



# Insights Assessment Report

Southwark Council

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## Acknowledgements

The Assessor would like to thank the Leader, the CEO, the directors, management and staff at Southwark Council for their commitment and support prior to and during this Investors in People (IIP) assessment. This level of engagement is key to the process and is necessary if the organisation is to continue to continuously improve and adopt the recommendations included in this report.

The Assessor would like to thank the organisation for providing a room for the on-site interviews and for the very warm welcome received.

Special thanks go to the organisation for listening and for taking on board the initial feedback, and to the internal project team for their enthusiasm regarding IIP, input to the planning process, communication with the Assessor relating to organising the interviews, and for providing additional information in the run-up to the on-site interviews and after the assessment.

Most importantly, the Assessor would like to thank everyone who took part in the IIP online assessment survey (OLA), and to those who attended the interviews and the context meeting, for their very warm welcome, their willingness and their enthusiasm regarding the process and the noteworthy loyalty they have shown towards their employer. The feedback contained in this report could not have been gathered without the honest and open participation of the people who completed the OLA and attended the interviews, and their contribution and assistance are gratefully acknowledged.

## Executive Summary

Southwark Council was last accredited as an IIP organisation in 2015 and achieved Gold status. It was evident through conversations with staff, presentations with management and spending time at the Council, that the organisation was on a journey to implement a culture that promoted high performance working and to become a great place to work, building on the values and culture that the Leader, the CEO and the Strategic Directors set out to achieve a few years ago. Performance, people, policies and practices were improving in terms of sophistication and deployment, enhancing a people culture that maximised the value of engaging, developing, managing and motivating staff to perform at their place of work and to have an impact on the wider community that they serve: the residents of Southwark. The Council has achieved further notable success, for example, more than 95% of council homes are now of a decent standard, school standards are rising and better quality, affordable homes are being built.

Three years on, the result of this assessment confirms that the original momentum has not reduced but has gained pace and is applied with greater levels of vigour and tenacity during a time of significant change and challenge within the sector and a tighter squeeze on budgets set by central government. The importance of people is understood by the Council, as is the relationship with the wider stakeholder network in the borough, with much focus being placed on community groups and the disadvantaged, resulting in a high-performing council in many areas. Schools have been transformed from being some of the worst to being some of the best in the country; supporting a fairer future for all. Southwark is also no longer a 'red flagged' borough because of its previous lack of decent homes.

Southwark has received many external accolades both nationally and in London, for example, individual departments have a range of recognition tools to suit working patterns and locations, in addition to events such as the recent Traded Service breakfast with the Strategic Director and Chief Executive. Furthermore, Nigel Adams MP praised Southwark's Trailblazer work in preventing homelessness (July 2018). Southwark's Housing Solutions service also retained the nationally-recognised Customer Service Excellence accreditation (June 2018) and the Council, working in partnership with engineering firm AECOM, won a prestigious award at the 2018 London Transport Awards (March 2018). The parking team and Jo Redshaw won two awards at the British Parking Awards at the Lancaster Gate Hotel on 9 March 2018 and the Council was highly commended in the Council of the Year category at the LGC Awards 2018 (March 2018), placed in the top 100 Apprenticeships Employer 2017 list by the National Apprenticeships Service and was shortlisted by IIP for Apprentice Employer of the Year 2018.

The concept that happy, contented and satisfied staff have a direct correlation with performance is acknowledged by the CEO, the directors and the senior leadership team. There is now a strong alignment between delivery from the Council and what people do 'on the ground', supported by more evident people strategies, which were evident three years ago but which have improved and are more consistently applied.

Significant investment continues to be made in training despite budget cuts, for example, ILM for managers and supervisors (which is well embedded) and a new energised HR and training function to manage and embed a culture of continuous improvement. Progress has been steady, confirmed at interview with the Strategic Directors and line managers, reflecting the outcomes that the Council is now achieving.

The strategy applied demonstrates positive outcomes, not only in relation to people's experience and perception but also in relation to performance. Internal employee surveys have consistently presented positive results and an uplift in performance metrics since the last IIP assessment. The impact of its strong, people-based culture is reflected in the Council's objective to deliver quality services, for example, a new shared ICT service was implemented with the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Brent in response to poor service delivery from a previous contractor and in response to staff feedback that significant changes were needed (November 2017). Children's Services were also assessed as 'Good' in March 2017 and SEND also received a 'Good' assessment in August 2018 from Ofsted. The latest Councilwide staff survey revealed high levels of staff engagement and improvements from the 2015 survey satisfaction levels (July 2017). Southwark further undertook an LGA Peer Review in September 2015, which confirmed "***If anyone can, Southwark can!***"

Maintaining this position is a key performance indicator (KPI) in the current Council Plan and is recognised as a critical factor for future success. The Council Plan for 2018/19 to 2021/22 is outlined below.

## **A Modern Council**

To deliver our plan, the Council must be fit for the future, with a modern workforce, backed by good governance and sound resource planning.

Our residents are at the heart of everything we do, so we will ensure that everyone who lives in Southwark experiences a modern and efficient council where our residents and their needs drive our policies and our delivery. We want everyone who lives or works in Southwark, and those who visit or study, to experience the very best that Southwark has to offer. As a council we will be on the side of our residents, fighting for them in challenging times.

In order to deliver on our ambitions, we need to have responsive, digitally enabled services that adapt well to change. Digital improvements have the potential to transform individuals and communities. We want to ensure that everyone can access and make the most of these new opportunities, and that no one is left behind in a fast-changing world.

We will continue to adapt our services to ensure they are cost-effective, reliable and responsive, and can be accessed at a time convenient to residents and businesses. We will also continue to develop new ways of working and to modernise our operations and staff accommodation.

We want all residents and businesses in the borough to have the digital tools and skills they need. We will continue to work with partners to improve Southwark's digital infrastructure, and we will support residents and community groups to improve their skills so they are able to access everything the digital world has to offer.

We cannot escape the impact on council services of significant budget cuts. This means we will have to continue to look at new ways of doing more with less, including charging for some services, working with new and different partners outside the Council, and delivering value for money.

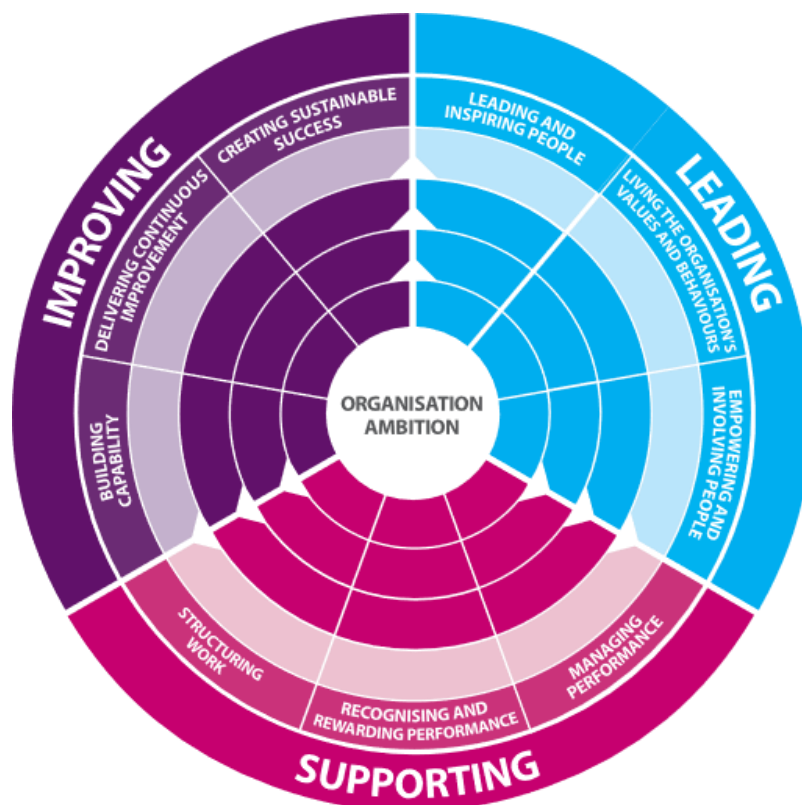
Gaining independent feedback and a baseline measurement is important to the organisation; therefore, the decision was made to continue to use the Investors in People Sixth Generation Framework, as it provides detailed insights in relation to achieving high-performance working.

The positive alignment results and associated results from the IIP OLA were reinforced by feedback at interview. This confirmed a culture that incorporates openness, truly supports diversity, trust and willingness to communicate, and involves all people at every level in the work of the Council as much as is feasibly possible. These attributes were remarked upon during interviews and were recognised as influencing the high levels of loyalty and pride in working for Southwark, with many people at all levels saying they joined or wanted to come to Southwark because of what it is doing and achieving. The mutual ethos is also recognised as important and a significant aspect in the levels of engagement achieved, underpinned by a genuine, values-led leadership style from the Leader and the CEO.

In terms of opportunities for performance improvement, the immediate priority areas identified are: ensuring a continued focus on delivering continuous improvement; enhancing levels of ownership in relation to decision making; promoting the individual's responsibility; and establishing a culture of talent, succession planning and learning as a result of impact analysis and benefit realisation. These priorities will continue to flourish in the current culture; embracing diversity and the brand and brand values of the Council, in the principles that the Council lives by. A detailed overview of all recommendations can be found on page 51 of this report.

The heat map below summarises the overall assessment outcome. It shows that the organisation attained 'Advanced' level in nine indicators. This results in a Gold level award, and congratulations are extended to everyone at Southwark Council.

### Southwark Council Assessment Outcome





## Organisational Context

During initial discussions before the assessment took place, the 'As Is' heat map below showed an even split as to where the organisation believed itself to be and where it wanted to be. Discussions with managers and directors were very thorough and robust. These were seen by the Assessor as being useful, and highlighted from the outset an organisation that knows and understands itself, and a team that understands the opportunities and challenges ahead with emerging, better-defined objectives and people processes that are much more established and are creating positive outcomes much more consistently than three years ago, for example, business planning and the behavioural framework were mentioned as well as the efforts to eradicate inconsistencies in line management.

The Assessor discussed and challenged the outcomes through debate and interaction, with emphasis on the levels and relating to all the indicators. The discussions were open and honest and were followed through at the one-to-one interviews with the CEO, the directors, managers and other senior staff members as well as with the Organisation Team (OT), who led on all IIP matters for the Council. From the outset, the organisation felt that continuing to achieve IIP at Gold status was seen as a good benchmark for receiving feedback throughout the Council. The Council has the ambition to achieve Platinum status in a few years by improving in areas that are already working well and in areas where improvements can be made. IIP links clearly with the principles by which the Council lives.

Many targets have been achieved, for example, the commitment to make Southwark a full employment borough, with a target of 5,000 for the years 2014 to 2018 but with 6,000 having been achieved. Furthermore, 84% of residents surveyed stated that they were happy with the housing repair service provided, the free swim and gym (offered to both residents and employees, with 65,000 registered on the scheme), and 75% of residents satisfied with the neighbourhood. In addition, a construction skills centre launched in September 2016 has supported and trained more than 300 residents and is listed in the Centrivia Top 100 Apprenticeships Employer List.

The Council's vision is outlined in the 2018/19 to 2021/22 plan and asks: What does a fairer future for all mean? It also adds: we have identified the five areas where we believe we can make a real difference to improve the lives of our residents, and transform our borough to be the very best it can be. In Southwark a fairer future for all is: the best start in life: clean air, great schools and opportunities to thrive; the quality homes that you and your family need; a great place to live with clean, green and safe communities; a healthy borough where your background doesn't determine your life chances; and full employment, where everyone has the skills to play a full part in our economy. We have moved a long way towards achieving this in the last eight years, and this Council Plan sets out the next steps and the direction we will take in the future. But we know that to achieve this we must be a council that works alongside



you, listening to you and fighting for you. So, to do this our vision is also to be a council that is: fighting for you, on your side in tough and challenging times; a modern and efficient council: working with the community, listening to residents and open to you.

