



**Harborough District Council**  
**Workforce Strategy 2025 to 2030**

## Harborough District Council – Workforce Strategy 2025 to 2030

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## 1. Introduction

Having the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time and at the right cost is critical to the Council achieving our vision and priorities for residents, businesses, partners and staff. We are committed to supporting our employees, so that they want to work for us, feel that they are valued and that they are appreciated as individuals.

Our customers expect increasingly high standards of customer service and there will continue to be funding pressures focusing on efficiency, which leads the Council to consider better use of technologies and the continuation of developing a flexible, skilled, engaged, diverse and aligned workforce.

This, our Workforce Strategy, considers the major people matters that affect, or are affected by the Council's vision, aims and values, as set out through its Corporate and Service Plans and addresses how we can most effectively respond to these challenges within available resources for both our organisation and our employees.

The traditional public service models of service delivery are being challenged in the context of austerity and demand and alternative ways of providing services are constantly being explored through our revised service planning and through discussions with the Performance and Transformation Lead in conjunction with budget setting. This approach will strengthen the link between business, financial and workforce planning and could have a more significant implication for our workforce, the Council is committed to supporting our employees and their development to meet the ever-evolving demands of their roles.

In February 2025, Councils in Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, amongst a number of other two-tier Councils and unitaries across England, were formally invited to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation as set out in [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#) published on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

With the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution now very much the backdrop for many English Local Authorities, the challenges of workforce planning, including issues with candidate attraction and retention, will increase meaning Councils will have to be more creative and forward thinking to ensure the right talent is attracted. We also need to ensure our employees are skilled, knowledgeable, and trained so they are prepared for challenges and opportunities that occur as we move through a period of change towards a new Unitary structure.

As a result, over the coming two to three years, local authorities will be working together more closely to deliver services in an integrated way and in direct response to the needs of local people and communities. Due to ongoing national skills shortages for some professional roles, local authorities chase and compete for the same talent, so there will be a greater focus on local interaction and a variety of working arrangements that attract a broad range of talent from all demographics, each wanting something slightly different from their working lives. This strategy reflects the overall direction the Council wishes to pursue in achieving its objectives through its people.

## 2. The Council's Vision and Priorities

The Council's vision [Corporate Plan | Harborough District Council](#) is by working with communities, we build a future for the people of Harborough District that gives them the best life chances and opportunities through:

- Place and Community – Community Leadership to create a sense of pride in our place.  
Healthier Lives – Promoting health and wellbeing and encourage healthy life choices.
- Environment and Sustainability – Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations.
- Economy - Supporting businesses and residents to deliver a prosperous local economy.

This workforce strategy enables the Council to focus on how we will seek to meet the vision and priorities that shape everything that we do. Our workforce will continue to adapt to new ways of working and changing capabilities to deliver the priorities and the corporate delivery plan.

## 3. Our Workforce

The most recent census figures from 2021 showed that, over the last 10 years, the Harborough District Population had increased by 14.3% to 97,631. This increase is significantly higher than the average increase for the whole of the East Midlands which was 7.7%. Excluding full time students, 49,034 of the district's residents are economically active.

The population of the district is ageing; there has been an increase of 38.5% in our residents who are aged 65 years of age or older and this age group now make up 22% of our total population. There has been a smaller increase (10.1%) in the number of people aged 15 to 64 within the district which shows that in just 10 years we can see some significant changes in our population.

The overall percentage of our residents who fall into the category of typical working age (15 to 64 years of age) is decreasing. To address this, the Council needs to be seen as an employer of choice so that we can attract and recruit from a diverse and talented pool of applicants.

Equality of opportunity is embedded throughout the recruitment and selection process, and we commit to sharing opportunities for development and promotion with all employees. We have an established process in place to support managers and employees to identify and implement reasonable adjustments when required.

The Council continues to provide opportunities for young people through apprenticeships, job opportunities, and access to work experience placements. We visit schools and job fairs to increase the profile of the Council, and local government, and discuss the range of jobs and careers available.

With people living longer and the proportion of older workers increasing, we need to improve the way we attract, manage, and develop people as they age. Older workers are generally defined as those aged 50+ (CIPD 2024) and by understanding their experiences, the preferences they have as well as important considerations that emerge as people get older, we can design roles to support more fulfilling working lives. To recognise the needs of an older workforce, we need to build in flexibility that allows people to remain in work whilst balancing personal responsibilities such as caring commitments, which can often be experienced by older employees.

We recognise that the employment market is vastly different to what it was pre the COVID 19 pandemic. Therefore, we need to ensure that we have the processes in place to allow us to recruit and retain talented individuals in a competitive market.

In addition, with national skill shortages and stronger competition from across the UK within a number of key local government roles, we need to keep abreast of demographic changes, particularly within neighbouring Districts, Boroughs and Counties, to ensure that we attract the necessary skills and experience from outside of the District, and flexible working opportunities will allow us to do this.

