

# WORKFORCE STRATEGY

## 2024 - 2028



Supporting our workforce to **THRIVE** 



# INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to present to you our four-year 2024-2028 workforce strategy.

The workforce strategy is our commitment to nurturing a culture of excellence, empowerment, and growth. It reflects our dedication to creating an environment where every member of our team can unlock their full potential and contribute to our shared success. Guided by our organisational values and behaviours serving as the DNA to shape our culture and, along with the workforce strategic themes, create a workplace where everyone is supported to thrive!

The strategy encompasses several key themes, including talent attraction and grow our own, employee learning and development as we strive to become a learning organisation, succession planning and inspiring leadership, and employee engagement and retention. It also emphasises the importance of embracing diversity and inclusion, fostering a culture of innovation, and using data to make informed decisions.

I am confident that the workforce strategy places us as employer of choice, and also demonstrates our commitment to enhance the experience of every individual who contributes to our shared vision. Together, we will create a workplace that thrives, a place where we inspire one another, where our achievements are celebrated, and where our passion for what we do fuels our future accomplishments.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your unwavering dedication, commitment, and creativity. With this strategy as our compass, I am excited for the future.

Thank you for being part of our incredible Herefordshire team.

PAUL WALKER  
*Chief Executive*



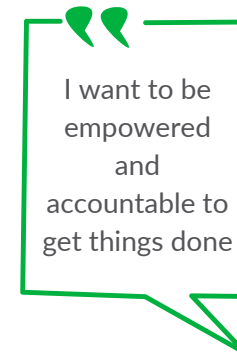
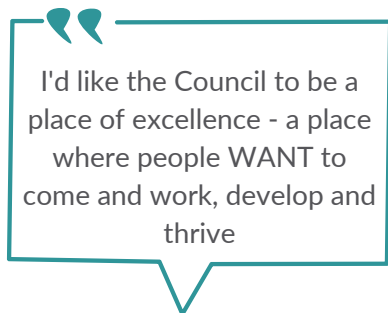


## HOW WE DEVELOPED OUR STRATEGY

This strategy succeeds the Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy 2021 - 2024 which was developed and published at a time of great change and challenge for Herefordshire Council. The Council's approach to change in recent years has been broadly incremental and the events of 2020 resulted in a rapid and fundamental transformation of our workforce and working practices. The strategy therefore sets out an overall aim to develop an engaged, agile and resilient workforce and in doing so embraces the opportunities and address the challenges that the experience of covid in 2020 provided.

2023 saw the strengthening of employee voice and the introduction of a number of new employee network groups. This workforce strategy has been successfully co-produced in collaboration with our dedicated staff, leaders and trade unions through a number of open and facilitated workshops. Through this collective effort, we have harnessed the power of diverse perspectives and expertise, fostering an inclusive and engaging environment where every team member's input is valued and appreciated.

You told us:

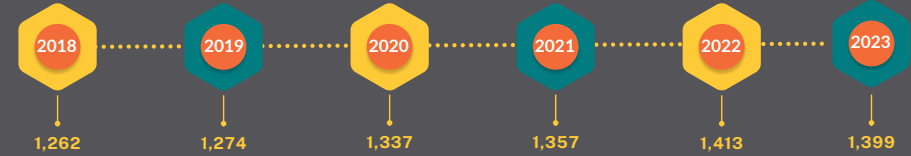




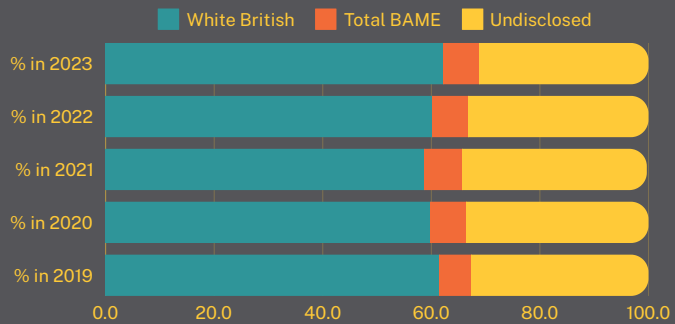
# OUR WORKFORCE TRENDS

The strategy has been informed by our workforce demographic and trend data. We have looked at induction and leavers' data, analysed our equality information and reviewed data such as absence and information from the employee survey. We know that our workforce is ageing, becoming more diverse and flexibility is an important factor for staff deciding stay here or join us.

