

# People and Organisational Development Strategy



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

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# At South Cambridgeshire District Council, we realise that our people are our most valuable asset.

This strategy outlines our approach to recruit, build and develop our colleagues in order to achieve our Business Plan priorities under the four key themes:

- Growing local businesses and economies
- Housing that is truly affordable to live in
- Being green to our core
- A modern and caring Council

Our approach is to focus on putting the wellbeing of our colleagues at the centre of everything we do, and redefining our values to ensure that all colleagues adopt the same important behaviours to work towards a common goal.



## Vision

**To put people at the centre of everything we do. Happy and productive colleagues means better outcomes for our district.**

We will do this by:

- Helping our people achieve their potential through a culture that drives performance and recognition.
- Having happy and fulfilled colleagues through wellbeing support.
- Recruiting and retaining the best people.

# Values

## Where are we now?

After consultation with our workforce, we have reviewed our values to help us to identify the behaviours that are important to us as we work to achieve our Business Plan.



### Ambitious

**We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges:**

We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.



### Collaborative

**We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication:**

We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.



### Compassionate

**We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery:**

We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.



### Accountable

**We take responsibility for our actions and decisions:**

We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.



## Where do we want to be?

We want our values to be embedded across all strands of our organisation and processes so colleagues understand the expectations of performance and behaviour to deliver the Business Plan, whilst ensuring we adhere to the principles of public life set out within the Nolan Principles.

We want all colleagues to know what the values are, what they mean to their role and their contribution to the work they do at the Council.

# Climate and environment

Linking to one of the core Business Plan objectives – ‘Being green to our core’ - we need to embed this thinking throughout all aspects of the life cycle of our employees. This starts with recruiting colleagues who are as passionate as we are about our targets and aspirations set out in our [Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature strategies](#) and links through to performance measures and outcomes.

# Transformation model

## Where do we want to be?

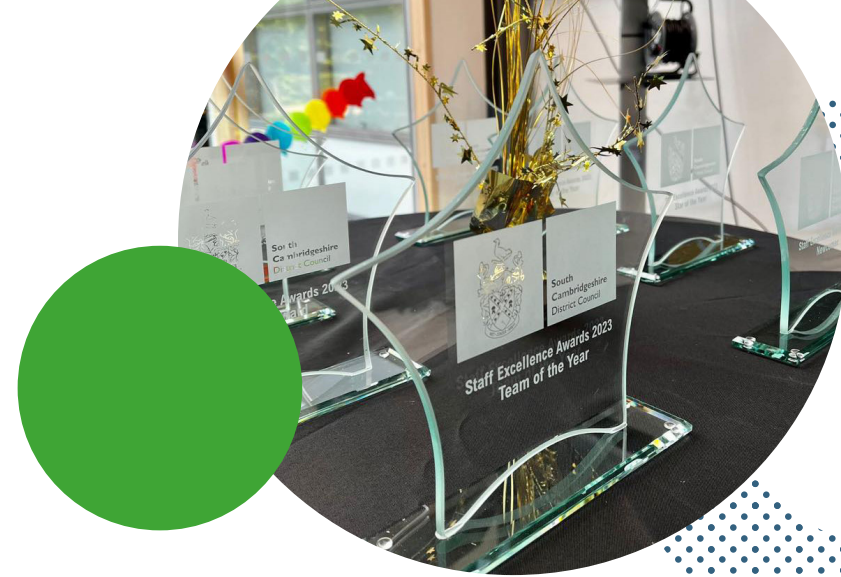
We always look for efficiency gains to improve productivity and outcomes for customers. Along with aspirations to be a 'learning organisation' we want to place a strong emphasis on colleague development, innovation, and creativity to adapt to changes and constantly improve how the organisation functions. This is through skills and culture to work towards our target operating model. We will embrace trying new initiatives and ways of working that support this approach.



**60%**  
online/automated

**30%**  
holistic contact centre

**10%**  
back office experts



## How do we get there?

- Make our values visible through the recruitment process, onboarding, and induction programme.
- Support managers to use the values to improve performance and challenge behaviour.
- Strong links to the Business Plan, and target operating model aspirations embedded in all processes.
- Linking the performance of individual employees to the performance of the organisation through our policies, to ensure they advance together to find innovations or opportunities for progression.
- Encourage communication and questioning, which provides a safe platform for employees to express their opinions and take risks, through raising manager awareness, and our culture and values.
- Promote creativity and let employees try out new processes or ways of working.
- We will use technology to support us to deliver our people first approach.

# Wellbeing

## Where are we now?

We are committed to providing a flexible, adaptive, and agile working environment for our colleagues, encompassing the way we work, where we work and the tools we need to successfully achieve this.