Each year the Council produces information in relation to the make-up of our workforce. Effective employee monitoring is important for measuring progress towards our equality goals and ensuring our employees work in a truly inclusive environment. Monitoring also helps us to compare representation of our workforce with the community we support. As part of demonstrating our commitment and compliance with, our Public Sector Equality Duty we produce and publish an annual workforce comparison report. Statistics taken from our most recent Workforce Comparison Report (August 2025) was completed by 71% of the workforce and uses demographic data from the 2021 Census for comparison:

### **Age**

- In 2021, 2% of the Harborough district population were aged 18-19 years (with a third of these in full time education) and 4% were aged 20-24 years. This closely reflects the 5% of our employees who are aged under 24 years.
- 15% of our employees are aged 25-34 years which is higher than our population figure of 11%,
- 36% are aged 35-49 years compared to 19% of the local population,
- 41% aged 50-64 years, compared to 22% of our population,
- 3% are aged 65 years or over.

The 65+ district population in 2021 was 22%, which includes those who may have already retired so cannot be directly compared with our workforce.

### **Health condition or illness**

25% of our employees stated that they have a physical or mental health condition or illness which has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more. Of these, 40% stated that the condition or illness does not reduce their ability to conduct day to day activities, 51% stated that it reduces their ability a little and 9% a lot.

In 2021, 15% of the Harborough District population declared that they have a physical or mental health condition which reduces their impact to carry out day to day activities.

### **Race**

From the staff who declared their ethnic group, 94% said that they are White and 6% described themselves as Asian, Black, Mixed, or 'Other' ethnic group.

This figure is lower than the 8% of Harborough District residents who described themselves as belonging to one of these ethnic groups, but higher than our employee percentages over the last 4 years.

### **Religion or Belief**

2021 Census figures showed that 50% of our district population are Christian which is higher than the 43% of our employees who declared this as their religion. 47% of our employees stated that they have no religion, which is greater than our population figure of 38%, and 5.7% stated that they are Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or 'other' which is slightly lower than the 5.9% of our population who declared these as their religions. 4% of employee respondents selected that they did not wish to declare their religion.

### **Sex**

68% of employees stated that they are female, 29% male and 3% stated 'other' or 'prefer not to say'. This compares to our district population figure of 50.5% female and 49.5% male.

Our workforce data is comparable to other Local Authorities and public sector organisations and is similar to last year. The figure is impacted by the number of part time positions at the Council.

Office of National Statistics UK Labour Force data March to May 2025 showed that nationally, 36% of women in employment worked part time compared to 14% of men. 33% of positions at this Council are part time roles and 88% of these are held by female employees.

The female to male split is more even when looking at full time roles, with 57% of positions being held by female employees and 43% by male and when looking at management positions (Grade 10 and above) where there are 59% female and 41% male employees. 18% of positions at Grade 10 and above are part time roles.

### **Sexual orientation**

89% of employees described themselves as heterosexual/straight, 8% as lesbian, gay or bisexual and 3% preferred not to say.

Census data showed that 92% of the Harborough District population indicated that they were heterosexual/straight, 2% indicated that they were lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, Queer or 'any other sexual orientation' and 6% preferred not to say.

### **Gender Reassignment**

95.7% of staff indicated that their gender is the same as that assigned at birth, which closely matches local data from 2021 of 95.2%.

In general terms Harborough District Council mirrors our district population statistics, however there is always room for improvement. Whilst recruitment on merit is important to the organisation, we will continue to look closer into the reasons for any gaps between our employee's demographic and our district population and seek solutions to this imbalance should it present a concern.

Whilst our permanent staff figures are still not as high as demographic statistics, we can see that percentages are more reflective in our many new permanent starters so we are hopeful that this will be reflected over coming years and will be monitoring this closely. We are also pleased to note the number of our staff who were happy to declare that they have a physical or mental health condition which has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more. We work hard to ensure that our staff feel supported at work and have introduced policies to assist everyone to achieve their full potential. This includes making adaptations where necessary to help people remain within the workforce and also raising awareness of some of the barriers faced by people who experience conditions, such as neurodivergence, to ensure that they are better supported by managers and colleagues within the workplace. This work was noted during our recent Peer Review and feedback from staff has been very positive and our continued retention of the Disability Confident Accreditation.

#### 4 Our Vision

The vision for Harborough District Council and our community is to have a workforce that understands and is committed to the organisation's priorities, is innovative and creative, diverse, and inclusive, responsive to customers, ready and willing to respond to changes in the work carried out and how it is done.

Working positively together across teams will help employees feel knowledgeable and engaged in the services the Council provides. At a time of transformation in local government, the Council, as an employer, will need to continue to review the organisational design and seek to operate in a more "matrix" or collaborative model which reduces bureaucracy and allows employees to operate more flexibly. With LGR on the horizon we need to work even more closely to plan and deliver services across traditional boundaries.

Employees will require more flexible terms and conditions and reward systems to reflect a changing labour market. This in turn means that we will need to be clearer on responsibility and accountability with a focus on outcomes.

Great leadership is essential, it needs to be visionary, ambitious, and effective. The development of leadership needs to be at all levels of the organisation. The skills and values required of leaders and managers now and in the future need to focus on:

- Personal resilience and wellbeing
- System thinking (taking a holistic approach that focuses on outcome and not process)
- Relational agility (how we engage with other perspectives and networks and use them to understand and solve complex issues)
- Socio/political understanding of place
- Commercialisation

- Digitalisation and transformation of services
- Coaching for results
- Empathy with customers and colleagues
- Clear communication and engagement with colleagues
- A genuine interest in the health and wellbeing of employees

In addition to good leadership, our employees play a huge part in the future success and resilience of the Council. In line with the Council's values and competencies, our employees will have a clear understanding and focus of what is expected from them, they will engage proactively in change initiatives to enable the smooth and efficient transformation of services which benefit the customer, residents, and their colleagues.