## **Our values**

Everything that we do as a council is to achieve our vision of a fairer future for all in Southwark. Our values inform how we will do this, the principles that will guide our decisions and determine how we deliver on the commitments that we have made.

It was recognised that, with focused development, the potential exists for the Council to achieve its objectives, which will be recognised through demonstrating an embedded culture and more consistency with all areas of the Council working as one team, which the OLA results revealed as being a strength. The foundations to achieve many of these objectives are already in place and were discussed at the context meeting and at one-to-ones, further backed up by documentation received before, during and after the assessment.

## **Metrics**

The Council publishes a very thorough workforce report annually. This is discussed by Cabinet and the top team. It is a well-embedded function and the Assessor has seen the 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 reports. A few points noted by the Assessor were: 1) during 2017/2018, 494 training sessions were delivered with 2,740 members of staff attending. These figures were coordinated by the OT Team; more would have attended locally; 2) in January 2018, a new Learner Management System (LMS) was implemented by the corporate OT Team to accurately report on training. The Council target was to have 3% of its workforce as apprentices; this figure is now 3.5%; a 0.4% increase since 2016/17; and 3) ILM was implemented in 2014. Currently, 297 managers have completed the programme and 104 are partly through their studies.

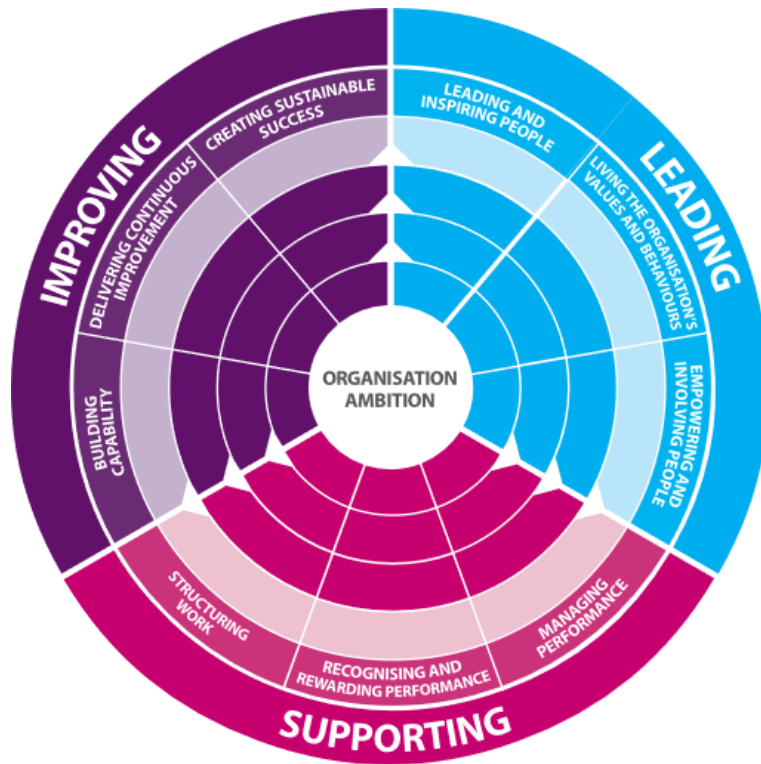
## **Southwark Council: Self-diagnostic**

Having carefully considered the IIP Framework, Southwark Council believes that it is advanced in many areas of IIP and has the culture in place to be a high-performing organisation in three years' time.

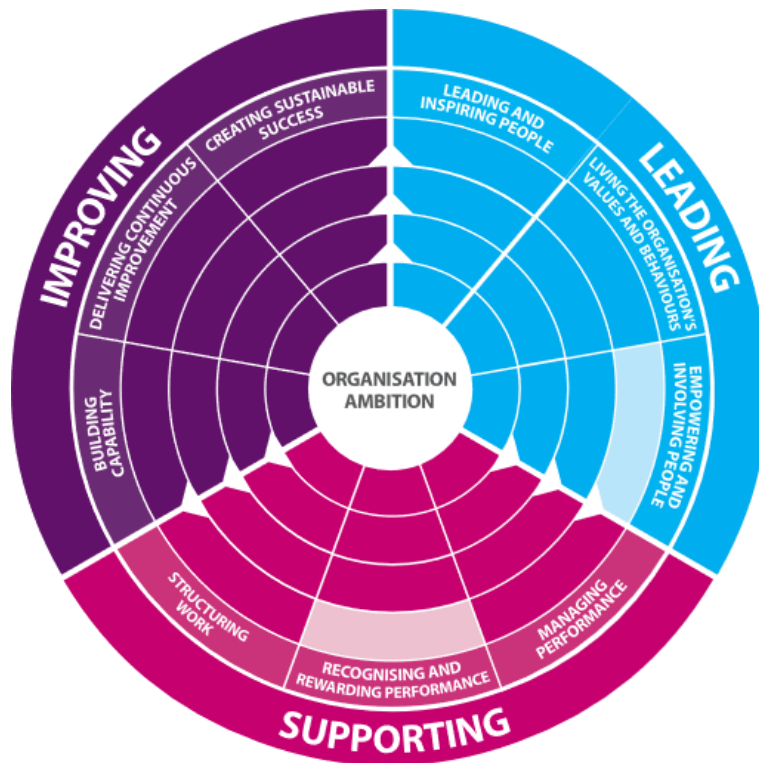
The heat maps below summarise where the Council believes it currently sits against each of the nine IIP indicators, and where it aspires to be in order to achieve its organisational ambition.

The shaded cells represent the maturity level against each indicator. The more cells shaded, the more mature and embedded the practices are within the organisation.

'As Is' Heat Map



Aspiration or 'To Be' Heat Map



## Assessment Approach

Following the initial planning meetings, presentation to the Strategic Directors, meetings with the top one hundred managers at their conference, the context discussion with the directors and key senior managers in September 2018 (from which details for the organisational analysis were elicited), the organisation was assessed primarily using the OLA and face-to-face interviews.

Staff were informed of the IIP assessment and accreditation process by the OT Team in September 2018, when they were asked to take part in completing the OLA and a possible interview. This provided time to deal with any questions or issues that staff raised. The organisation reported that there were no material issues and that staff were happy to be involved. As an organisation of 4,500 employees, all staff members were asked to complete the OLA. A total 2,404 completed responses were returned (57%), indicating a very high level of engagement by staff and improving on the last internal staff survey. The OLA responses represented all functions and levels of the Council.

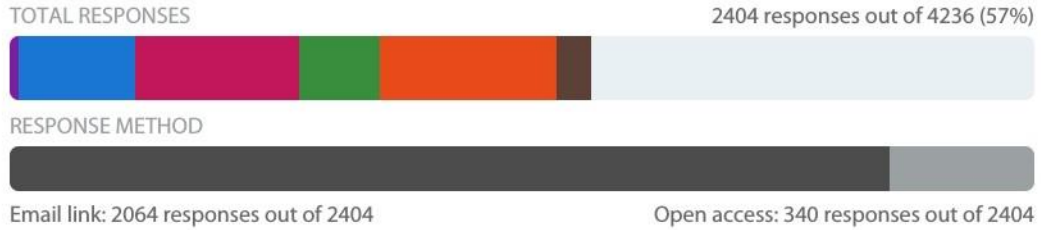
Online and paper assessment responses were analysed to determine key themes or issues, and these were used as a basis on which interviews were designed and administered. Structured interviews were carried out with 150 respondents from all functions and levels, selected purposively because they were ideally placed to discuss IIP and the wider Council opportunities and challenges. People were interviewed in both one-to-one meetings and small groups. Confidentiality was assured, and people in groups had the opportunity to talk both individually and in private with the Assessor while he was on site. All interviews were conducted in an office, with the Assessor also visiting one of the depots, where he met frontline staff and four union representatives. All interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.

There was further follow-up with a member of the OT Team to discuss performance metrics and related documentation. The Assessor also met with the Leader of the Council and one other Cabinet member and had a follow-up meeting with the CEO.

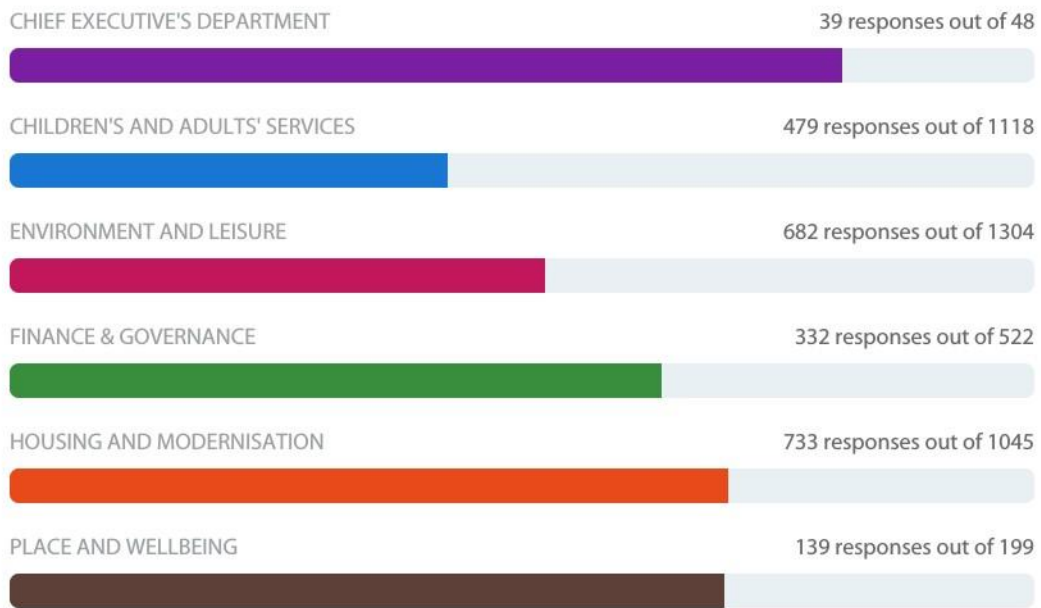
Data on which the assessment was based included that elicited from the OLA and interviews, and documents provided by the Council. These were freely provided and included: business strategy; training details; the full suite of people-related procedures and key performance metrics; reviews of services; and a detailed document prepared by the Head of OT setting out the Council's position in relation to IIP.

# Survey Response Rate

## Overview



## By Team



## How Southwark Council was assessed



The OLA was deployed to 4,500 employees, with a response of 2,404 (57%). This was above the international IIP guidelines and therefore the sample is considered to be statistically significant.



Based on the findings from the OLA, the IIP Assessor interviewed 150 employees from across the organisation.

The types of analysis undertaken and the sources of information used



are mentioned earlier in the report.

## Detailed Assessment Outcome

### Southwark Council IIP Benchmark

#### Benchmark



\* This reveals the average IIP Benchmark for all organisations who have undertaken the survey.

The IIP benchmark shows Southwark Council's overall performance from the OLA compared to the IIP average for all organisations that have completed the OLA, and against the average in 'Public Administration and Defence'. Please note that this benchmark is based on live data and was correct as at 6 November 2018.

#### Overview of OLA results

The table below shows how Southwark Council's employees responded to the OLA for each indicator of the IIP Standard (including the average per indicator and the difference to other organisations that have completed the OLA).