We believe this flexibility increases people's ability to manage their work life balance whilst still meeting the objectives of their role, team, and the organisation. We want colleagues to have an equal experience of employment, regardless of team, location, or personal characteristics.

We recognise there are challenges in life and colleagues may need to access a range of supportive measures for both their physical and mental wellbeing. We will continue to provide a range of supportive wellbeing initiatives which include a parent pal support group and menopause café sessions, and build on our Employee Assistance Programme and Mental Health First Aider provision.

## Where do we want to be?

We want a motivated and healthy workforce – where colleagues feel able to talk openly and are treated with compassion and our policies reflect that situations are not always straightforward, and that colleagues and managers have the tools and access to best support people with their needs.

We want to support colleagues with transformation and the changing world of work and technological advances so they feel able to do their job now and in the future.



## How do we get there?

- Annual health and wellbeing survey for all colleagues, aiming to improve upon “Good days at work” year on year and address any areas which are not improved.
- Wellbeing Strategy in place and user-friendly, easily accessible support for colleagues and managers to support others.
- Annual review of Hybrid working arrangements to make sure they are fit for purpose, enabling engagement.
- Monitoring of case work and interventions where issues are highlighted.
- People policies are kept under review, and easy to access and use, in a toolkit format.
- Continue to support managers to access their absence data and monitor sickness absence figures, to ensure they remain below target and interventions are purposeful.
- Menopause accreditation achieved.

# Performance and reward

## Where are we now?

Colleagues enjoy an attractive reward offer which includes:

- 17% employer pension contributions.
- 25 days' annual leave (plus Bank Holidays), rising to 30 after five years and an annual leave purchase scheme. Note that leave entitlement is currently being adjusted to take into account four-day week working arrangements.
- Payment of one professional subscription annually.
- Free car parking and access to electric vehicle charging points.
- Salary sacrifice schemes.
- Development opportunities including project work.
- Policies which support performance conversations through regular 1-2-1s.

We have a range of ad hoc reward solutions, an annual Staff Excellence Awards event and quarterly Going the Extra Mile awards. We also have an internal colleague compliments page where we encourage colleagues to share positive performance.

## Where do we want to be?

We want all colleagues to be aware of their own and their team's performance objectives and engage in creating these, so that they contribute to the future of the organisation. We want colleagues to feel rewarded, recognised and feel valued for the work they do and for excellent performance.

We want to support colleagues to take control of their development through a dedicated Development Hub, where they can access the skills they need for the future, and support managers to be able to identify talent and make well-defined succession plans. We want to ensure our approach to reward is fair, transparent and supports the organisation, particularly in hard-to-recruit areas.

## How do we get there?

- Make sure all colleagues and potential candidates are aware of the current benefits through straightforward and accessible information on our website.
- Work with service areas to identify key roles and high performers and have in place succession plans to create opportunities for development – also helping to avoid key service failures.
- Create efficient feedback loops including 360 degree and team learning, and embed a culture where people feel open about making mistakes and learning from them.
- Work towards becoming a 'Learning Organisation' – to create an environment and opportunities for training and development for colleagues that is worthwhile and easy to access.
- Completion of our equal pay audit and consideration of any recommendations identified.
- Transparent reward framework in place.
- Review our Performance Framework and ensure it is easy to use and provides insightful data on our organisational performance. The performance process supports the organisation to deliver our Key Performance Indicators and ensures colleagues are clear about their contribution to them.
- Development Hub launched to provide support for managers and colleagues to fulfil their role and develop within the organisation, including procurement of a skills hub.
- Undertaking a skills audit to identify gaps for current and future needs, including digital skills and using technology effectively.

# Effective leaders and managers

## Where are we now?

We have embarked on the first step of our Leadership Academy, which equipped our Corporate Management Team level with a range of skills and behaviours. We need to continue to adapt our policies to provide a framework for consistency, enabling managers to use discretion within the policy for the best outcomes for individuals.

## Where do we want to be?

We want to enable our managers to treat colleagues as human beings in a supportive and empathetic approach. Our leaders and managers need to have the confidence and capability to develop, challenge and reward colleagues whilst role modelling our values and creating an inclusive environment, to deliver excellence and champion continuous improvement.

We want to ensure all colleagues have skills fit for the future. We need them to be part of the transformational approach to deliver the required productivity and be accountable for the team and people they manage.



## How do we get there?

- Career pathways identified and introduction of Development Hub to support manager development.
- Implementation of the Learning and Development Strategy and action plan, ensuring training programmes are responsive to customer feedback.
- Apprenticeships and graduate schemes form a key part of our talent pipeline.
- Feedback from the organisation on implementation of a People Team Business Partnering model.
- Delivery of user-friendly policies and toolkits.
- Leadership Academy, for the next generation of managers and line manager training.
- Values are embedded and respectful challenge is welcomed. All colleagues have accountability for implementing efficiencies in the work that they do.
- Implementing a coaching and mentoring culture by providing access to coaches as part of the development process and providing opportunities for managers to develop these skills.
- Monitor performance across the authority and deal with capability issues promptly and compassionately.