Performance management is also key to ensure we are focussing on the right things, recognising good performance and that we are also able to address performance issues promptly and effectively at corporate, service, and individual levels.

The appraisal process is an essential part of performance management and will continue to operate throughout the organisation, along with one to ones and team meetings. We will develop, implement, and maintain a consistent framework which ensures that all employees, through their line managers, understand their role and responsibility within the organisation and how they are accountable for their actions and behaviours.

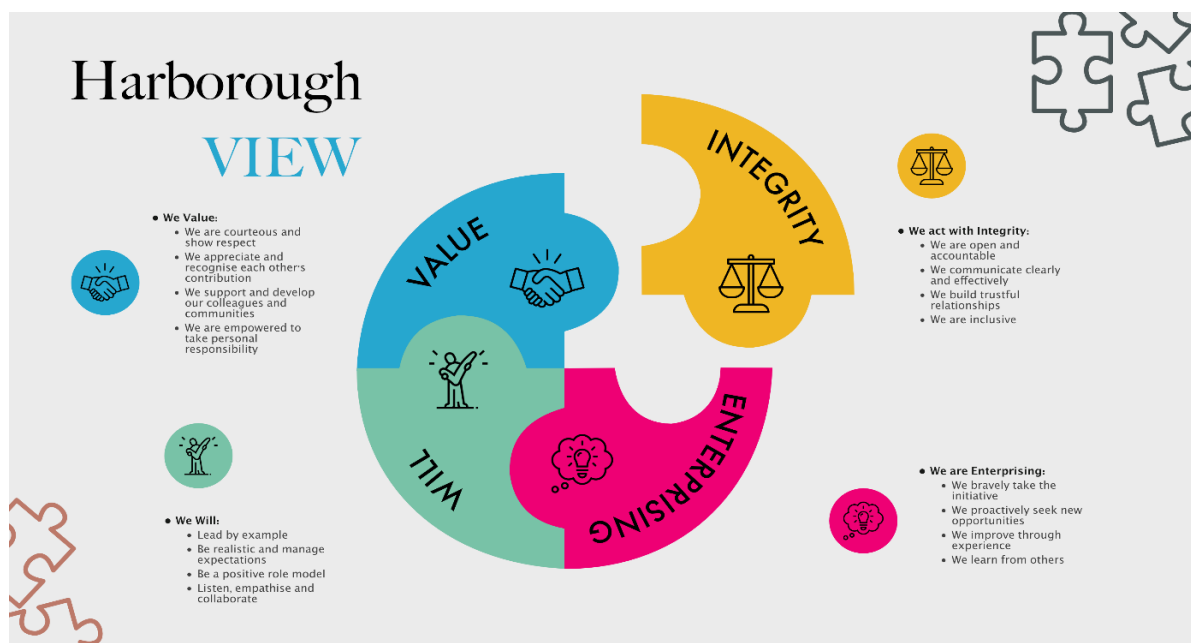
We will enable managers to coach, reward and lead supportively and manage their teams to maximise engagement and allow them employees to be able to perform their jobs well that will enhance personal satisfaction. The Corporate Management Team and the Senior Leadership Team will continue to engage closely with all employees. We all need to feel valued and appreciated and the management teams will encourage ideas and innovation from everybody linking into the Transformation Programme, 'Future Fit,' which is focussing on opportunities for end-to-end transformation of services in line with changing customer needs.

As an organisation, Harborough District Council has its own culture, character and personality and every colleague and Councillor contribute to that personality. Positive officer and member relations is critical to a productive and engaging working environment.

Our recently revised Employee Values, Harborough VIEW, were devised by our employees and have been developed to articulate this personality and the experience we offer our customers.

These values are at the heart of everything employees do and link directly into the reward and recognition scheme.

Harborough District Council's values are:



Harborough VIEW:

- We Value
- We act with Integrity
- We are Enterprising
- We Will

It is through the skill and effort of our employees that we will achieve our corporate aims. This strategy and associated action plan demonstrate our commitment to attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining our employees with the qualities that are needed. It also sets out how the Council aims to engage with our employees through effective reward, good management, leadership, culture, and a safe working environment. The strategy also aims to enable effective management of employees in terms of workforce size and composition.

The values filter through to performance management, and our employees demonstrate how they perform and achieve against each value through appraisals and one to ones. The revised values, once produced, will also be introduced at the recruitment stage where there will be the opportunity for prospective employees to demonstrate shared values and behaviours.

People managers are encouraged to adopt a coaching style of management to focus their teams on results focussed decisions and outcomes, not task-based outputs. We have a number of people managers who have undertaken formal coaching and mentoring training and will continue to look to offer this as a development opportunity. We are members of a Local Authority regional coaching and mentoring network and tap into this resource so that our employees can enhance skills, knowledge, and performance in addition to targeting specific skills and goals.

## 5 Aim of this Strategy

The aim of this strategy is to demonstrate our commitment in delivering our corporate priorities over the next couple of years and to explain how we intend to do that through our workforce.