## Indicator summary

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average Indicator Score	Difference from IIP Average
INDICATOR 1 Leading and inspiring people	15.7%	33.0%	19.2%	15.7%	6.2%	5.6%	4.5%	5	-0.6
INDICATOR 2 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	22.6%	41.2%	17.8%	11.5%	3.0%	2.1%	1.7%	5.6	-0.3
INDICATOR 3 Empowering and involving people	21.4%	35.7%	19.8%	8.6%	6.2%	4.6%	3.7%	5.3	-0.5
INDICATOR 4 Managing performance	27.0%	38.6%	13.7%	8.8%	3.7%	4.5%	3.7%	5.5	-0.3
INDICATOR 5 Recognising and rewarding high performance	12.4%	27.9%	19.3%	16.3%	7.5%	9.0%	7.6%	4.6	-0.5
INDICATOR 6 Structuring work	24.4%	40.9%	16.2%	9.4%	3.6%	3.0%	2.4%	5.5	-0.3
INDICATOR 7 Building capability	19.5%	35.4%	18.6%	13.2%	5.0%	4.6%	3.8%	5.2	-0.3
INDICATOR 8 Delivering continuous improvement	17.4%	37.5%	20.8%	13.7%	3.5%	4.3%	2.9%	5.3	-0.3
INDICATOR 9 Creating sustainable success	22.3%	37.4%	19.8%	13.1%	3.1%	2.4%	2.0%	5.5	-0.3

NB: The average indicator score (AIS) is the average response from all employees who participated in the OLA. To help interpret this score, number 7 represents a response of 'Strongly Agree'. Therefore, the closer the average indicator score is to 7, the more positively the result can be read. The number 3.5 is a neutral response.

The next part of the report provides a detailed analysis of the Council's assessment against the IIP Framework. The Assessment Outcome Table in Appendix 1 shows the performance level achieved for each of the 27 themes within the IIP Framework.

## Optional questions

The results to the optional questions chosen by the organisation have been incorporated into the survey results. These have no bearing on the outcome of the assessment.



## Indicator 1: Leading and inspiring people

### Indicator 1: Leading and inspiring people

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Base Questions</b>							
I trust the leaders of my organisation	12.7%	34.4%	18.7%	17.6%	6.8%	5.0%	4.9%
Management communicates the organisation's ambition	15.2%	41.0%	20.9%	9.9%	5.0%	5.1%	3.0%
My manager motivates me to achieve my best	25.8%	31.4%	16.2%	10.8%	5.2%	5.1%	5.4%
My organisation develops great leaders	9.2%	25.0%	21.0%	24.6%	7.9%	7.4%	4.9%

### Creating transparency and trust

The AIS for this indicator is 5.0; 0.6 below the overall IIP average.

The vision of the organisation is very clear and is robustly communicated to all employees, with everyone 'on board' with what the Leader, the CEO and the leadership team currently have planned and continue to plan for, with 77.1% agreeing (15.2% strongly agreeing, 41% agreeing and 20.9% somewhat agreeing). People strongly stated during the interviews, (100%), at all levels and from all departments and areas, how proud they are that the Council is performing well, and confirmed that it is a team effort; something that has gone from strength to strength over the last few years. The above results were further consolidated during the interviews. The results from the OLA further revealed 65.8% agreeing that there is transparency and trust within the Council. ***"The Strategic Directors are excellent here."***

Significant communication takes place throughout the organisation, both formal and informal, which many people confirmed had improved since the last IIP assessment; an action point at that time to improve internal communications. Staff briefings have been created as an opportunity for all members of staff to come together to engage with one another and the leadership team. There is also increasing use being made of social media, with blogs being posted by the directors and the CEO. The culture of communication and 'tone' throughout the Council is two-way and engaging, whether that be staff conferences and meetings, management meetings or one-to-ones. Furthermore, staff talk positively about the Leader, the CEO and the Strategic Team, and trust them to lead Southwark effectively.

Leaders are engaged with the staff, whether that be through observation in teams, away days, development policy meetings or plans relating to a transformation project, general meetings or taking the time to go 'back to the floor', which many directors do and have done so for a

number of years. Approachability, trust and engagement are visible in many areas, which was confirmed both by longer-serving and newly appointed members of staff. Across the groups, this was also consistent, for example, in the Chief Executive's Department (a small department), 82% state that they trust the leadership, with this figure being 54% in Environment and Leisure (a larger department) and frontline services.

***“CEO’s blog.”***

***“Doing things that other councils don’t do.”***

***“We look after our residents and our staff.”***

Many communication tools were also mentioned, for example, blogs, Yammer displays in lifts and hubs (for example, Tooley Street).

***“Internal communications have greatly improved.”***

### Motivating people to deliver the organisation’s objectives

The passion and loyalty from the staff towards the Council ‘shines through’ and has not diminished since the last IIP Gold accreditation, with the OLA revealing 73.4% of staff feeling motivated to deliver the organisation’s objectives. The passion of staff is further evidenced when they talk about the residents, the newly-planned challenges and the high profile of the Council, with many stating that it ***“makes me feel proud to work here and very proud of what Southwark does.”***

Motivation to achieve greater results year on year is also strong and, through the KPIs and work planning process, this challenge and ownership prevails, with 60.2% in Finance and Governance stating that they are motivated to deliver the organisational objectives and, in Place and Wellbeing, 59% of staff stating that they are motivated by managers. In addition, many members of staff are inspired and supported to achieve personal goals in their own careers and whichever path they decide to take.

Internal promotions and career growth are effective, with many people in leadership and management positions being 'home grown'. This has improved since the last IIP assessment through the use of the extensive and ongoing ILM programme.

***“Corporate targets in place, data collected, monthly targets reported on.”***

### Developing leadership capability

Over the last few years, the role of leaders and managers has been clarified and greatly enhanced, together with significant learning and development bring provided for managers and leaders; resulting in aspiring leaders and a change in culture, effectiveness and capability. There is now greater consistency among line managers than there was three years ago, with only minor inconsistencies mentioned by staff at interview. The OLA revealed 55.2% agreeing that the Council develops great leaders. This figure was higher at the interviews, with 80% confirming this with the Assessor.

***“Managers’ way of working in place.”***

***“Much much less inconsistency in management practice now.”***

***“ILM programme is excellent.”***

Significant effort has been channelled into developing both current and future leadership capabilities, as follows:

- Leadership and management training: ILM has been established for a number of years.
- Coaching and mentoring by directors in many forms, for example, senior female directors coaching more junior staff through the well-established women's network.
- Collaborative learning opportunities: attending conferences, networking outside the Council, representing the Council at events and chairing external meetings.
- Presenting projects to the CEO and Strategic Directors through the ILM qualifications, which has resulted in many people leading on projects throughout the organisation.

**Performance level achieved: Advanced**

Opportunities for the Council to consider under these three themes in terms of achieving higher levels of accreditation are as follows:

- Consider where possible to use the IIP OLA survey results at a staff conference or through each director/manager to discuss the direction of the Council, in line with the results, and to discuss what everyone can do to achieve a higher result next time leading to higher-performing individuals and teams. Making this a workshop-style event is encouraged, with a view to putting in place realistic targets to achieve, to manage expectations of staff at all levels and to make use of the data. Some of percentages in the 'neither agree nor disagree' category need to be explored, for example, 24.6% of people neither agree nor disagree that the Council develops great leaders.
- Visibility and engagement of all senior managers with members of staff they do not work with on a regular basis could be improved, through informal meetings in smaller groups, such as conversations (based on the model delivered to residents), breakfasts or lunches. This will help to: build relationships; build trust; identify talent; support members of staff who may have issues; provide a way of 'getting messages across'; and further develop the mentoring and coaching of staff (especially where diversity could be improved in some of the management teams).
- Cross-working among managers could be improved, in addition to consolidating the 'one team' ethic (although this has greatly improved as a result the ILM programme), in line with how a member of the public would view a 'joined-up' service from the Council.
- Capacity of some leaders could be reviewed in order to examine leadership and management capacity, particularly at assistant director level.
- The link <https://www.investorsinpeople.com/resources/more-about-investorspeople/why-are-some-companies-better-creating-high-performing> outlines the overlap between Dr Andre de Waal's work on high-performing organisations and the IIP Standard. Dr de Waal was the key academic used to create the Sixth Generation Standard. It is worth reading this report, particularly those managers undertaking the ILM programme, with regards to the objective for the organisation to become a high performing one.

## Indicator 2: Living the organisation's values and behaviours

### Indicator 2: Living the organisation's values and behaviours

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Base Questions</b>							
The values at my organisation guide the way we work	17.6%	36.7%	22.5%	12.7%	5.0%	3.3%	2.2%
My organisation has clear values	23.7%	42.5%	17.2%	8.9%	3.4%	2.2%	2.0%
I share my organisation's values	23.8%	44.9%	17.3%	9.6%	1.7%	1.2%	1.5%
My behaviour reflects the organisation's values	30.4%	46.3%	11.4%	8.0%	1.5%	1.0%	1.3%
I challenge behaviours which don't match the organisation's values	17.5%	35.7%	20.5%	18.2%	3.5%	2.9%	1.7%

### Operating in line with the values

The AIS for this indicator is 5.6; 0.3 below the overall IIP average.

The values are well embedded within the Council and the newly developed behavioural framework is enhancing this and is becoming well established. This applies throughout all areas, and to directors and members of staff, with the OLA revealing 68.8% of staff agreeing that they share the same values as the Council. This supports the directors' argument that they believe that the values are well embedded but, equally, want to keep revisiting them and 'keep them fresh'. They regard the behavioural framework as a cultural tool to drive this further. The commitment and drive to do this came across very strongly during the interviews, with approximately 70% agreeing.

Many events and Council processes drive the values, for example, the values are reflected in policies, the various plans developed by the directors and members of staff with their teams and in the work planning processes that provide the focus for people to ensure that the values and behaviours are embedded and provide the model framework to challenge people. In both the OLA and at interview, people agreed that they share the same values as the organisation and that their behaviour reflects the values (with the OLA revealing 76.7% of staff agreeing with this). The enthusiasm with which people at all levels talk about 'Future Focus' is to be noted, for example, many frontline members of staff are fully aware of the requirement for the Council to effectively allocate and spend its budget.

The fact that the people, the operating processes and the culture are managed using a genuine and open approach by the Leader, the CEO and the Strategic Directors supports the values

and behaviours. During the interviews, people could link examples of things they themselves had done with actions and decisions the organisation had taken in line with the values, for example, the restructuring of teams being undertaken to reflect the values, and the overall structure of the Council being changed to adapt to changing times, for example, the implementation of the Place and Wellbeing Department.

### Adopting the values

The 'principles we live by' and the behaviours are evident throughout the organisation from members of staff at all levels, which reflect the Council's objectives over the last few years. The new organisational structure and new key appointments were made based on feedback from the last IIP and there is now more consistency and continuous improvement. These working practices have been in place for a number of years and have become well embedded, as confirmed after the last IIP assessment when the organisation achieved Gold accreditation under IIP5. The OLA revealed 76% of managers agreeing that they adopt the values, with 66% of non-managers also agreeing.

Examples mentioned during discussions with staff in relation to adopting the values were as follows:

- Recruitment and selection are based around the values; this applies to external recruitment, internal recruitment, secondments and internal movement of staff.
- People are assessed on the values and behaviours through work plans and the performance management system throughout the Council for leaders, managers and members of staff.
- The values and behaviours feature very clearly in the deployment of learning and training activities.
- The values continue to feature strongly in leadership and management training throughout the Council, for example, through ILM courses.

### Living the values

Many employees have demonstrated, and continue to demonstrate, how they operate in line with the values, through their work, their interaction with residents, the community and voluntary groups in the borough and the work of the management group, for example, when people apply for promotion, are preparing for a project or are dealing with residents' queries.

The majority of directors have implemented an open communication structure on a day-to-day basis. Some of them now work from sites across the borough, utilising the ever-improving remote working tools now in place, with visits to departments and 'back to the floor' initiatives, and meeting frontline staff at events, for example, the women's group, tea with the CEO, EMpower (BAME) and the LGBTQ+ group.

