

Workforce Strategy – Strategic Action Plan

The council has approved a four-year Workforce Strategy that sets out how the organisation will develop the capacity and capability of the workforce to achieve the Strategic Priorities set out in the Council Plan. The aim is to create a high-performance culture that drives effective and efficient service delivery.

The Council Plan will set out a clear vision for the outcomes the council wants to deliver for residents. The Workforce Strategy describes the way we plan to develop our current and future workforce to ensure we have the right people with the right skills, to enable the council to deliver the council plan. The strategy sets out the aims and plans for the next four years and demonstrates a commitment to our workforce.

It is recognised that the workforce is the organisation's most valuable asset. For the Workforce Strategy to be successful we must ensure that all staff feel engaged and motivated so that they can deliver the best possible outcomes for residents.

Delivering the Workforce Strategy will be vital for the long-term success of the council. It will be challenging and will take time to embed across the organisation. To support the delivery of the strategy a detailed operational action plan is being developed, which services will work to deliver over the next four years.

This action plan is based on the three key themes of the Workforce Strategy:

1. Workforce Planning and Talent Management
2. Engagement
3. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Further highlighting the importance of workforce planning were the findings from a recent Corporate Peer Challenge which recommended that the council:

Embed the 2023-2026 Workforce Strategy and develop an action plan which needs to be implemented at pace.

This will help to align organisational capacity, corporate resources, transformation, workforce development, succession and talent management, and performance management to the new priorities. It will also strengthen the link between the council's ambitions and delivery as well as providing a clear corporate line of sight on how resources are being deployed, what is being achieved and how the organisation is feeling.

A high-level strategic action plan has also been developed to demonstrate the direction of travel and to outline the key action points that sit under the three main strategic themes of the plan.

Some actions span across all three of the themes, but for ease have been included under the theme where most actions fall. The themes have been subdivided into broad subject areas. The actions consist of a combination of business as usual, new projects which have already been started and completely new workstreams. There are a total of 118 different actions within the action plan ranging from short term "quick wins" to long-term complex activities and projects.

Whilst the enclosed action plan gives indicative dates, these will be refined in accordance with the more detailed action plans managed within the organisation. The Strategic Action Plan will not be a static document but will grow and evolve over time as we see the impact of our actions and / or we are faced with new challenges. There are many interdependencies within the Action Plan and many of the activities cannot be done in isolation.

Whilst Human Resources and Organisation Development have had a major role in shaping the Action Plan and will provide extensive support around its delivery, the principal players in implementing the plan will be CMT, Heads of Service and service managers. Without them to lead on initiatives and activities staff will not engage in the changes we are trying to bring about to align our workforce with the changing environment in which we operate.

The strategic action plan is detailed in the following pages.

Theme One – Workforce Planning and Talent Management

Lead Officers – SH, DP, CF, BT, PS, HoS

Workforce Planning and Talent Management - the way we secure and retain the workforce that we need now and, in the future, whilst achieving an increasingly diverse workforce where everyone's contribution is recognised and valued.

This is the largest of the three themes within the Action Plan with 65 separate activities allocated to it. These have been broken down into three areas for ease of communication:

1. Workforce Planning
2. Recruitment and Retention
3. Corporate Human Resources Policies

1. The main actions and timeframes for the **Workforce Planning** area are as follows:

| No | Overarching Task | Examples of Key Activities | Date |
|----|--|---|------------|
| 1 | Build on the work already undertaken to embed workforce planning as a key business process, using apprenticeships and other ways to build talent pipelines and make wider use of HR metrics to support decision making | Develop and implement robust service-level business plans containing longer-term detailed workforce plans, knowledge transfer plans and recruitment and retention plans | TBC |
| | | Managers to use HR metrics to support decision-making, workforce planning etc | 31/03/2024 |
| | | Increase the number of "true" apprentices employed by the council to help build a talent pipeline to support workforce planning by developing and launching a Corporate Apprenticeship programme. Encourage further use of the Apprenticeship Levy to support the development of existing staff to develop internal capacity for the future | 31/03/2024 |