To demonstrate our commitment, we will:

- Lead a Council wide approach to support, reward, develop and manage employees so that consistent levels of high performance are the norm, and employees feel trusted, happy, and motivated.
- Build capacity and resilience to achieve successful change, building the leadership capabilities of managers.
- Establish and maintain effective relations with employees and trade unions to enable good employee engagement.
- Develop and foster an environment of respect for equality, diversity, and inclusion and where discrimination is not tolerated.
- Develop a workforce action plan incorporated within service and business planning which underpins the Council's aims and encourages a result focussed approach.
- Develop excellent Human Resources processes, policies and procedures which actively support and enable managers in their responsibilities.
- Develop a customer service ethos whereby we support and add value to the work of key partners, stakeholders, colleagues, and members.

## 6 Key Workforce Strategic Themes

Every Council value what makes their place different, their special circumstances and their unique approaches. These unique qualities are reflected in their workforce and the challenges our sector faces. But we all have one thing in common, continuing to develop a workforce that is:

- Productive – efficient, motivated, engaged, technological literate and flexible.
- Joined up – properly integrated across all the different organisations, partners, and stakeholders.
- Involved in co-designing and co-creating services – so that the ideas and experience of the people most involved in services day to day can be fully utilised.
- Truly valued and respected – supported through the stages of life and career and able to enjoy good quality benefits as well as fair pay.
- Diverse – reflecting the communities it services and making use of all the talent in these communities.

## **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

We recognise that a diverse organisation is necessary for the continuing accessibility and quality of our services. It is important that as a Council, our workforce is reflective of the communities and residents that we serve. That elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation continues to be achieved through our policies, procedures and guides and ensures that all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We seek to identify and eliminate barriers that create disadvantage. Our aim is to encourage good practice on equality throughout our organisation and to emphasise its importance as an essential element of all aspects of the business we conduct internally as well as externally within the wider community.

We continue to develop our suite of equality learning and training resources and have a revised mandatory Equality Module from 2024. All new employees and workers receive equality training face to face, and the Council employs an Equality and Diversity Officer, and has for many years, to actively advise, guide and promote equality and diversity in services, practices, processes, and policies that may have an impact on employees, our residents and customers. In addition to our three-year Equality Plan, we have made significant progress in our policy development and creation of specialist guides, including some of those listed below:

- Menopause Guidance
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Flexible working policy
- Stress Policy
- Family Friendly policies
- Recruiting and Managing Employees who are Neurodivergent.

### **Actions**

- Improve the monitoring of information that we hold through re introducing the annual workforce equality survey and actively encouraging our employees to update their personal and sensitive data on our Human Resources system.
- Continue presenting the Face-to-Face induction training which includes equality and diversity training and keep it under review along with our equality online modules to ensure it is relevant, fit for purpose and that it addresses identified skills gaps.
- We will ensure that during the review of our employment policies and procedures that they are fit for purpose and support inclusivity.
- That all of the Council's strategies and policies which have an impact on our communities or on our employees will have an up-to-date Equality Impact Assessment written.

### **Outcomes**

- A workforce that is educated and knowledgeable about equality and diversity and has a good understanding of the potential impact and consequences of their actions and decisions on each other and our communities.
- Elimination of the use of inappropriate language and behaviours which are contradictory to an inclusive working environment and the Councils' values.
- A confident workforce that will constructively challenge inappropriate behaviours.

- An inclusive Council that actively encourages and develops all employees, recognises talent in potential employees, and provides a supportive and safe environment for all.
- Our communities feel listened to and supported through good equality and diversity education of our employees which underpins operational decisions.

## **Learning & Development – Skills and Behaviours**

Harborough District Council recognises the importance of its employees and their development in its core values and the achievement of its key objectives. We are therefore committed to developing its people and its culture.

Our ability to lead and manage through change and transformation is key to delivering effective services. We will continue to work with teams to ensure they have the capacity, skills, and tools to deliver services in a flexible manner, with continuous improvement in mind for the customer. Development of our employees is an investment in the future of our Council. Learning, development, and talent management will focus on improving employee performance and in turn service delivery through skills and behaviours. The Employees Values underpin the behavioural competency framework and sets about to deliver culture change, culture identity, and improvement. The Corporate Management Team and the Senior Leadership Team are key developers of their teams, and everyone shares responsibility for their own learning and development, formalised through the appraisal scheme and competency behaviour framework. Development opportunities will be accessible and fair to all. Development activity will be managed and delivered at the most appropriate level, considering economies of scale and cost effectiveness.

The Council is always looking to improve and develop the skills of its workforce, so they meet the needs and expectations of our customers and changing requirements of the Council. Employees need to be encouraged to use internal and external sources to develop innovative ideas and approaches that increase efficiencies and we actively encourage a culture of innovation.

We are committed to ensuring that all our employees have the opportunity and appropriate access to develop their skills and reach their full potential. With the support of learning, development, the Transformation programme, and workforce planning, we will ensure all training is relevant and up to date and meets the needs of the organisation and employees.

### **Actions**

- Identification of skills, behaviours and needs to meet organisational priorities through a workforce assessment.
- Development of skills required to work effectively with partners across sectors.
- Development of a programme to meet these needs through an adaptable development plan
- Embedding values and culture changes through programmes such as the Transformation programme, 'Future Fit,' and our Values, and link these to recognition.
- Ensure training and development opportunities are available to deliver the leadership requirements of the organisation.
- Promote apprenticeships to encourage new apprentice into the Council which supports succession planning.