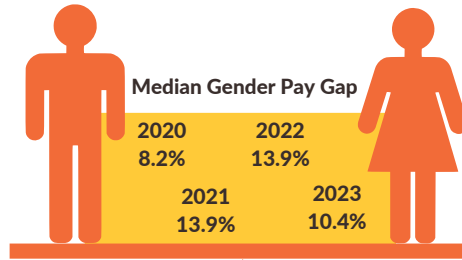
Number of people (non-school based) employed by the council



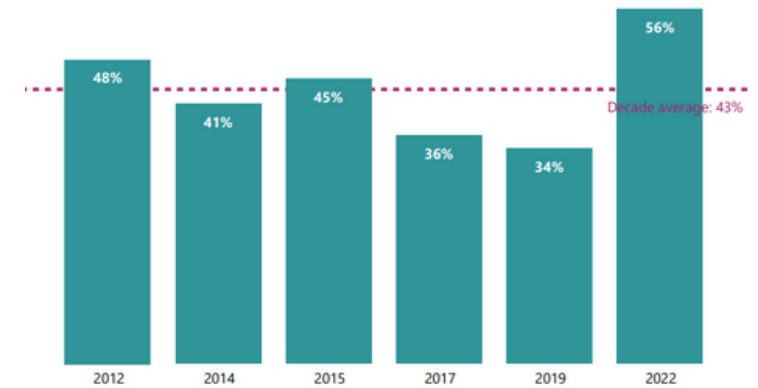
Ethnicity trend



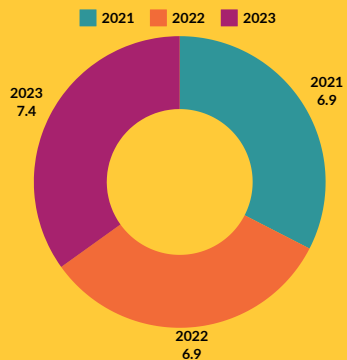
Median Gender Pay Gap



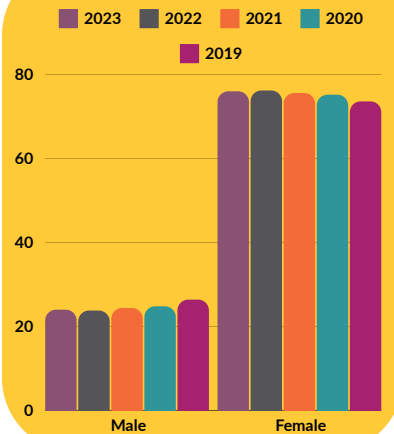
Employee survey completion rate trend for previous decade (Whole council)



Average days lost through absence per employee

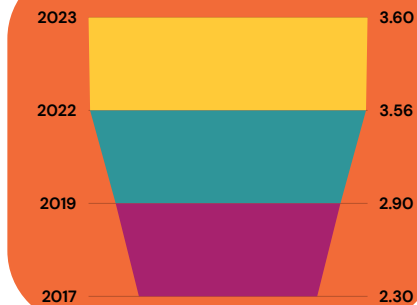


Gender Profile

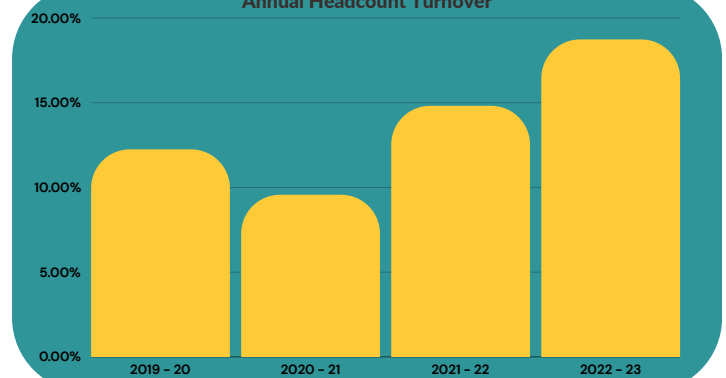


Average length of service in 2023 is 5 years

Employee Engagement Score



Annual Headcount Turnover





# DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

## Work Environment and Flexible Working

Our work environment and how we work has changed drastically over the past few years. We continue to embed and evolve flexible futures to meet the changing needs of a multi-generational, flexible and geographically diverse workforce.

## Changing Demographics

Our future workforce will be a more lean and efficient structure with a reducing headcount. Shifting demographics such as an ageing workforce, the emergence of Generation Alpha require different strategies to address needs and expectations of the workforce.