Staff are involved in the decisions made, for example, consultative sessions relating to plans and processes that affect staff, and transformation projects, including sports and social events. As a result, staff value this approach. Although this has been part of the Council's culture for many years, staff believe that it has improved, in addition to the external projects to determine where the Council is having an impact on residents, for example, new libraries and community regeneration projects that are helping residents. Interviewees confirmed a motivated workforce when discussing the Council's achievements, with some of the projects being visible and admired by other councils.

People can and do challenge behaviours at all levels, and there are opportunities for staff to talk in confidence to the CEO and directors, as well as use other avenues, for example, the work plans and performance management are wide reaching and include elements of 360degree feedback in places in addition to further input from internal services throughout the Council depending on the role of the person being reviewed and appraised. A total 53.2% of staff stated that they can challenge the behaviours and, at interview, gave examples of how they can do this, as follows:

- Meetings.
- One-to-ones/supervision.
- Observations.
- Informally.
- Through documentation and policies.
- An open door to the CEO and directors so that they can feed directly into them.
- Via HR, which people believe has improved and that trust has been established.
- Whistleblowing policy in place and used as appropriate.

In terms of challenging behaviours, 56% in Housing and Modernisation agree, with 54% in Children's and Adults' Services also agreeing. Comments made to the Assessor by interviewees at all levels included:

***“Vision, values and the Council Plan, a very strong golden thread.”***

***“Respect at work policy in place.”***

***“I spend a lot of time talking to staff.” (Director)***

The directors are visible right throughout the Council – both formally and informally – and are seen as approachable and prepared to act on feedback. HR was also mentioned as a function that people trust and feel supported by, especially by some managers. In addition, people speak with enthusiasm about the 'team' and 'supportive' culture that exists among the staff, both towards each other and towards the CEO, the directors, managers, the wider stakeholders and clients, and further discussed the many groups set up, for example, the women's group, the health and wellbeing group, the LGBTQ+ group, and the empower and disability group.

In summary, employees are very much aligned with the ethics of the Council. Staff are extremely proud of the Council's achievements and many stated that they would recommend Southwark as an excellent place to work and live.

**Performance level achieved: Advanced**

Opportunities for the Council to consider under these three themes in terms of achieving higher levels of accreditation are as follows:

- Directors and managers should spend time with all members of staff in order to revisit the behaviours and values so that everyone clearly understands them and keeps them 'alive'. This will help create a network of behavioural 'leads' to help continuously embed the behavioural framework.

- Display the values and behaviours more publicly and visibly at all sites in the borough, for suppliers, customers and all members of staff and the public to see, thereby building on the idea that the organisation is a values-driven council.
- All assistant directors should further ensure that the values are role-modelled by everyone, at all levels, and should lead by example.
- The link <https://www.investorsinpeople.com/resources/ideas-andinspiration/organisational-values-must-reflect-reality-not-aspirations-why> may help with any further work being considered relating to values and behaviours, especially within an ongoing changing business environment.

## Indicator 3: Empowering and involving people

### Indicator 3: Empowering and involving people

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Base Questions</b>							
I have all the information I need to do my job well	15.5%	36.2%	22.9%	8.8%	8.7%	4.8%	3.1%
I am encouraged to use initiative in my role	30.9%	37.7%	15.6%	6.2%	3.7%	3.0%	2.9%
I have a say in decisions that affect my role	13.6%	27.9%	23.6%	12.4%	8.6%	7.7%	6.2%
I am trusted to make decisions in my role	25.5%	41.0%	17.1%	6.9%	3.9%	3.0%	2.7%

#### Empowering people

The AIS for this indicator is 5.3, 0.5 below the overall IIP average.

The OLA revealed that 57.1% (21.4% strongly agree and 35.7% agree) of people feel empowered by their employer. Southwark Council is seen as having a culture of openness and empowerment, which has been its philosophy for a number of years, with its history of conducting staff surveys to reflect employment engagement satisfaction.

The sharing of knowledge and support for people to do their job to the standard required is high on the agenda for directors and managers, particularly as a result of severe budget cuts with fewer members of staff now having to deliver the Council's services. For example, there are best practice groups on methods and relating to the theory and practice of management, mainly as a result of the ILM programme and policy issues, or providing online advice, for example, the Whitehall industry group. The OLA revealed 51.7% of staff agreeing that they have the necessary information they need to do their job effectively.

There are instances throughout the Council where people chair a meeting, or where a project is led by more junior people in the group, which in turn develops staff in many areas, for example, in leadership skills. Coming up with ideas and using your initiative is strongly encouraged, for example, the modernisation programme and the budget challenges in Children's and Adults' Services. These ideas are then presented to directors in terms of objectives and how they can support the Council's strategy and objectives going forward.

In many areas, people are trusted to make decisions that are right for their department or function, and many staff have done so. The OLA revealed 68.6% of staff stating that they are encouraged and can take the initiative in their role and in groups, for example, in Place and Wellbeing 79% agree, and in the Chief Executive's Department 80% agree.



***“We trust the leaders here.”***

***“All staff conference in Environment and Leisure was excellent. We want it to continue.”***

### Participating and collaborating

There is a history of strong employee relations within the Council, and this is evident among the long-serving members of staff and the notable examples of people who travel a long way to work at the Council. An example noted at the context meeting was how the values and ethos of the Council ‘shine through’, with an open and honest debate taking place relating to the issues and challenges and how committed the directors and managers are to the business and to achieving their KPIs. The OLA revealed that 56% of managers agree that there is participation and collaboration, with 36% of staff agreeing. These two figures will need further discussion and exploration because the figure for senior managers is 83%, which means maybe some lessons can be learned as to how to improve this at other levels. One example noted by the Assessor was the involvement of the in-house repairs contractor being involved in communications when services in that area were being taken back in house.

Leadership takes an open approach, with strong support for staff to take reasonable risks and to try new things. There is an open-door policy, set by the CEO, and every effort is made to listen, to act quickly on new ideas and to implement them; not just from staff but also by listening to clients and through various external meetings, for example, the 3,000 conversations with the public which have been fed into the Council Plan.

Throughout the interviews, people discussed the culture to ‘be yourself’, to try new ways of working and of being well supported, and that these are some of the reasons why they work at Southwark, with many staff also being residents of the borough. Some people further stated that they had previously left the Council but came back because the same culture did not prevail in other places and was unique to Southwark.

There are many factors that make the Council great, according to employees. Factors consistently mentioned were teamwork and the people they work with, the diversity and inclusion culture and loyalty to the CEO. Employee dedication to the residents, the quality of work and the quality of the services also come across ‘loud and clear’, as well as their support for the Council to continue to be a high-performing one. The OLA revealed that 66.5% of people feel empowered to take decisions and act on them, demonstrating that the solutions and processes in place are working in many areas and that staff believe in them in line with the values and culture. In some of the groups, the results vary, for example, in Finance and Governance the figure is 70% and in Environment and Leisure 65%.

***“Regular meetings with the unions around restructuring.”***

### Making decisions

The engagement of managers and supervisors as leaders is strong in many areas, through departmental meetings, one-to-one meetings and work planning, with many people from this group confirming during the interviews that they participate in the decision-making processes, which is enhanced by the ILM initiative. There was no sense of a blame culture operating within the Council, and everyone spoken to stated that they feel as involved at departmental

level as much as at organisational level, feeling trusted in their roles to make decisions. The OLA revealed 66.5% of people agreeing with this and 17.1% somewhat agreeing.

The entire development programme over the last few years has been to raise the Council's image and to improve performance, and this has now matured with very successful outcomes for both residents and staff.

Many examples were given relating to the involvement, communication with and engagement of staff, as follows:

- All-staff weekly meetings in place throughout the departments.
- Management meetings.
- Operational meetings.
- Quality observations – effectively executed in line with the Council's values.
- Departmental meetings.
- Staff visits to community and voluntary groups.
- Director forums.
- Other staff seconded to higher level meetings, given a 'voice' at the table and involved in decision making through internal panels.
- Secondments to other departments.
- Working groups.
- Blogs.
- Newsletters.
- Away days.

People feel empowered to make decisions, and locally, through line managers, there is robust communication and information, thereby enabling staff to 'get on with the job'. This was confirmed by managers and staff during their interviews with the Assessor. This has improved over the last few years, and middle managers now appear more settled in their roles, whereby people feel able to 'speak up' and challenge the way things are done, and in the majority of areas this is fully embedded. The Council's investment in line management development has contributed to this improvement, and this was confirmed during the employee interviews with discussion about the ongoing ILM programme and the many promotions into higher positions following successful completion of the programme.

Many workshops and focus groups take place to discuss plans. People feel that their 'voices are heard' and that they can make a difference. There is transparency throughout the organisation, and most managers in their respective areas are noted for their openness with members of staff, with a strong emphasis on the 'golden thread' being very much in place.

The interviews revealed that the Council is a very open, coaching and mentoring organisation, but a small minority of staff noted that, in places, the culture still needs to embed and become more visible to all members of staff. This was felt to be more an issue of timing than anything else and in places may be affected by the large demands that some managers, assistant directors and heads of service have placed on them.

***“As managers we certainly do feel involved in decision making.”***

**Performance level achieved:** Advanced

Opportunities for the Council to consider under these three themes in terms of achieving higher levels of accreditation are as follows:

- Continue to encourage staff to become involved in decision making and to believe that their contribution makes a difference. A key group to consider – and building on their success to date – are middle managers, who can become a well-focused middle managers group. Consider a conference for this group based on the future success and capability of the Council, with their role in succession planning and talent on the agenda.
- Greater focus should be directed at encouraging more staff to lead on initiatives in order to increase the level of empowerment, to identify talent, and to further encourage participation and collaboration, for example, within departments and groups, thereby enabling people to take ownership and improve teamwork. This approach will also aid succession planning.
- More work can be done on decision making processes, and involving staff in decision making that affects their role can still be improved. The OLA states that 12.4 % neither agree nor disagree, and 22% disagree, and, although relatively low percentages, these are nonetheless worth exploring further at all levels.
- The link [Employee Voice: why is it important to sustainable success?](#) may be useful for providing additional information that can be used by managers to support them in this area.

## Indicator 4: Managing performance

### Indicator 4: Managing performance

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Base Questions</b>							
I have agreed my objectives with my line manager within the last 12 months	28.4%	40.9%	11.6%	7.0%	3.5%	5.0%	3.6%
My manager helps me improve my performance	24.1%	34.9%	16.5%	11.8%	3.7%	5.0%	4.0%
I feel encouraged to perform to the best of my abilities	23.5%	37.4%	16.9%	9.9%	4.7%	4.1%	3.6%
I have discussed my performance with my manager in the last 6 months	31.9%	41.3%	9.8%	6.4%	2.8%	4.1%	3.7%

### Setting objectives

The AIS for this Indicator is 5.5; 0.3 below the overall IIP average.

The OLA revealed that 69.3% of staff state that they set clear objectives with their line manager. The Council has a plan in place, supported by KPIs, departmental plans and individual work plans, that fully align to the overall objectives, vision and ambition. This is a well-embedded process in both planning and the monitoring of KPIs, which was confirmed consistently during the interviews and at the context meeting. Currently relating to 80,000 residents, the local planning process is extremely well embedded, having been operating successfully for several years with regular consultation with various stakeholders. The Assessor reviewed the Council Plan, in addition to KPIs and departmental plans, in order to back up this statement but, more importantly, all members of staff interviewed confirmed that their work objectives and personal objectives are fully aligned with those of the Council and are regularly reviewed, with the OLA revealing 73.2% agreeing with this.