- Develop a learning and development strategy to ensure that all our interventions are appropriate and meet the needs across the organisation.
- Identify and develop training to resolve our corporate skills and manager competency gaps.
- Continue to promote apprenticeship qualifications to existing employees.

### **Outcomes**

- Performance improvement across the Council.
- Engaged employees focussed on the customer and excellence in service delivery.
- Having up to date workforce plans for the longer term will aid resilience, capacity, and succession planning.
- Learning and development clearly linked to organisational priorities and workforce objectives.
- An organisation, attractive to partners and stakeholders due to having skilled, efficient, solutions based and positive employees.

### **Resourcing – Attraction, Recruitment and Retention**

The Council needs to respond to financial challenges, change, transform and remain cost effective in our provision of our people resources, retaining our talented individuals in tandem with delivering workforce transition. The organisation needs to be reflective of our community, be focussed on equality and diversity and inclusion and balance attraction of new employees and all that they bring with our existing employees through opportunities and fulfilling work.

In a competitive labour market, an appealing employer brand is critical for attracting and retaining talent, and a refresh of the corporate priorities and staff values programme, by publicly celebrating our achievements and successes, this will support a positive brand for the Council. Expanding flexible working opportunities and promoting the different approaches that we offer, such as compressed hours, job sharing as well as hybrid working will broaden the net to bring in those with specialist or hard to find skills and experiences and will also help to attract career returning and mid-career changers.

Where we can within our limitations, we will review our pay and benefits to align and be more competitive and flexible to suit employees at various stages in their career life cycle. Through benchmarking and job redesign we will encourage attraction to our jobs, which is set to become more difficult as we move through the LGR process nearer to vesting day.

Alongside our website, job boards and specialist journals, we are active on social media platforms for recruitment and actively participated in the LGA national recruitment campaign that raised awareness of jobs in Local Authorities. We have endeavoured to improve the candidate experience, and our job advertisements and associated notes are clear and transparent, we have a number of guaranteed interview schemes including Armed Forces, Disability Confident and care leavers. We actively promote the work environment and career development options and benefits. We regularly attend career fairs or networking events and welcome work experiences students who can expect a structured and meaningful experience.

Positioning ourselves as an employer of choice is important when attracting talent in this competitive 'local authority world,' we need to be attractive so that we can attract and recruit from a diverse and talented pool of applicants, particularly with the LGR and the uncertainty, with this in mind we need to be transparent with prospective employees and ensure both the opportunities and the challenges are clear. Equality of opportunity is embedded throughout the recruitment and selection process, and we commit to sharing promotional opportunities to all employees. We have an established process in place to support managers and employees to identify and implement reasonable adjustments when required.

A comprehensive set of policies, procedures and toolkits are available to provide transparent and clear support in a safe environment for the entire workforce during the lifetime of their career with the Council.

The Council uses technology in the recruitment process which has improved the candidate experience and improved efficiency in the HR Team regarding the processing of applications and can also draw from the recruitment data to be able to monitor the effectiveness of recruitment campaigns. The use of electronic signing has improved the efficiency of the offer process and an improved experience for new employees. The introduction of our new HR and Payroll software later in 2026 will enable us to automate the recruitment and selection process further.

#### **Actions**

- Embed further flexible working practices to ensure a responsiveness to customer needs and provide a good work life balance for employees.
- Retain our awards, Disability Confident and Silver Award in the Employer Recognition Scheme under the Armed Forces Covenant through positive and proactive recruitment and employment practices and strive to achieve the Gold Award.
- Highlight the positive elements of working for Harborough District Council, its culture and personality and attract applicants who are passionate about working at a local community level and the difference they can make.
- Further develop creative and accessible recruitment and retention practices that appeal to a wide and diverse audience and creates a positive image for Harborough District Council in the local community including promoting opportunities to study an apprenticeship, volunteering, and student placements.
- Identify skills shortages and address job design for roles that have increasing national skills shortages.
- To further develop the success of the apprenticeship programme.
- Encourage the retention of a valued older skilled and experienced workforce through flexible working, continued access to learning and development, progression, coaching, mentoring, and leadership opportunities.
- Identify our harder to fill posts by working with Head of Service and Directors and through workforce planning to understand the reasons therefore be able to develop creative and targeted ways to engage with potential applicants.
- Support Service Areas to create clear pathways into their harder to fill roles and help prevent high turnover levels.
- Strengthen and further develop links with local universities, colleges, and schools and third parties such as the LGA and East Midlands Councils.

- Review recruitment processes and practices to remove any perceived barriers and expediate appointments and adapt attraction approaches towards different audiences which do not compromise on equality.
- Constantly review job titles, adverts, job descriptions, and person specifications so that applicants can easily identify the role they wish to apply for.
- Look for innovative ways to ensure we retain the talent we have within the organisation such as learning, development, benefits, and an agile working approach that can adapt for employees throughout their career lifecycle.
- Continue to run and develop the Team Leader Development Programme and management development programmes.
- Develop the multi-channel approach to attracting candidates.

### **Outcomes**

- A more predictable resourcing plan and responsive workforce
- Opportunities to attract and grow talent through succession planning, talent management and on-going learning and development including management development and Team leadership training.
- Encourages returners, and other underrepresented groups to work for us.
- Move away from traditional recruitment and selection methods to provide different and more creative redesigned roles that address skills and experience gaps and tap into all demographics.
- Present ourselves as a forward-thinking creative and progressive Council.
- Reach a broader and wider diverse pool of talent through the increased use of multi-channel approaches.