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| | | Review the provision of agency staff so that it aligns to our Workforce Strategy and Workforce Plans for both ad hoc and fixed term agency provision | 31/03/2024 |
| 2 | Continue to support the development of our staff, extending this to explore opportunities for career development and succession planning | Managers to explore the options for career pathways and career graded posts, and provide development opportunities which allow staff to progress | 31/03/2025 |
| | | Look at ways of evaluating the impact of L&D activities on performance, including creating measures to report on how these impact on performance | 30/12/2024 |
| | | Use a variety of learning and development initiatives and tools to upskills staff including the corporate and service-based training programmes, Apprenticeship Levy, coaching and mentoring programmes, awareness sessions and on-line resources etc | 31/03/2024 |
| 3 | Embed leadership and management development within the culture of the organisation to provide a pipeline for future managers and leaders | Create inspiring leadership development programmes for both aspiring future leaders and potential senior leaders | 31/03/2024 |
| | | Relaunch our Level 3 and Level 5 Management Apprenticeship programmes | 30/06/2023 |
| | | Simplify and align Skills Matrix and Manager Role Profile with our Principles and expand the use of these tools in one-to-ones and appraisals | 31/12/2023 |
| 4 | Extend the use of appraisals and one-to-ones to support workforce planning, career development and succession planning to help us overcome the challenges that have been identified through the initial work on workforce planning | Review and relaunch corporate Appraisals, Personal Development Plans and One-to-One meetings ensuring that these are linked to workforce planning, career development and succession planning along with the allied knowledge transfer plans | 31/08/2023 |
| | | Build on our approach to performance management to reflect the changing environment in which we work, understanding what “good” looks like, providing staff with recognition for high performance, and supporting staff if they struggle to achieve this | 31/03/2025 |

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| | and to develop our workforce of the future | Identify potential high performing individuals and those with potential to be high performers as part of the appraisal process and set them personal development plans accordingly. Ensure that conversations about aspirations form part of appraisal and one-to-one discussions for all staff no matter what point there are at in their career | 31/12/2024 |
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2. The main actions and timeframes for the **Recruitment and Retention** area are as follows:

| No | Overarching Task | Examples of Key Activities | Date |
|----|--|--|------------|
| 1 | Continue to review and develop our recruitment processes and methodologies, supporting managers with training, engaging with local schools and colleges to increase the pool of potential candidates and raise the council's profile as an employer of choice, thereby increasing our chances of securing the best possible candidates for vacancies | Continue to review our recruitment processes to ensure that they are flexible, fit for purpose and relevant to the roles being recruited to, and produce new recruitment policies, processes and procedures as necessary | 31/03/2024 |
| | | Develop and promote our corporate brand as an employer of choice and promote the wider benefits of working in the public sector to make the councils more attractive to potential candidates | 31/03/2024 |

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| 2 | Continue to review and build on ways of retaining talented members of staff eg HR policies and terms and conditions of employment, and further develop our induction process to support the successful on-boarding of new starters and staff moving into new roles within the council, to help us to become an employer of choice | Ensure that our policies and procedures support staff retention eg allowing opportunities for secondments and acting up arrangements etc. Review the current induction process and develop / launch a revised induction programme and process for all new starters and staff moving within the organisation which is used consistently for all new starters at both Corporate and Service level | 30/09/2023 |
| 3 | Continue to review ways of working such as Agile working and the use of digital and technological advances to enable more effective ways of working which support both customer-focused service delivery and employee wellbeing | Develop and launch the Agile Working Policy and ensure that the move to Agile Working is driven by a customer-service delivery focus | 31/08/2023 |
| | | Understand how staff are using the workspaces at the councils' office locations and provide appropriate workspaces to enable staff to work in-house instead of remotely when needed | 31/03/2024 |
| | | Managers, supervisors and team leaders to undertake training to enable them to manage remote and hybrid workers effectively and consistently | Ongoing |

The main actions and timeframes for the **Corporate HR Policies** area are as follows:

| No | Overarching Task | Examples of Key Activities | Date |
|----|--|--|------------|
| 1 | Ensure that our policies and procedures are fit for purpose, promote our principles and culture and support recruitment and retention | Continue to review all corporate employment policies according to the agreed timetable, to ensure that they are fit for purpose and contribute towards developing the culture and behaviours which the organisation espouses | Ongoing |
| | | Ensure that equalities, diversity and inclusion considerations are built into all our policies and procedures | 31/07/2024 |
| | | Provide training for managers and staff to embed new policies and behaviours | 31/03/2024 |
| | | Ensure that we have policies and procedures that enable us support recruitment and retention | 31/09/2024 |
| 2 | Look to introduce more creative ways of reaching potential candidates, using more varied ways of selecting the best talent for our organisation and recruiting for future potential. Provide wider opportunities for our residents through work experience and apprenticeships | Explore the options for broadening our range of recruitment tools and techniques to provide more flexible approaches which are aligned to our workforce plans and Principles. Establish a policy for regular, more formal opportunities for work experience and internships, taking into consideration the remote working nature of the workforce, to give potential applicants an insight into the careers available within the organisation and local government more widely | 31/03/2025 |