Managing performance has always been a strong feature at both organisational and individual level, but the model has been developed in a bespoke way over the last few years. It follows a more coaching and mentoring model rather than a target-driven, results-only model to achieve results at any cost, for example, taking on board the people and cultural aspects of performance. This is now bearing excellent results, with achievement by results at an all-time high over the last year, for example 5,000 apprenticeships achieved. The results from the OLA are in line with this, with 59% of members of staff stating that they are encouraged to set objectives with their line managers and to improve performance. A total 60% agree in both Housing and Modernisation and in Place and Wellbeing.

Objectives for staff in all departments are clear and are owned by management and the relevant team. During the interviews, people spoke positively about teamwork. The structure of the Council does not 'get in the way', with an engaged model of working with staff. Traditional performance reviews take place at a one-to-one level as well as work plan reviews, spot checks, and observation of work in many departments, for example, in Children's and Adults' Services, due to the nature of their work. The majority of people stated that they are performance-managed and are given feedback, whereby, for example, if quality is not up to the required level, they are supported to develop an action plan where coaching and mentoring is provided coupled with milestones and a framework to improve. This process was confirmed to be consistently applied throughout the Council and has improved significantly in terms of consistency compared to the last assessment, albeit delivered using different approaches in some areas due to the nature of the work but still in line with the Fairer Future Promise. Performance improvement is showing in many areas of the Council, for example, 96% of Council Tax is now collected.

In addition, managers confirmed that they are challenged and performance-managed on the way in which they manage their behaviours (becoming more robustly embedded and formalised) and, if necessary, are held accountable, including feedback on their behaviours and the values of the Council related back to the values and what the Council is achieving for its residents. Reviews of the KPIs show 'stretch' and challenging objectives for departments and all members of staff. All departments monitor their own performance against the KPIs and take appropriate action as required at various meetings with assistant directors, heads of service, etc. This process is extremely well embedded and, for many members of staff, often results in projects for people to use their own initiative and take the lead to help the Council achieve its objectives. Many examples were given relating to coaching being provided by peers and the use of the ILM process to allow individuals to take the lead on projects in their own area or throughout the Council as well as working transformation projects.

***"People have stretch objectives, for example, people working on elections but not necessarily their remit."***

### Encouraging high performance

Objectives are continuously reviewed and updated to stretch individuals and departments to achieve excellent outcomes for themselves, against the plans and in relation to the residents of the borough. People are encouraged to self-monitor their own performance or to work with a colleague of their choosing, both formally and informally; a system that has developed and improved through the ILM process. Through the review process, people can set stretch objectives and know that they will be supported to meet them.

A great deal of time is invested in staff throughout the Council, with robust resources provided at all levels to encourage and achieve high performance. The KPI process reporting up to the Cabinet and directors is robust, and the plans that the Council has in place are very much working documents and are not just developed 'for the sake of it'. Individual Cabinet members sit with lead officers and their teams to review performance, to provide challenge and 'temperature checks' in terms of the overall Council Plan, or to respond to the need to change or adapt as a result of issues within the borough, for example, the rise in youth crime and the need to tackle health issues among residents (hence, the creation of the Place and Wellbeing Department and placing greater emphasis on public health now being a key target in the Council Plan).

Significant investment is made relating to line managers, with full support provided to encourage high performance and to address poor performance, which people confirmed does take place. Managers mentioned that, as a result of the ILM investment, their skills overall have been enhanced, especially in the area of personal performance in line with Council values. Performance management is delivered in a constructive and supportive way. Staff are proud and loyal to the Council and want it to achieve excellent results. To this end, staff are active in striving to maintain high standards and performance at all times. During the interviews, they spoke positively – and, in places, passionately – about the help they give to residents and the many achievements some teams have had that have been recognised both locally and nationally.

### Measuring and assessing performance

Measuring and assessing performance takes place for every team and service, and at the individual level for every member of staff. The process for doing this is clearly set out and, in general, is consistently followed. The OLA revealed 92% of senior managers agreeing, 82% of managers agreeing and 72% of non-managers agreeing. The process has many features and includes feedback from residents, achievement against plans and service commitments, behaviours and the 'softer' attributes of the position or grade as well as the 'harder', more obvious, measures linked to KPIs. People confirmed that the process is robust and flexible, and is delivered in a supportive way in order to achieve outcomes for the Council as well as for individuals.

Many informal structures are in place for giving and receiving feedback, with a clear emphasis on coaching and mentoring throughout the Council and with more investment planned for next year. The interviews confirmed that performance reviews and interviews are well executed, confirming that the Council is well advanced in this area. Many of the Strategic Directors and assistant directors become involved on projects throughout the Council to help drive performance and could talk positively about how they coach and mentor people.

The Council has a long and well-established history of recording data and reporting on this data to stakeholders, for example, to Cabinet, residents and community groups. This includes the performance of each department against its KPIs. In addition, there is significant HR reporting using metrics, including hard and soft measures, which has become more established since the last assessment. Work plans and HR processes are reported on, for example, recruitment and selection, including behaviours. Discussions on the data take place at management meetings, and themes and trends are acted upon. Considerable challenge and debate also take place, and actions are fed into the Council Plan, which is robust, alive and flexible.

### ***“Things get done here compared to other Councils.”***

Giving and receiving timely feedback is evident throughout the Council, for example, spot checks in areas, departments and offices, including back office and buildings and security. 360-style feedback and ideas are sought, to improve rather than blame or to 'pass the problem on' in many areas. There is a significant amount of coaching taking place, both formal and informal, and this is a strong part of the culture. Coaching is evident among supervisors and staff, with strong support from senior managers and directors in many places, but this can be improved at this level, whereby assistant directors could do more to coach and mentor junior and middle managers.

People were very clear in terms of what was expected of them. The formalised work plans and one-to-ones are conducted twice a year, and objectives and expectations form an integral part of these discussions. In the main, this is consistently applied, albeit with different styles depending on the nature of the work of the team and local empowerment arrangements in place as well as self-management.

The Council is accustomed to external review and inspection, such as the many checks, including health and safety (H&S) and statutory legislation. Furthermore, the online consultation hub increased by 75% after the 3,000 borough-wide conversations with residents. As a result, the Council is well positioned to ensure continued excellence in managing performance, and it used the IIP feedback from the previous assessment in a rigorous way following the 'touch base' meetings with the Assessor at the 18-month interval and fed some of the key feedback points into the people strategy as well as feedback from the GLA.

Overall, measuring and assessing performance scored an average of 5.7; the same as the IIP average.

### **Performance level achieved: Advanced**

Opportunities for the Council to consider under these three themes in terms of achieving higher levels of accreditation are as follows:

- Continue to embed the idea of providing feedback linked to the values and behaviours and try to obtain as accurate a picture as possible with key senior people taking the lead and becoming a 'family' of embedding behaviours at the Council.
- Encourage high performance at all times through further enhancing coaching and mentoring at all levels. Is there a need for workshops on coaching and mentoring and team coaching for managers and supervisors (middle managers)? This is a specific project of the ILM and is seen as a motivational and challenging exercise.
- Some line managers need to be more consistent and confident in challenging poor performance (although the people interviewed stated that they thought this was 'going in the right direction' and had improved significantly). This should be more targeted at senior level and not necessarily for frontline staff.
- The link <https://www.investorsinpeople.com/resources/share-and-inspire/get-peopleinvolved-how-you-manage-performance> can be used for further reading and research relating to performance management.

## Indicator 5: Recognising and rewarding high performance

### Indicator 5: Recognising and rewarding high performance



### Designing an approach to recognition and reward

The AIS for this indicator is 4.6; 0.5 below from the overall IIP average.

The Council takes very seriously the welfare of its employees and strives to have in place a motivated workforce because this is seen as being imperative to its success, for example, a number of health and well-being initiatives having recently been implemented. This is largely achieved, with 51.5% of respondents from the OLA stating that the Council adopts a culture of recognition. The interviews revealed 80% of people stating that they felt it was an embedded culture.

Morale is deemed to be high and everyone spoken to by the Assessor is committed and regards the Council as a good or great employer and a great place to work. A total 51.5% of staff stated that they feel appreciated for the work they do. Furthermore, 39.9% of staff stated that they feel recognised when they exceed expectations. However, because this is a rather low figure that did not reflect what the Assessor was told at interview, it therefore needs further exploration. The results show a pattern, and the interviews identified people stating that: morale is high; there is very committed leadership towards staff; it is a great place to work; and that the Council had a very successful year in terms of achieving its performance and budget during difficult times with severe budget cuts, restructuring and a challenging political climate.

In most areas, people stated that they felt confident that team and individual achievements are recognised and that there are recognition mechanisms in place, for example, recognition from the CEO at tea parties and the staff awards scheme. The OLA revealed that, in the Chief Executive's Department, 46% feel rewarded in ways that match expectations and, in



Environment and Leisure, this figure is 33%. The approach to recognising people is given a high profile at many staff briefings, with certificates being handed out and mention made of staff achievements, as well as external accolades and reviews that the Council achieves being communicated through The Source, blogs, newsletters, etc.

Southwark is a consultative council, and all policies and procedures are consulted on as appropriate, as well as being consulted on through the various unions that the Council recognises. This was confirmed as being the route for the Council's approach to recognition and reward, and the Council acknowledges that it is always looking at new ideas and ways of rewarding staff in a manner that motivates them. Recent activity was mentioned by the CEO that identifies further work relating to recognition and reward and commissioning a report through the ILM programme, to build on what was on offer.

Recognition of staff is discussed on a regular basis by the top team and many other forums throughout the Council. This was evident from the interviews that the Assessor had with directors at the context meeting, and was noted in the minutes of meetings and in the HR metrics reported to the directors, for example, the number of awards handed out and the vouchers and rewards given. The metrics relating to staff leavers, sickness and absenteeism are all examined and reported on regularly, and these in turn are discussed and fed into ongoing OD and HR strategies, as often this data can help determine if people do not feel rewarded or recognised.

### Adopting a culture of recognition

The Council does its best to reward high-performing departments but can only do so within the constraints of its overall performance achievements, which it executes fairly and robustly despite the significant constraints on budget as a result of the austerity measures that have had to be adopted. Pay is revised and upgraded where possible and there are clear HR procedures in place for pay revisions. The OLA revealed that 52.2% of staff agree that the Council adopts a culture of recognition and reward and 52% feel appreciated for the work they do.

People know and understand the mechanisms for rewarding them, and many informal structures are in place. Examples cited included the following:

- Staff recognition scheme.
- Career progression and development.
- Flexible working practices are very well regarded by staff.
- Staff celebrations.
- Health and well-being.
- Recognition by the CEO.
- Established range of benefits, including childcare vouchers, parental leave, flu jabs, cycle to work scheme and eye tests.

The OLA revealed that 60% of managers feel appreciated for the work they do, with a figure of 50% for non-managers. This data provides the Council with evidence to discuss and to determine the lessons that can be learned from the various groups.

People at all levels believe that many of their line managers recognise team and individual performance but are not sure that the managers themselves always feel motivated, and this can affect manager performance. Most people agree that there is a culture of reward and

recognition throughout the Council and that the Council would not accept a culture of being results driven at any cost. People also commented on the feedback from stakeholders in the sector, reviews in the national press, and feedback from outside agencies as well as the highprofile work led by the CEO relating to the Grenfell tragedy.

### Recognising and rewarding people

Behaviours associated with the Council's values are high on the agenda and feature prominently in the Council's work, so that employees when recognised for their work are automatically recognised for their behaviours. This is maturing and is becoming more formally part of the norm. The discussion relating to behaviours was positive in many areas, evident in departments and came across very clearly during the interviews with staff. This should be seen as a 'live' topic in the Council, which is to be encouraged. Formally, behaviours now feature in work plans, departmental observations, and in general day-to-day activities throughout the Council.