### **Workforce Planning**

Workforce Planning is a continual process used to align the needs and priorities of an organisation with those of its workforce to ensure it can meet its legislative, regulatory, and service delivery requirements. This planning process is key, so the Council can meet its organisational objectives.

Workforce Planning enables the Council to take informed decisions on how to make the organisation more agile and responsive from a process, people, and technology perspective.

With the development of a new Performance Management Framework, joint service planning, and budget meetings, this places an emphasis on aligning service, financial and workforce planning.

In the past, the process for workforce planning has been the responsibility of the senior management team through the annual business and budget setting process, where they ascertain their future requirements and the availability of resources.

For workforce planning to be completely effective it needs to involve a series of steps as indicated below and also involve stakeholders from all parts of the Council to ensure the data obtained through the process is fully understood and translates that to what it means for both short- and long-term resourcing needs. Through adopting a similar approach, the Council can understand in much greater detail its current workforce and develop actions

plans to address gaps through appropriate interventions, this could include for example more apprentices or clearer career paths to support succession planning, new posts, or technology.



CIPD 2024

### Actions

- Develop the Council's Workforce Planning process and embed workforce planning into the Council's planning and performance framework whilst still a sovereign council to ensure we continue to deliver and develop our staff, taking into consideration for the longer term plans for staff, LGR and a new Unitary from April 2028.
- Continue to directly link financial and business strategies with people management and development plans.
- Place greater emphasis on how budget implications and other restraints are reflected in workforce plans.
- It is vital that our managers have the competencies that are required to support our workforce and can demonstrate the competencies required to undertake their corporate responsibilities, therefore we will revise and develop our existing management competency framework and provide developmental opportunities within this.
- Encourage Service Areas to increase the range and level of opportunities for apprentice and trainee roles ensuring placements are meaningful.
- Develop our succession planning processes as well as our talent management programmes to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills at the right time which will support the retention of talented individuals whose roles are pivotal in the organisation now and in the future.
- Establish a clear and measurable link between workforce planning, the business planning cycle the learning and development strategy which is to be developed.

## Outcomes

- Effective planning means staff are less likely to feel overworked or unsupported, improving morale, lowers sickness rates, and helps with staff retention.
- Staff who feel valued and listened to are more likely to stay.
- Matching staffing levels to actual needs stops waste.
- Improves employees' work-life balance.
- Ensure the Council is 'future-focused' to enable us to deliver the corporate priorities and action plan and are change ready and skilled moving into a new unitary.
- Reduce employee costs as they will be deployed and trained to focus on delivery.
- Target inefficiencies and improve productivity.
- Supports employees and the Council to prepare for change.
- It brings together operational and strategic planning processes.

## Reward and Recognition

The organisation needs to continue to be able to recruit and retain talented individuals regardless of the changes ahead; pay, reward and recognition is very much a key part of this. Terms and conditions are reviewed on occasions to ensure they are up to date and reward employees fairly; however, these need to be evolved further so they are appropriate, flexible, and competitive to attract, retain and reward our employees. Over the lead up to LGR, we will continue to listen to our employees and devise reward systems within our financial and operational circumstances ensuring transparency and fairness, engaging with employees, and recognising achievements. Balancing pay, terms and conditions, motivation, talent, and benefits and reward within a fair process is difficult.

The Council currently uses a statistical job evaluation scheme for all of its roles, this ensures fairness and consistency across the organisation. Regarding the Equal Pay requirements contained within the Equality Act, the Council ensures that all pay arrangements can be objectively justified through the use of this job evaluation method.

The current scheme is a job evaluation technique which uses a framework to objectively evaluate jobs to assess their relative size of jobs across the Council. The distribution of the three elements of know-how, problem-solving, and accountability are tested in the evaluation of each job to see if it makes sense.

With the future challenges of skills shortages and moving towards a new unitary structure, a critical part of attracting talent now lies within the remuneration package we can offer current and potential candidates.

Within the constraints of a local authority and the transparency of our pay spine and grading structure, we have introduced a Reward and Recognition Incentive Policy to introduce some flexibility to payments or supplements, such as golden hello's and market supplements, amongst other non-financial related benefits which include professional development and agile and flexible working which for those who may have a disability or have caring for unwell relatives can be a valuable benefit. This will continue to be utilised to support attract and retention leading up to the new unitary.

Through the council's values, Harborough VIEW, we will continue to shine the spot light and celebrate the contribution made by individuals and teams across the Council, and as one team celebrate the achievements from our colleagues.

## **Actions**

- Develop flexible reward packages, financial and non-financial, and within current financial constraints ensuring recognition of achievements.
- Continuously review terms and conditions considering the current employment market to ensure we remain competitive and offer attractive benefits to attract talent.
- Embed further the Harborough VIEW reward and recognition scheme award scheme.
- Continue to invest in Learning and Development at all levels of the organisation.
- Create clearing pathways that support succession planning and apprenticeship.
- Review and update the Councils Values and embed in recruitment and performance management.
- Benchmark terms and conditions and look to re address the competitiveness, fairness, and balance across neighbouring authorities regarding all of terms, conditions, benefits, and development opportunities we offer.