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

## Where are we now?

We have a strong EDI Forum which meets regularly and champions a diverse range of awareness-raising activities and supports the organisation to challenge any issues.

Our workforce broadly represents our local community.

## Where do we want to be?

We recognise the value of a diverse workforce in achieving our best work and will monitor equality data from our workforce and applicants to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our local community and provide equality of opportunities to our colleagues.

We will continue to consider how we can attract under-represented groups or provide additional support to those who may need it.

We use Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) to make sure EDI is considered in all our processes and everything we do.

## How do we get there?

- Recognise 'care experienced' as a protected characteristic and provide an action plan setting out our offers of support.
- Sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Continue with our accreditation to the Disability Confident scheme.

- We will continue to raise the profile of the EDI Forum as a place to promote best practice, share learning and implement change. We have agreed Terms of Reference for this Forum and update actions in the Equality Scheme Action Plan.
- Introduction of a concern card where any concerns about dignity issues can be raised anonymously.
- Continue to monitor the gender pay gap as well as utilising data to monitor this at an ethnicity and disability level.
- Health and Wellbeing survey results are positive.
- Ensure EqIAs are completed for all policies, systems, and processes.





# Attraction and retention of talent

## Where are we now?

There are so many brilliant reasons to want to work for us. However, we have not always been definitive on our employer brand and this needs to be explicit.

We need to make sure that our recruitment process is equitable, fair, and justified but with the flexibility to be able to attract and on-board candidates in a way that is flexible and easy to do.

Our turnover rate is low, and this means that people want to keep working for us. However, we need to ensure that this does not limit injection of innovative ideas, and that we continue to monitor why people leave and why they stay.

We have a high number of colleagues who are promoted from within, supporting our ambition to develop and retain knowledge within the organisation.

## Where do we want to be?

To do our best we need the best people. We need to ensure our adverts reflect what we need of people, and how the changing environment affects job design and the skills that we need. We must look to the future to understand what we need to achieve this, and have a clear employer brand.

Listen to our employees and make sure we use development, wellbeing, and reward to keep them in the organisation, and provide opportunities and mechanisms to develop within and create talent pipelines.

Make the process easy for candidates and managers and recognise that recruitment of distinct roles may require unique approaches.

We need to focus on roles that are difficult to recruit and come up with creative solutions to address filling the gaps.



# Attraction and retention of talent

## How do we get there?

- Review our pay and reward strategy to ensure we remain competitive and flexible in our approach to rewarding colleagues who work with us.
- Take proactive control of our employer brand on our website, defining our values and expectations of colleagues and what we have to offer.
- Deliberately recruit individuals who traditionally may have found it difficult to enter or stay in the workplace (care leavers/military) to support diversity within the organisation.
- Use analytics to monitor quality and quantity of applicants to support managers where recruitment can be a challenge and support recruitment initiatives.
- Gather feedback from candidates, through onboarding and from those colleagues who have been with us a number of years to gain information to identify issues that may affect retention.
- Review our recruitment processes to make it easier for people to apply to work with us.
- Build on our current practices to demonstrate being an employer of choice.
- Recruit staff who align with our values and ambitions of transformation, target operating model, commercial thinking, being passionate about learning and considerate of climate and environment.
- Through job design, regularly review our job descriptions to ensure that we identify skills needed for the future, and the culture and behaviours we expect are reflected to ensure we have the right people in place.
- Understand what we need from our different service areas and roles to be a success.
- Engage with Early Careers to support young people to enter our workforce and help them to succeed.
- Use innovative ways and new platforms to reach new markets.
- Utilise information collated from the Colleague Insights programme to support employees.
- Listen to our colleagues to understand drivers for leaving or staying with us and address any issues and barriers to keeping our top performers.



# Monitoring and Success measures



We provide quarterly people and recruitment data to the organisation through the Employment and Staffing Committee. This tells us what strategies are working and where we need intervention.



Customer feedback from our resident surveys helps show that our people are delivering efficient and effective customer service.



Recruitment data that tells us we can compete with and attract from the private sector and see growth in the numbers of people wanting to work for us.



Our job descriptions match our employer brand, values and expectations and are obvious on what candidates need to be successful.



Our Health and Wellbeing survey results remain consistently good and compared to national averages and show improvement in any areas requiring intervention and our colleagues think the Council is a good place to work.



Our EDI statistics reflect our local area, and we see an increase in applications from underrepresented groups.



Sickness and Turnover KPIs remain below target intervention levels.



# Linked policies

Learning and Development Strategy

Recruitment Policy

Performance and Reward Policy



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