Theme Two – Engagement

Lead Officers – SH, DP, BT, PS, HoS

Engagement - the ways employees are motivated and engaged in the delivery of the Councils' Strategic Purposes.

There are a total of 26 different activities which fall under the Health, Safety and Wellbeing theme and these fall broadly into three areas:

1. Culture
2. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion
3. Engagement, Communication and Consultation

| No | Area | Overarching Task | Examples of Key Activities | Date |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|---|------------|
| 1 | Culture | Further develop our culture to allow our staff to be high performers, who understand their role in, and are committed to, contributing to our success | Promote our Principles and build them into the heart of who we are and how we behave, both individually and as an organisation. Enable our managers to build on their abilities to have open and supportive conversations with staff which help build a culture of trust and which engage our staff in two-way discussion | 31/03/2024 |
| | | | Continue to implement the Culture Working Group's work programme and review this alongside the WFS Action Plan | 31/03/2024 |
| 2 | Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion | Ensuring our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies are reflected in our processes, procedures, behaviours and culture | Work to achieve an increasingly diverse workforce which has a high level of awareness of EDI and behaves in a way which reflects our EDI policies | 31/03/2025 |

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| 3 | Engagement, Communication and Consultation | Increase the level and effectiveness of employee engagement and motivation and increase the involvement of staff, especially front-line staff, in our consultation and communications processes. | Continue to hold regular staff surveys and extend these to other forms of internal consultation and communication, reviewing the effectiveness of these over time. Broaden the delivery of the current, successful Chief Executive's Q&A sessions to other Heads of Service and to cover specific topics of interest and importance | 31/03/2025 |
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Theme Three – Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Lead Officers – SH, DP, BT, PS, MB, HoS

Health, Safety and Wellbeing – *the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff is important, and we will strive to provide a safe and healthy working environment that promotes everyone's wellbeing, and we will focus on helping staff to make better choices, change behaviours and better manage their overall wellbeing.*

There are a total of 26 different activities which fall under the Health, Safety and Wellbeing theme and these fall broadly into three areas:

1. Health and Safety
2. Occupational Health
3. Workforce Wellbeing

| No | Key Areas | Overarching Task | Examples of Key Activities | Date |
|----|-------------------|---|---|------------|
| 1 | Health and Safety | Ensure compliance with our legal obligations to staff in relation to workplace health and safety and support managers in carrying out their role within this. | Continue to enhance the provision of training, advice and support for managers and staff around H&S, enabling them to carry out their roles effectively, supported by robust policies | 31/12/2024 |

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| | | | and procedures. Ensuring that up-to-date and accurate risk assessments are in place throughout the organisation. | |
| 2 | Workforce Wellbeing | Ensuring the wellbeing of all our staff so that they can function effectively and deliver high performance and make a significant shift from reactive to preventative approaches to wellbeing | Build on the range of resources and awareness sessions available around important health and wellbeing topics so staff can take good care of themselves. Extend the use of the Health & Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards throughout the Workforce Strategy to prevent stress-related illness as far as reasonably practicable, and to minimise the impact of stress-related issues on the workplace. Support managers so that they can continue to address wellbeing related issues in the workplace | 31/03/2024 |
| 3 | Occupational Health | Ensure that current OH services meet the needs of the organisation, through shadowing with teams on the frontline to establish where the issues lie, providing focused Mental Health, Menopause Awareness and Men's Health Champions training, in addition to enhancing the health surveillance profiling and checks for frontline staff | Work with our current occupational health provider to ensure that the provision continues to meet the needs of the organisation including developing new and appropriate approaches for dealing with stress and other health issues in the workplace. Ensure that the provision of occupational health services is understood by staff and managers and are accessed as needed. | 30/12/2023 |