## **Outcomes**

- Employees understand the value and the benefits of working for the Council.
- Employees and teams are recognised and valued for outstanding work and behaviour and thereby aid retention and succession planning.
- The ability to attract good quality candidates and introduce the Council as a credible local employer through various recruitment channels and sources including apprenticeships and work placements.
- An agile, skilled, and modern workforce with up-to-date skills and the ability to adapt to a changing political environment.
- An attractive reward and recognition package that is commensurate with our employees' skills, knowledge, and experience, critically important as we move towards a new unitary structure.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

The Council's employees are at the heart of the organisation. Their wealth of experience on the job makes their views and suggestions key to informing the future of Council services. The health and wellbeing of employees is particularly important as it produces positive attitudes, encourages motivation and innovate thinking and is therefore a crucial factor in building employee engagement.

We are committed to keeping our workplace safe and healthy, and our workforce engaged and resilient, ensuring all our employees, wherever they are based, have access to our support services and can take part in activities and training that promote good health and wellbeing.

Employees wellbeing is an integral part of our employee support mechanism. We have strong and positive employee relations with our recognised trade unions to ensure our employees feel informed and have clear methods of providing their views.

The organisation has travelled beyond the customary remit of health and safety towards a more holistic approach to the wellbeing of all employees through various approaches including flexible working, health promotion, mental health first aid and stress awareness. Our approaches will reflect the diversity across our workforce to ensure it is effective, proportionate, and relevant. The council is committed to building a culture that enables individuals to bring their whole selves to work.

### **Actions**

- To conduct annual employee engagement surveys and pulse surveys during the year to gain employee feedback on the issues important to them.
- Provide mechanisms and tools suited to the workforce and culture.
- Work closely with the Corporate H&S Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer to ensure linkages with compliance and strategies.
- Continue to manage the relationship with the occupational health provider to ensure quality and valued information is provided to support employees and the organisation.
- To encourage employees to use the employee assistance programme (EAP) for advice, guidance, and support, and provide specific individual support when necessary.
- Support the development of wellbeing initiatives, the outcomes of workforce surveys, and the values and behaviours of how we interact with employees.
- Continue to engage closely with the recognised trade unions, working collaboratively to maintain good relations.
- Continue to deliver Mental Health First Aid training across the organisation to raise awareness and breakdown stigma, identifying signs and symptoms sooner and provide early intervention and appropriate support for our workforce and our customers.
- Recognise the important role managers play in supporting their employees and continue to engage with our managers to ensure they have the relevant skills to do this, including managing hybrid teams, encouraging resilience, and equipping them with skills to have effective mental health and wellbeing conversations and manage change effectively.
- As a joint venture across the Council, we will continue to develop a programme of targeted awareness sessions on a range of health and wellbeing subjects.
- Following the employee survey, and employee benefits package will be introduced in 2026, this is in addition to the salary sacrifice AVC's scheme introduced and financial education and wellbeing workshops and resources and free leisure centre memberships.

### **Outcomes**

- Improved resilience within in the workforce
- Less absence through sickness
- Increased motivation and an engagement culture, with an ability to positively embrace change.
- A robust set of support mechanisms in place
- Trained and competent mental health first aiders, providing vital early intervention when necessary and line managers trained in Mental health skills to be able to support their team's wellbeing.
- Improved staff engagement through an attractive and competitive benefits package

## Performance and Change

The ability to quickly and effectively transform, change and improve is essential to achieving service delivery improvements that benefit our residents and customers. Our Senior leaders are critical in the success of workforce transformation. Leadership will make the difference in embedding new ways of working, as well as supporting people to enhance productivity, inclusion, innovation, and engagement.

Service delivery models change and evolve continuously demanding the need for a flexible and engaged high performing workforce, open to developing new capabilities and adopting new norms. A clear and consistent approach to managing change will be used to help keep people aware of what is expected. We want to ensure our values are demonstrated every day through engagement and a culture which is collaborative, inclusive, and creative. We want to know how well we are performing and take timely and appropriate action to address any risks.

We want to develop an agile and flexible workforce that embraces new ways of working and maximises the use of technology to support efficient working.

The ability to move and adapt with change is now even more critically important as we move through the next few years towards new unitary.

### Actions

- Running training in the change management processes ensuring managers understand and apply the principles supporting employees throughout in particular in the lead up to the LGR.
- People managers need to be effectively coach their teams for performance improvements and result based problem solving.
- Engage with partners and professional colleagues to share workplace issues and develop shared approaches in line with best practice.
- Continue to apply performance management frameworks, linking appraisals to Corporate Priorities and service team plans and manage individual performance consistently.
- Develop skills and capabilities within the workforce to improve agility, responsiveness, and work effectively with other sectors and partners.
- To provide effective training on the introduction of new systems so employees are confident and efficient.

### Outcomes

- Increased awareness from employees of the Council's and team priorities and the required collaborative work needed to achieve team and organisational objectives.
- A collective understanding of change management helping employees to adapt better to different ways of working and preparing them for the changes ahead with the LGR.
- Employees positively input and contribute to the Council's service delivery through operational and corporate plans.
- Increased and improved service delivery through a variety of efficiency models driven through the Transformation programme, service planning, budgeting planning, and workforce planning.

