensuring equality of opportunity in employment. The following measures are in place:

- All the council's vacancies are advertised in relevant online publications and on the council's web site. A positive statement about the council's commitment to equalities appears in all job adverts.
- All the council's jobs have an up-to-date job description that identifies the range of criteria necessary to undertake the role.
- All jobs are evaluated by an analytical job evaluation scheme, which ensures they are graded relative to all other jobs within the council.
- Selection is made on merit and is on the basis of meeting the essential requirements of the job. This is assessed by a panel who conduct shortlisting and the selection interviews, relevant exercises, and assessment centres.
- To ensure that all applicants are short-listed against the same criteria, we ask all job applicants to complete the council's job application form or if submitting CV's, to complete the CV application forms.
- If the council engages temporary workers via a recruitment agency, the agency is required to comply with the council's equalities requirements. The council operates in accordance with the requirements of the Agency Workers Regulations and the majority of temporary assignments are made via our vendor neutral supplier, Hays.
- All new employees undergo an induction programme where they are informed of their responsibilities under the council's 'Code of Conduct' and Disciplinary Policy.
- If an external job applicant believed that their application had not been considered fairly, they may register their dissatisfaction using the council's corporate complaints procedure.
- The council is accredited with the 'Disability Confident' employer scheme for employment practices to support those with a disability in the work place.
- The council encourages applications from applicants in the protected characteristic groups, where these groups are under-represented.

- The council sets equalities targets and reviews them on an annual basis.

17.0 JOB APPLICANTS

- 17.1 During 2022/23, 27 roles were advertised with 308 job applicants. Of those 308 applicants who answered the question about their Ethnic Group on the Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form, 258 (48.13%) were from the BAME population.

The Applicant Tracking System, Webrecruit, was implemented during 2019/20 and this has resulted in a significant increase in the number of applicants stating their ethnic origin and other equality questions on the Equal opportunity Monitoring form than in the previous year (see tables below). The form is mandatory to complete, although there is the option to 'Prefer not to Say' as there is no statutory requirement to compel applicants to provide a response to these questions.

- 17.2 **Table 9: Ethnicity of job applicants.** Figures for 2021/22 are shown as ():

Ethnic Origin Description	No of Applicants 2022/23	% of Applicants 2022/23
Asian British: Bangladeshi	6 (10)	1.95% (1.87%)
Asian British: Indian	44 (73)	14.29% (13.62%)
Asian British: Other	25 (29)	8.12% (5.41%)
Asian British: Pakistani	24 (28)	7.79% (5.22%)
Asian British: Kashmiri	3 (2)	0.97% (0.37%)
Black British: African	25 (34)	8.12% (6.34%)
Black British: Caribbean	6 (12)	1.95% (2.24%)
Black British: Other	10 (11)	3.25% (2.05%)
Mixed Ethnic Background	19 (39)	6.17% (7.28%)
Other Ethnic Group	11 (20)	3.57% (3.73%)
White: British	82 (204)	26.62% (38.06%)
White: Irish	0 (5)	0.00% (0.93%)
White: Other	53 (69)	17.21% (12.87%)
Prefer not to say / not stated	0 (0)	0 (0%)
Total Number of Applicants 2021/22	308 (536)	100.00%

Table 9a: Ethnicity of job applicants. Figures for 2020/21 are shown as ():

BAME / NON-BAME	Number of applications	% of applications
BAME	173 (258)	56.17% (48.13%)
Non-BAME / Prefer not to say	135 (278)	43.83% (51.87%)
Total	308 (536)	100.00%

- 17.3 **Tables 10 to 13:** Other protected characteristics for 308 job applications received during the year, 2022/23:

Table 10: Disability of job applicants. Figures for 2021/22 are shown as ():

Disability	No of applicants	% of applicants
Yes	11 (24)	3.57% (4.48%)
No	294 (509)	95.45 % (94.96%)
Prefer not to say	3 (3)	0.97% (0.56%)
Total	308 (536)	100.00%

Table 11: Religion of job applicants. Figures for 2021/22 are shown as ():

Religion	No of applicants	% of applicants
Buddhist	6(7)	1.30% (1.31%)
Christian	104 (206)	33.77% (38.43%)
Hindu	35 (49)	11.36% (9.14%)
Jain	0 (01)	0.00% (0.00%)
Jewish	2 (5)	0.65% (0.93%)
Muslim	48 (55)	15.58% (10.26%)
Sikh	2 (6)	0.65% (1.31%)
Other	4 (7)	1.30% (1.31%)
No religion	94 (166)	30.52% (30.97%)
Prefer not to say	13 (35)	4.22% (6.53%)
Total	308 (536)	100.00%

Table 12: Marital Status of job applicants. Figures for 2021/22 are shown as ():

Marital Status	No of applicants	% of applicants
Civil Partnership	4 (4)	1.30% (0.75%)
Divorced / Separated	27 (36)	8.77% (6.72%)
Married	109 (202)	35.39% (37.69%)
Single	162 (291)	52.6% (54.29%)
Widowed	0 (0)	0.00% (0.37%)
Prefer not to say	0 (1)	0.00% (0.19%)
Total	308 (536)	100.00%

Table 13: Sexual Orientation of job applicants. Figures for 2021/22 are shown as ():

Sexual Orientation	No of applicants	% of applicants
Bisexual	8 (21)	2.60% (3.92%)
Gay or Lesbian	7 (10)	2.27% (1.87%)
Heterosexual	267 (459)	86.69% (85.63%)
Prefer not to say	23 (44)	7.47% (8.21%)
Other	3 (2)	0.37 (0.37%)
Total	308 (536)	100.00%

18.0 THE WAY FORWARD

- 18.1 The council is fully committed to equalities and performing strongly as an employer of choice in representing staff with all protected characteristics at all levels in the organisation.
- 18.2 In an effort to improve representation in our workforce for those who have a disability the council will continue to participate in the Disability Confident employer scheme.
- 18.3 We have placed an advert promoting us as an employer of choice in a specialist disability related publication and we will continue to do similar promotional work going forward.
- 18.4 An Organisation Development Strategy incorporating succession planning and talent management has been developed, in part to ensure we are forward planning to address the aging workforce profile we currently have, to avoid a potential exodus of key knowledge and skills which might impact on corporate and service delivery. We will continue to review our strategy and ensure corporate training needs are revised annually to reflect the organisation's needs.
- 18.5 The council will seek to encourage younger people to join the organisation, by building on the existing apprenticeship schemes and work experience placements offered, including a scheme working closely with local schools. We will further explore the potential of providing a graduate scheme at the council, subject to available funding.