People are motivated in relation to their work, the ever-improving, high-quality service to residents, and to each other, and they are very proud of the Council. Whether this is linked to reward and recognition is hard to tell, because the directors and staff all seem to be extremely professional and dedicated to the quality of the service they provide and are therefore motivated by their achievements. This was evident in the way people at interview spoke about how the Council services have 'grown' and have achieved great things, which they say motivates them more than any recognition scheme. This year had been a very successful year for the Council in terms of performance overall. In addition, people are passionate about helping underprivileged people in the borough, which is very much part of the culture and is embedded in the systems and processes. Much discussion is also taking place relating to local youth crime and public health, which are seen as two challenges for Southwark, but challenging and improving them is seen as motivational by the various directors and teams involved.

***"Acknowledge I could get out more and recognise what's going on."***

***"Much discussion on people issues at the directors' forum."***

Recognition at the Council comes in various forms, as follows:

- In briefings, names are announced when external accreditations are achieved by teams and individuals.
- Certificates of achievement issued.
- Many opportunities to develop within the Council, for example, secondments.
- Time and permission granted for staff to become involved in other Council activities outside of Southwark and to lead nationally on topics.
- Social events arranged.
- Overall, staff commented that the benefits are very favourable at Southwark, for example, welfare, duty of care, flexible working and recognising long serving members of staff.
- Women's network and spectrum autism staff group well established; EMpower (BAME) and LGBTQ+ staff groups launching.
- Retained Disability Confident status (previously two ticks).

**Performance level achieved: Advanced**

Opportunities for the Council to consider under these three themes in terms of achieving higher levels of accreditation are as follows:

- Remind people at all levels of the value of recognition and the importance of it in the workplace.
- The number of staff neither agreeing nor disagreeing that the 'package' on offer motivates them should be revisited because it affects the scores for this indicator. The Council may wish to recommunicate what it does for its employees, or spend some time with a group of staff to revisit the organisational approach to reward and recognition. Noted during the interviews was the number of people who actually forget 'what's on offer' and may not relate it to recognition.
- While the OLA scores are lower than expected for this indicator, they are not borne out at interview, which provides the basis for more open debate on recognition and reward.

## Indicator 6: Structuring work

### Indicator 6: Structuring work



### Designing roles

The AIS for this indicator is 5.5; 0.3 below the overall IIP average.

Staff confirmed at interview that there is a clear organisational structure within the Council with a focus on its objectives, clear reporting lines and roles and responsibilities, and with the opportunity for staff to spend time in other departments to ensure cross-team deployment of skills in order to support the work of the Council, to develop staff skills, and to help with succession planning and talent. This is confirmed by the results from the OLA, with 55.3% of respondents stating that they can develop their skills in order to progress and further positive responses relating to people finding their work interesting, for example, in Environment and Leisure 60% of staff believe that their job is interesting (and within a challenging frontline service, thereby confirming the dedication of staff towards residents) and in Place and Wellbeing this figure is 82%. Roles, accountabilities and responsibilities have also been defined so that people can understand clearly what they are.

In addition, there is evidence to support the link between defined roles, organisational values, behaviours and competencies within the Council, which many people commented on by explaining that the time spent on their individual work plans is worthwhile. This was confirmed during the interviews, with people stating that their roles are interesting, that directors and managers utilise the skills and capabilities of the workforce and that people have interesting personal objectives outside of immediate work objectives (with 72.7% stating that their role enables them to work well with others). In places, due to the restructuring and budget cuts, the workload has increased for many members of staff and some would welcome further flexibility and cross-working. Working together was clearly demonstrated by the support given to Children's and Adults' Services by the whole Council when managing the budget deficit in this department as well as many other boards throughout the Council that people work on and have developed, which motivates them.

Key Council documents reviewed by the Assessor, the organisation chart, induction activities, work plans and the Council Plan showing KPIs that support the Council's objectives, support staff and, where possible, are flexible in order to aid the decision-making process. Reviews of the Council Plan and consultation on their budget planning process are strong and support the ethos of the Council, as well as being flexible, for example, the creation of a new department in response to the needs of residents.

Through the objective setting process, objectives and goals are clearly defined for everyone. People work hard on agreeing their own objectives and agreeing further stretch objectives for their roles within the Council and their respective departments. Work is made as interesting as possible, whether that be by modifying roles in teams or allowing people to shadow and be seconded into management teams as part of their development and career progression. Secondments are advertised, and people apply and go through a selection process, resulting in the creation of diverse ideas and opening up the structure to others. Many examples were given, but the key points raised at the interviews were as follows:

- People working on many projects throughout the Council; a transformation.
- Secondments on to management teams.
- Secondments internally throughout the Council.
- Study opportunities and educational qualifications.
- Collaborative learning opportunities.
- Staff meetings.

Skills and capabilities are clear in terms of progression, for example, in Children's and Adults' Services 51% agree that they can develop the skills they need to progress, and in Finance and Governance this figure is 55%. When people apply for internal promotion, clear criteria are provided relating to the competencies required, with people facing a panel and a selection process. The Council is flexible and responds positively to the demographic changes affecting staff and what that means for the workforce strategy in the future. Job roles are interchangeable as much as they can be, and are modified as necessary to adapt to the needs of the business and the external environment.

Plans and KPIs are robust and up to date throughout the Council, keeping abreast of the changes needed in organisational strategy and the needs of residents. The Council constantly reviews its organisational strategy and whether it is fit for purpose, and its reviews of the plans are robust.

### Creating autonomy in roles

Reporting lines are clear and flexible within the Council, with many staff agreeing that they have autonomy in their roles. The OLA revealed that 63% of staff feel that there is autonomy in roles throughout the Council. There is emphasis on not stifling debate and ideas, and many directors have adapted their roles to support decision making but not at the expense of an ideas culture or diluting Council values.

Policy reviews are thorough and undergo a consultation process with unions and managers. Policies are made readily available to all members of staff and, in most cases, are used as the need arises. Policies and practices are constantly revised and updated according to need or legislation and some were going through further reviews during the time of the assessment.

The flexibility of processes and systems surrounding the roles and responsibilities is tested for robustness on occasion through internal discussions and through their use by managers, with a favoured restructuring option taking place among teams, some of which are ongoing.

There is no duplication of roles, and people are utilised for their skills and knowledge. This is well managed by the Strategic Team despite austerity measures and budget restrictions in many places. Ongoing discussions take place as to how best the services can be delivered, with some services being brought back in house that were previously contracted out. Many members of staff interviewed agreed strongly with this, although a few were slightly sceptical. Therefore, because restructuring can challenge motivation in a negative way, it needs to be carefully managed and continually questioned whether it is the best option.

Work schedules are clear, with many robust recording mechanisms in place and displayed on noticeboards and electronically by the various departments, including legislation, for example, H&S, statutory and environmental.

Since the last IIP assessment, staff have stated that the structure of some duties and of management has become further embedded, which has benefitted the organisation. Employees are interchangeable and multi-skilled because of the intense, ongoing training, and therefore uphold the organisation's culture and standards with minimal inconsistency.

Policies and practices are available for all members of staff to use for their own benefit, or for teams to direct them and to follow guidelines. People confirmed that policies and procedures are there as a guide but not as a hindrance to their roles and that HR has improved in terms of service delivery. However, it was mentioned at the interviews by a few members of staff that they believe that HR relates more to supporting managers and not staff; something for the leadership team to be aware of and to monitor.

### Enabling collaborative working

The OLA revealed that teamwork and collaborative working are key strengths, with 72.7% agreeing and with many enabling structures now in place, for example, management meetings, staff and management meetings, best practice groups and various ad hoc working groups. All of the members of staff interviewed stated that teamwork and the people culture are what make the Council the success it is today, and strongly agree that this is led from the top. Among the groups, this was also positive, with 77% agreeing in the Chief Executive's Department and 75.1% agreeing in Housing and Modernisation.

The Council maintains a professional approach, and although equally professional in its approach to ethnicity and diversity, there are many informal ways in which people work together and there are no barriers between the teams that cause them from working well together, for example, staff engage easily with members of staff in other departments. The approach from directors in this regard is supportive, with them attending events, formally and informally meeting employees as well as residents, and undertaking back-to-the-floor sessions. Staff can also attend these meetings depending on their role or interest. Examples put forward were as follows:

- Diversity groups.
- Social groups.
- Many project boards throughout the transformation programme.

As a result, the Council is well positioned to ensure that structures are sound, well-tested and firmly in place to achieve its objectives. People are motivated and aligned to achieving the objectives and believe that their roles are interesting, with the OLA revealing 70.4% of staff agreeing with this.

***“It’s the Council ethos now to work as one Council.”***

***“ILM 5 has enabled us to work outside of our remit and across the Council.”***

### **Performance level achieved: Advanced**

Opportunities for the Council to consider under these three themes in terms of achieving higher levels of accreditation are as follows:

- What further work can be done within roles to take on board the changing needs of communities, markets and organisational strategy? This could be linked to any future change that the Council may need to face, attempting to link services to the needs of residents in a simple and straightforward way.
- What further work can be done to encourage more formal and informal networks and to maximise collaboration among workers? A suggestion is improved internal communications, for example, the diversity groups, engagement of the depots and other offices outside Tooley Street.
- Getting people to take ownership in a strongly people-centred organisation can often be a challenge because it might be assumed that the Council ‘will sort it out’. This needs to be openly discussed, with the Council having taken a very ‘parental’ approach in the past.
- Further reading and research, especially for managers, can be found through the following link: <https://www.investorsinpeople.com/resources/ideas-andinspiration/every-manager-leader-become-role-model>

## Indicator 7: Building capability

### Indicator 7: Building capability

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Base Questions</b>							
People are selected for roles based on their skills and abilities	12.6%	29.0%	17.8%	18.1%	7.6%	6.8%	7.9%
I have opportunities to learn at work	23.3%	37.8%	18.2%	9.7%	4.4%	3.6%	3.1%
I make use of my organisation's learning and development opportunities	16.7%	36.2%	22.0%	13.5%	5.2%	4.0%	2.3%
My manager thinks it is important that I develop my skills	25.9%	36.9%	14.9%	13.2%	3.0%	3.2%	2.8%
I know how my organisation invests in learning and development	18.8%	37.2%	19.9%	11.5%	4.6%	5.1%	2.9%

### Understanding people's potential

The AIS for this indicator is 5.2; 0.3 below the overall IIP average.

The Council has a strong focus on learning and development for everyone working there, in addition to an embedded culture of developing talent potential. The OLA revealed 57% agreeing with this, which was further evident from the interviews and from reviewing the data made available. Many staff in various positions, including the management team, are 'home grown' and work in various positions throughout the Council, and have either undertaken the ILM programme or have 'come up through the ranks' via the very successful apprenticeship programme. Staff throughout the Council have the opportunity to discuss and agree their learning and development opportunities with their line manager, and this is executed effectively in the majority of places, with 59.4% of respondents from the OLA stating that they believe that the organisation believes in, and is committed to, the learning and development of staff, and that they can learn at work.

The Council offers a range of staff development opportunities. These include individual development, team development and collaborative working, as follows:

- Qualifications: professional qualifications, for example, a new HR team with all members of staff now professionally qualified or undertaking qualifications since last IIP.
- Collaborative learning opportunities; staff meetings.



- Individual reflection; coaching and mentoring.
- ILM courses.
- Specific courses such as safeguarding, diversity and inclusion.
- Unconscious bias training.
- Bite-size courses.
- Cabinet away days and mentoring for Cabinet members.
- Two leadership away days in Place and Wellbeing.
- Prince2 Foundation Training.

The Council has worked hard to foster a learning culture that encourages deep, professional conversations and follows best practice theory and guidance, for example, in formal situations such as work observation, feedback and meetings with staff, but also in less formal situations, such as small group meetings, on-the-job meetings or through e-learning sources, with emphasis currently on unconscious bias development for many managers.