## **Partnerships with Trade Unions**

There is a positive partnership relationship between the Council and our recognised trade union which is essential to the development of the Council and its services. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining good relationships with our Trade Unions and is committed to work in social partnership built on principles and practices of shared commitment between the organisation and our employees. The organisation is committed to working closely with the Trade Unions, in the development of future strategies for the delivery of services and specifically in relation to the LGR and the impact this will have on our employees. Communicating clearly and regularly with our Trade Union partner is key to ensuring the employee voice is heard and listened to.

### **Actions**

- Engage regularly with Trade Unions to maintain close working relationships through regular meetings that meets the needs of both Trade Union, the Council, and our employees.
- To consult with Trade unions on revised and new employment policies and keep them abreast of development and changes in the Council.
- To ensure there is full and transparent engagement from the outset where employees may be affected by organisational change.

### **Outcomes**

- A productive relationship built on respect, which allows for positive conversations even at times of change within the Council.
- Mutual understanding of the ongoing challenges of the Council and how they can contribute and shape solutions to meet these demands.
- Positive engagement with the Trade Unions enables us to unlock the full potential of the current and future workforce which is vital to the organisation.
- Employees will receive independent support during periods of change.

## **7 How will we measure success?**

Measuring the effectiveness of the workforce strategy will be tracked through performance indicators on Pentana:

- Employee engagement survey and pulse surveys to gauge employee satisfaction.
- Employee turnover figures and reasons for employees leaving.
- Sickness absence – long and short term and the number of formal absence reviews.
- Ratio of contingent workers compared to employed and analysing the reason for these additional resources.
- Recruitment success rates.
- Performance management is improved through better quality appraisals, SMART objectives and one to one meeting, and people managers utilising their skills as experienced coaches.
- The number of employees with a performance development plan.
- The number of internal promotions.
- Priorities are delivered on time and to budget.

## 8 What Happens Next?

As indicated above, the primary purpose of the Workforce Strategy is to ensure the Council's priorities are achieved and that our workforce feels valued, rewarded, and engaged. This strategy should be seen as a "live" document that evolves as the Council's priorities change and the make-up of the workforce changes and develops over time.

An action plan will be pulled together with all the actions mentioned within this strategy and outcomes will be implemented and developed in several ways as detailed below.

### The strategy will be implemented through:

**Service Plans** - each Service Area develops a service plan, which is a working document and revised regularly. The plan will support the delivery of the Corporate Strategic priorities as presented in the Corporate Plan. The Service Team Plans will address specific workforce issues in their areas including process efficiencies, capacity, and skills development. These plans will be monitored and managed within each service area and reported on through the Corporate Management Meetings and key activities at Cabinet.

**Action Plans, Policies and Programmes** – the Strategy will impact on a wide range of policies and programmes across the Council. Human Resources, Organisational Development in collaboration with the Corporate Management Team, Senior Leadership Team, will initiate specific action plans to take forward the priorities for 2025 to 2030. Progress will be monitored using the measures outlined above.

**Workforce dashboards** – a framework of key performance indicators and operational metrics using Pentana will be produced and regularly monitored to inform the Corporate Management Team, Service Areas, and the Council as a whole on progress towards collectively achieving the outcomes of our workforce strategy.

**Progress review** - CMT will receive regular updates through the monthly HR/OD update to Corporate CMT and available through Pentana. This strategy is a working document and needs reviewing regularly to keep up with changes in employment markets, employment legislation, such as the Employment Rights Bill the government's Plan for Change that includes an overhaul of apprenticeship funding that will take effect in January 2026, and changes in the operational and financial situation of the Council.

With Devolution and the Local Government Reorganisation set to go ahead, once we have a decision from government on the unitary structures for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, this strategy will need to be revised for the needs of a new larger unitary. The need for cross Council collaborative working will increase as we move through the final months of this significant change. Other measures on the Council's progress on its wider priorities will also indicate if the Workforce Strategy is meeting its primary objectives.

This Strategy sets out how the Council will meet its existing and future workforce requirements whilst still a sovereign authority. The Corporate Management Team and Senior

Leadership Team in conjunction with HR and Learning and Development will be expected to feed into the action plans which will be reviewed on an annual basis in line with business planning and budget setting.

This strategy has been written to address the next five years, so beyond the planned implementation date for the commence of the new unitary structure. It is expected that the Local Government Reorganisation will go ahead in which case this Workforce Strategy will no longer be relevant and a new strategy developed that will support the delivery of the new unitary. For now, as a Council we will, continue to evolve and moves forward towards excellence despite the constantly shifting external pressures and challenges facing our sector. We will invest in our employees and provide the learning, training, and development they need not only to deliver for our communities but also to put them in a strong position as we head into a new unitary. Employees are encouraged to self-learn and develop and ask for support to help them personally achieve.

This live document needs to be reviewed regularly, working collaboratively with the Local Government Association utilising models and frameworks to support the delivery of the action plan from this strategy.

We will continue to collaborate with partners and networks to share learnings across our sector that have proved successful and have addressed issues faced by all including national skills shortages, changing legislative frameworks and the changing demands of our community expectations.

As our workforce adapts to the challenges and significant changes ahead, we will seek to better understand what our employees value. We will review our policies, processes, benefits and working practices to ensure they support flexibility, provide an attractive employment experience, and create meaningful job opportunities. This includes offering fair remuneration packages, recognising achievements and hard work, and providing development opportunities that help position our staff as move to a new larger unitary.