The Council and many senior members of the management team are effective in identifying talent and in coaching and mentoring people, with many staff agreeing with this. There is a well-embedded process that works both formally and informally throughout the Council. Innovation and new ways of learning, for example, Learning Source, have been reviewed and relaunched as well as traditional routes being used with strong support from the OT Team and managers as appropriate at all levels. Effective use is made of coaching and mentoring, and these are used in many forms in order to support staff, as well as many short learning events, teach-ins and lunchtime activities promoting learning events in the foyer at Tooley Street.

Overall, the OLA reveals that 62.8% of staff agree that they have opportunities to develop their skills, and the interviews back this up. This is further supported by managers.

### Supporting learning and development

Significant guidance and support is made available to staff and teams on how best to develop their careers, and this takes many forms. The OLA confirmed this, with 52.9% agreeing and a further 22% somewhat agreeing that they make use of the learning and development opportunities available to them. Skills development and practice are monitored through one-to-one meetings, observation, feedback and overall evaluation of how effective a programme of learning has been, with reports being produced via the My Source interactive tool.

The resources for learning and development have been extremely well maintained since the last IIP assessment, with substantial ongoing investment in leadership and management training based on feedback from the last assessment. The OLA revealed 61.1% of people agreeing that learning and development is supported and a further 18.2% somewhat agreeing. The Assessor has seen this maintained over the number of years he has visited the Council, with its strong ethos of continuous learning and development built into its fabric. This confirms the Council's commitment to IIP, its support for ongoing learning and development, and its objective to become a high-performing organisation. The OLA revealed 56% of respondents agreeing with this and a further 19% somewhat agreeing.

***“The L&D offer here is very strong.”***

### Deploying the right people at the right time

Recruitment and selection is a well-thought-out process and has improved since the last assessment, as confirmed at the interviews by people who have been recently recruited and

by those on recruitment panels. Significant resources are deployed into 'getting the right people for the job'.

The approach taken of involving managers and staff in the recruitment and selection process is well established and highly regarded by all parties, as well as being deemed good practice by IIP. This is seen as a strength of the Council and has enabled it to deploy the right people into posts at the right time, with the OLA revealing 41.6% of respondents agreeing and a further 17.8% somewhat agreeing. The same system is also used for internal promotions. At interview, everyone stated that recruitment, retention and promotion are key strengths of the Council, adding that the recruitment process is based around Council values. Further plans are in place to further improve recruitment by enhancing the recruitment tools and electronic system currently in place. The OLA revealed that, among managers, 56% agree that people are selected based on skills and abilities, with a further 20% somewhat agreeing. Among nonmanagers, 39% agree and a further 18% somewhat agree. These figures will need further discussion and investigation because there were mixed views given relating to this during the interviews.

Resource planning is well managed throughout the Council, to ensure that adequate resources are in place to maintain frontline services and quality standards for residents and the political administration, as set out in the manifesto, vision and objectives. For example, many restructuring initiatives and reviews are implemented in order to ensure that resources are allocated where they are needed, for example, the new Place and Wellbeing Department that was set up in response to residents' needs and the current challenges within the borough. The Council is doing well, recruiting staff where necessary, further providing support to employees worried about the effects that Brexit might have on their lives, and recognising pressure points in some areas with regards to resources.

The Council is recognised for developing talent from within its existing staff base, but also attracts talent from outside. During their interviews with the Assessor, people stated that they chose to work for Southwark Council because of its reputation as a local authority on a national scale. Throughout the past few years, many critical roles within the Council have been filled internally and externally and, in places, enhancing diversity at various levels. There are talent plans in place for members of staff who want them. This has improved and become much more consistent since the last assessment.

It is also acknowledged that a number of people are very happy in their existing roles, performing to a high standard but not necessarily looking for promotion. For some members of staff who have given very long service to the Council, they are supported in other ways through coaching and mentoring and training, to support them on their chosen path or to support them in getting involved in other projects across Southwark. The OLA revealed that 74% of managers agree and a further 14% somewhat agree. A total 61% of non-managers agree that their manager supports them with learning and development and a further 15% somewhat agree.

The directors and the wider management function meet regularly to discuss resource planning and the capabilities required for the future. In addition, directors and HR staff regularly meet with their respective teams throughout the Council to assess their needs and to develop plans to implement their requests on an ongoing basis. This process has improved since the last IIP assessment.

***“Excellent internal communications job done on IIP.”***

***“Recruitment can still improve further. Has come a long way but can go further.”***

**Performance level achieved:** Advanced

Opportunities for the Council to consider under these three themes in terms of achieving higher levels of accreditation are as follows:

- Continue to look more deeply at the impact that learning has on the overall performance of the Council and the lessons that can be incorporated into future training and people plans.
- Review how vacancies are advertised internally and externally, at all levels, and what changes can be made. The results of the OLA could be interpreted that a small number of people are not convinced that all internal roles are filled on merit. Furthermore, do all managers stop and think, ‘Is there anyone internally who can fill a post before going out to market or taking on an internal secondment? The OLA revealed 22.3% disagreeing and a further 18% not sure.
- Probationary periods to be implemented by the next IIP assessment.
- Further work could be started with some ‘traditional’ teams that could benefit from having more of a diverse team in line with the structure of the Council and residents in order to improve the diversity of ideas, team structure and to promote diverse talent.
- The link below is recommended in terms of addressing talent management, which, although not currently a challenge at Southwark, is worth reading. Retaining talent can become a challenge for any organisation.

<https://www.investorsinpeople.com/resources/share-and-inspire/how-do-highperforming-businesses-tackle-talent-management>

## Indicator 8: Delivering continuous improvement

### Indicator 8: Delivering continuous improvement

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Base Questions</b>							
I look for improvement ideas from my colleagues	21.5%	43.8%	18.8%	10.6%	1.6%	2.1%	1.5%
I am responsible for improving the way we do things	15.5%	30.6%	23.4%	15.5%	4.7%	6.7%	3.7%
I am encouraged to improve the way I do things	16.1%	40.1%	20.1%	14.2%	3.0%	3.7%	2.8%
I am trusted to try new approaches in the way I work	16.3%	35.6%	20.8%	14.4%	4.7%	4.7%	3.5%

#### Improving through internal and external sources

The AIS for this indicator is 5.3, 0.3 below the overall IIP average.

The whole ethos of the Council is one of continuous improvement, with a clear focus on this from the directors and wider management. The OLA revealed 65.3% of respondents stating that they agree that they look for improvement ideas from colleagues, with a further 18% somewhat agreeing.

There is a strong understanding of the very significant investment in time, money and resources deployed in learning and development. Arguably, more could be done to accurately track the impact on business and performance and staff downtime relating to training and development, but it is discussed in meetings and examined by job output, performance and the achievement of KPIs, which is demonstrating a clear link with continuous improvement. There is also a residents' benchmarking group in place.

At departmental level, discussion takes place in meetings regarding the impact of learning and development, with input from the line manager and staff members. Some of this is ongoing and is formally carried out via work plans and departmental reviews. The OLA revealed 56.2% agreeing that they are encouraged to improve the way they operate, with 20.1% somewhat agreeing.

Managers gave numerous examples of individual and team development having improved the performance of individuals and teams. Staff also offered many examples of how learning and development activities have improved individual, team and organisational performance, for example, job swapping or cross-training, people moving between departments and being promoted. Some very good examples were also given relating to technical development and softer skills training, with people recognising the improvements made recently to the training,

learning and development programme. The OLA revealed that, in Children's and Adults' Services, 70% of staff agree that they look for improvements from colleagues, with 17% somewhat agreeing. In Environment and Leisure, these figures are 62% and 18%, respectively. It is noted that these departments are frontline departments with a large amount of staff, which shows that the 'message' is reaching them.

At individual level (and to a lesser extent, departmental level), evaluation of learning and development is working reasonably well. There were many good examples given of staff having been promoted, having gained experience, and having improved their performance as managers through the management development programme (ILM), other training programmes and coaching. Some people interviewed could point towards examples of how their career prospects had improved as a result of their learning and development and how they had been led and managed, for example, many of the apprentices interviewed by the Assessor.

The concept of learning from reviews and evaluation is very much a natural occurrence throughout many functions of the Council, but in specific areas it is used as a robust process to drive individual and departmental performance through KPIs, and is particularly strong in Children's and Adults' Services, and these models could be shared with others. This might be through acting on feedback from observations, or from how people use new skills and techniques learned from training and development interventions.

The use of evaluation techniques, and the reviews of data held by the Council, for example, HR metrics and performance data, are also tools used extensively to act on feedback and to support improvement, as well as some 360-degree reviews and a review of the recent restructuring within HR itself. The directors and others are actively engaged in the wider sector, through working with extremal bodies, LGAs, other councils and central government, and the Leader of Southwark Council is Chair of London Councils. The Head of OT presented a report on Retention and developing Higher Apprenticeships to London Councils in June 2018.

### Creating a culture of continuous improvement

Staff 'own' the continuous improvement ethos and drive it across the Council with, as they state, energy and rigour attached to it. The OLA revealed 51.9% agreeing that they are trusted to try new ideas. There are many ways in which staff can put forward good ideas through meetings, quality and best practice groups, one-to-one meetings and other informal mechanisms, with many project boards in place, whereby people from across the Council are working together to shape its future. There is no blame culture, and managers are encouraged to try new ideas when in departments, or they can 'buddy' with someone in order to learn new ways of working, to learn from mistakes and to implement new ideas.

Many other councils are taking the lead from Southwark, both in terms of leadership and the quality of services and methods, with the Leader, the CEO and senior members of staff speaking at national events. People come to work for the Council from a wide area because of its reputation, and some staff travel a long distance to work there.

The OLA results show that 46.1% of people believe they are responsible for improving things within the Council and a further 23.9% somewhat agree. The interviews fully support this and personal ownership and responsibility is well embedded within the Council. A key example noted by the Assessor was the review of OT, whereby all staff members were asked to complete a survey relating to how well they thought the restructuring was going (linked to Indicator 3: Empowering and involving people).

## Encouraging innovation

The embedded culture at the Council is one of innovation throughout all functions. The OLA revealed 52.3% agreeing and 20.2% somewhat agreeing with this. People are encouraged to provide ideas, which are presented to the directors and are further discussed. Many processes are in place for producing ideas and are working extremely well. These include:

- Work plans.
- Informal networks.
- Meetings.
- Informal meetings with directors; open door policy.
- Best practice quality groups.
- Transformation boards.
- Significant innovation with community groups.

The results from the OLA relating to encouraging innovation ranged from 56.1% agreeing in Place and Wellbeing, 47.9% agreeing in Housing and Modernisation and 55.4% agreeing in Finance and Governance.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, a strong feature of the assessment was the high number of responses received from staff and management relating to teamwork and the people who make the Council what it is today. This is discussed with pride and defines the robust people culture that is embedded throughout the Council.

There is a strong drive among members of the leadership team for the Council to continue to do well and to not 'stand still', as demonstrated in the Council Plan, with clear KPIs and the ambition to become an IIP Platinum employer over the next few years.

The Council has always worked on its own initiative within the sector and has been very innovative in its working methods, which is highly regarded by other councils. New ideas and innovative ways of working have had very positive outcomes on performance, staff morale and the reputation of the Council. Some notable examples identified by the Assessor are as follows:

- Morale throughout the Council is extremely high in many places.
- The Council is in a sound financial state.

Performance in terms of achievement and continuous improvement is effective, for example, the new Place and Wellbeing Department created in September 2018 to ensure that people focus on regeneration and strengthen connections to communities. This is part of a groundbreaking partnership with Public Health England.

The Council's Cabinet reaffirmed its commitment to bring its housing repairs service in house from October 2018, in order to drive up standards and to ensure a consistent approach to repairs for the benefit of tenants. This was in response to performance issues and resident satisfaction feedback (March 2018).

Benchmarking takes place for many services compared with other services in London, for example, Southwark Libraries issues the highest number of books in London, the Council is

the best in London on recycling and it has been awarded with a National Highways maintenance award.

**Performance level achieved:** Advanced

Opportunities for the Council to consider under these three themes in terms of achieving higher levels of accreditation are as follows:

- Some of the results from this indicator, where people neither agree nor disagree, need to be further explored, and may indicate a need for further communication or support for managers and staff in terms of what continuous improvement actually means.
- There should more communication relating to success and results from projects, Council-wide changes and improvements.
- The organisation may find the following link useful in terms of innovation and employee engagement: <https://www.investorsinpeople.com/resources/share-andinspire/8-ways-release-innovation-through-employee-engagement>

## Indicator 9: Creating sustainable success

### Indicator 9: Creating sustainable success

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Base Questions</b>							
My organisation is a great place to work	20.9%	35.8%	21.7%	11.9%	3.8%	3.3%	2.6%
My organisation has a plan for the future	22.8%	40.3%	17.8%	12.7%	2.4%	2.4%	1.6%
My organisation embraces change	16.8%	36.1%	22.3%	15.2%	4.5%	2.8%	2.2%
My organisation has a positive impact on society	28.5%	37.4%	17.2%	12.7%	1.6%	1.0%	1.5%
<b>Optional Questions</b>							
My organisation has a positive impact on the community	27.5%	36.9%	19.1%	12.3%	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%

### Focusing on the future

The AIS for this indicator is 5.5; 0.3 below the overall IIP average.

The Council has a clear focus on the future, as set out in the Council Plan, and this is communicated effectively to all employees and wider stakeholders. The Council is also very well placed to handle ongoing change and challenges from the sector and the political climate in general, for example, Brexit and the challenging times in inner city boroughs throughout London relating to youth crime. Externally, people are looking to the Council to take the lead and are learning from what it is achieving, with the Council achieving many accolades, for example, the Parks Department received 28 Green Flag Awards in 2017.

Communication processes and the involvement of staff in planning for the long, medium and short term are robust and work extremely well. The priorities, both current and new, are well communicated in full staff briefings, through The Source (soon to relay meetings to other sites), departmental meetings and management meetings as well as the regular top one hundred manager meetings (one of which the Assessor observed) and the directors forums. Staff confirmed that they are very much involved in the input to departmental plans and individual plans. The OLA revealed that 63.1% of staff agree that there is a plan for the future and that they know about it, and 17.8% somewhat agree.



The Council has a clear focus on the future, recognises where it needs to be and continues to improve. Last year was a very successful one, with the Council achieving some of its best results to date. It was also a year when the Council embraced change from both the sector and the challenges of running a successful council in London with severe challenges in terms of austerity. Examples provided include the following:

- The Southwark Conversation consultation heard from more than 500 residents in order to shape the Council Plan 2018/22 (Let's #talk Southwark) (December 2017).
- A staff conference (November 2017) was held to discuss regeneration and to raise awareness and understanding relating to work across the borough. An extra date had to be arranged due to demand (January 2018).

***“Very proud of Southwark.”***

***“Great place to work.”***

***“Really care about the people here.”***

***“Shortlisted for Council of the Year.”***

### Embracing change

A total 52.9% of staff agree that the Council embraces change and that it is well executed, with 22.3% somewhat agreeing.

The plans for the Council are robust, and consultation on plans for the various departments with stakeholders are driven by staff. Staff reported that the Council is a good place to work, with the OLA revealing 56.7% agreeing and 21.7% somewhat agreeing. Staff are very loyal to the Council, to the directors and to the residents, and many are residents themselves. Many members of staff have also worked for the Council for a long time. New members of staff are also enjoying working for the Council, with a very committed and motivated workforce in place.

***“Changes in HR have been massive.”***

***“IT Infrastructure getting much better.”***

***“Southwark Works evaluated.”***

***“Much around digital change. iPhones for everybody. Members’ iPhones and iPads. Very different place now.”***

***“New equalities plan being formalised.”***

### Understanding the external context

The Leader, Cabinet and leadership team are strongly linked to the appropriate stakeholders in the borough and the wider sector of central government. The Leader is Chair of the GLA, and many officers chair various external panels and sit on various boards. The relationship between the community and the Council is a strong one, with much consultation taking place with the community and voluntary groups relating to Council plans.

The workforce is very diverse at most levels and in most teams. Diversity and equality are important to the Council, with many mechanisms in place to manage diversity and equality across all functions and with many equality impact assessments being completed on services and projects. Training on equality and diversity is mandatory. One of the key aims of the Workforce Equality Plan is to increase BME staff representation at more senior level.

Everyone interviewed understood and spoke in detail about the residents and the importance of delivering excellent services to them. Many members of staff also talked about the Fairer Future Promise and spending residents' money wisely, linked to Council values. The Council measures its impact on communities by conducting regular surveys and consultations on projects, giving people a say in how the Council is run, which is a very embedded process.

***“Open and honest engagement with the members here.”***

***“Very good at partnership funding.”***

***“Ethnic groups are not held back in Southwark.”***

***“Boroughwide skills strategy approved.”***

***“Diversity training was excellent.”***

Events taking place to support the community include the following:

- Halloween bake-off for charity.
- Christmas boxes for those children in need.

Other examples include the following:

- Women's network and spectrum autism staff group well established; EMpower (BAME) and LGBTQ+ staff groups launching.
- Retained Disability Confident status (previously two ticks).
- Participation of apprentices increased from 5% last year to 10%, and all who completed went into employment.
- Retention of apprentices is 83% compared to 67% nationally.

## **Performance level achieved:** Advanced

Opportunities for the Council to consider under these three themes in terms of achieving higher levels of accreditation are as follows:

- Is there enough development for leaders as a leadership team, with new people now in the Strategic Team, and individuals, to manage future change? Is there adequate succession planning? Can more managers be networked outside of the organisation, i.e. within the sector and other sectors and those who have worked at the Council for a long time?
- What more can be done to improved diversity in some management teams? Is this proactively discussed enough and is thought given relating to improvement in this area?
- The link <https://www.investorsinpeople.com/resources/share-and-inspire/takingcontrol-change> provides further information and details of research for organisations embracing change.

## Implications and Recommendations

The following recommendations for the leadership team are based on the professional judgement and assessment of Southwark Council undertaken by Vincent Dolan.

The principles of IIP are extremely well embedded throughout the Council and are successfully implemented in order to achieve results that are now very evident.

Council performance continues to improve, and this has been a very good year relating to the achievement of KPIs. The Council is now recognised once again as an IIP Gold organisation, and this is the first under the rigorous IIP6, which is a very good model to continue to build on.

Commitment of leaders and staff at all levels towards the success of the Council is impressive. Staff talk with pride about the achievements of the Council, its culture, and, for many, their own progress as workers. This reflects the real and genuine interest they have in the quality of the services provided to residents and the reputation of the Council. There is a very good 'story to tell' and celebrate relating to the Council maintaining this and producing a strong performance, which could be incorporated into a case study to use on the Council's website and for the sector at large.

The planning process is robust within the Council, with efforts made to engage the entire workforce in the process, and many consultation opportunities are in place for employees to take part in. In the main, people are fully engaged to a level appropriate to their role and talk with confidence about the KPIs, objectives and plans that are in place. The cascading of the vision, ambition and direction of the Council is impressive and people want to know 'what's going on' and have the motivation and a real interest in contributing. Some people interviewed commented that other councils they have worked for do not do this and that they can see the real difference that openness and genuine engagement contribute to success. All of these are contributing factors to the culture and openness at Southwark, making it a high-performing local employer, which is deemed good practice, and we recommend that this continues.

The OLA revealed that some departments have fared better in some indicators than others, and it is suggested analysing the data further and work with those assistant directors and managers who need further support in order for all departments to achieve positive results with the aim of future improvement.

The values and behaviours associated with the values are clear to everyone, as well as the ethics of the Council and its overall culture. Revisiting these, at any forthcoming staff event, is encouraged because it will be a good opportunity for everyone to reflect on the behaviours and for the directors to elucidate on the future direction of the Council as behaviours become further embedded.

Building on the success to date is paramount, maintaining the many excellent working practices and culture but also providing an opportunity to reflect, re-engage and, where necessary, refocus and change as appropriate. This will help where possible to confirm and embed good practice and high-performing initiatives but will equally help everyone to challenge themselves and to continuously improve, i.e. ownership and self-management.

Staff do feel empowered and believe that they can 'speak up' and challenge. The people processes are well regarded and provide many opportunities for people to suggest new ideas, influence others and contribute to some of the ongoing debate. The culture is a very open one,

and people appreciate the efforts made by the current directors to have an open-door policy, in addition to other senior members of staff and the wider management group. In a busy and challenging council striving to be the best, it is important that this level of openness and engagement by all members of the management team is maintained, which will help to maintain and develop consistency. There is benefit in re-examining workloads and remits, for example, those of the assistant directors, and more can be done to 'iron out' some obvious challenges through tighter resource planning.

Investment in staff is operating at a very high level, and many people have and continue to undertake learning and development as well as obtain many new skills. As with many other organisations, due to budgetary constraints, levels of training budgets can be cut. It is advised, if possible, to continue to invest in training and initiatives such as the ILM, which appears to have greatly helped managers and supervisors over the last few years. In addition, it is recommended determining what more can be done to utilise the skills and culture of optimism acquired by people completing the ILM programme and how that can interface with apprenticeships, i.e. continuing to recognise new talent and skills.

At some point within the next year, it is advised to conduct a training needs analysis against the business objectives to ensure that the organisation has the right skills and people it needs going forward. The results of this should influence the next training programme.

Morale is high at the Council and this is reflected in the very positive results to the IIP assessment and the OLA. Efforts are made to value and reward people as much as is possible and to provide a good benefits package. While people do feel valued, are committed and morale is high, they would still welcome more immediate thanks and praise and, in places in the OLA, people are not fully convinced that the current package of reward and benefits motivates them. This is something to either discuss further at staff meetings or to ask managers to investigate in their departments and, longer term, involve people in designing a revised approach to reward and recognition. Building it from the bottom up and engaging apprentices and ILM managers might help bring a new perspective to the issues.

Teamwork and collaboration throughout the Council has improved and is effective, and people stated that the staff are 'what make the place'. Many people further stated that staff are very good at recognising each other's achievements. This could be further improved across departments as well as making it 'freer' in some, particularly in frontline services, for people to work and liaise across functions in order to respond quickly to residents' needs.

With regard to some of the IIP indicators, the practice of high performance is not far off and at an advanced level is creating positive outcomes. Working on an action plan over the next two years or so will help the Council to become high-performing overall with continued support from all the directors.

## Appendix 1: Assessment Outcome Table

Final outcome against 27 themes		Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
Note: Lowest theme level dictates final indicator outcome					
1. Leading and inspiring people	Creating transparency and trust				
	Motivating people to deliver the organisation's objectives				
	Developing leadership capability				
2. Living the organisation's values and behaviours	Operating in line with the values				
	Adopting the values				
	Living the values				
3. Empowering and involving people	Empowering people				
	Participating and collaborating				
	Making decisions				
4. Managing performance	Setting objectives				
	Encouraging high performance				
	Measuring and assessing performance				
5. Recognising and rewarding high performance	Designing an approach to recognition and reward				
	Adopting a culture of recognition				
	Recognising and rewarding people				
6. Structuring work	Designing roles				
	Creating autonomy in roles				
	Enabling collaborative working				
7. Building capability	Understanding people's potential				
	Supporting learning and development				
	Deploying the right people at the right time				
8. Delivering continuous improvement	Improving through internal and external sources				
	Creating a culture of continuous improvement				
	Encouraging innovation				
9. Creating sustainable success	Focusing on the future				
	Embracing change				
	Understanding the external context				

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