## Skills and Talent Gaps

Identifying and addressing skill gaps and talent shortages within the council is critical for maintaining excellent services for residents. As is ensuring that we prioritise future skills in areas such as commercialisation and contract management that support the future council operating model.

## Recruitment and Succession Planning

As our workforce demography changes and staff leave, succession planning for critical roles will necessitate creative and new workforce strategies focused on identifying, attracting and growing our own internal talent.

## Employee Experience

It is no longer the case that a fair salary alone retains talent. The wider employee engagement and health and wellbeing offer is becoming more crucial as we seek to be an employer of choice that attracts and retains top talent.

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

As we attract a more diverse workforce, we will also embrace, retain and promote diversity and inclusion in all that we do. We aim to foster a culture of belonging, review and adopt strategies that challenge and remove bias and discrimination in our workplace.

## Competitive Talent Landscape

Attracting talent is becoming more competitive. Strategies to develop our employer branding, recruitment marketing, and unique employee value proposition are required to attract within a challenging external recruitment market.

## Data and Digital

Digital transformation will enable and focus job design and service delivery. Enabling digital self-serve and using new technologies will shape new ways of working. This requires new thinking and is reliant on developing new skills to ensure we utilise and maximise its potential.



# COUNCIL VISION AND PRIORITIES - OUR GOLDEN THREAD

Everything we do is aligned to our County Plan. We have a clear set of priorities and plans designed to improve the quality of life for the residents of Herefordshire. As public servants it is our responsibility to do the very best that we can to realise our vision for those that we serve.

## OUR COUNTY PLAN

**Our County Plan 2024-2028 is our vision for the future of Herefordshire.** The plan sets out the Council's ambitions for the next four years of People, Place and Growth and sets the work of the council and our relationship with individuals, families, communities and partners. Our vision and ambitions are to: **Improve the County's infrastructure, protect the environment and put the needs of our residents first. We want economic growth, better paid jobs, improved air quality, and a council that will thrive and demonstrate great value for money.**

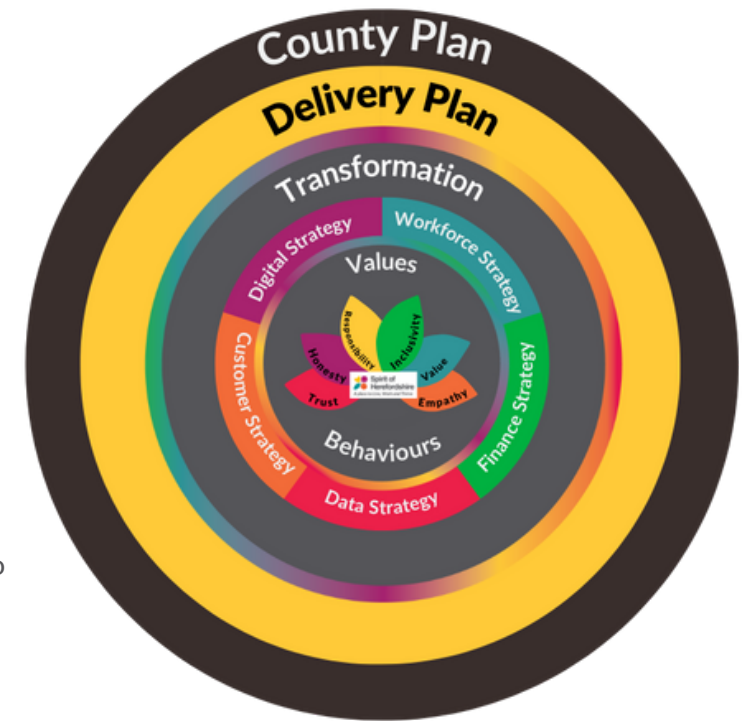
## THE DELIVERY PLAN

The Delivery Plan maps out the council's key objectives and deliverables that have been identified to achieve the County Plan ambitions during the coming 12 months. The delivery plan focuses on commitments and outcomes that are important to the people of Herefordshire and go beyond the day to day service provision to show how the council will progress its priorities in meeting our County Plan vision.

## THRIVE TRANSFORMATION AND SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

To ensure that we are best placed to achieve our vision and ambitions we need to ensure that we are operating effectively and efficiently. Our THRIVE transformation programme supports the realisation and exploitation of digital and data to modernise our council culture, customer experience and services of which there are four key areas; **improving our customer offer, working with our communities and partners, investing in people and leaders and strengthening strategy and the organisation.**

Our Workforce Strategy therefore outlines the work we will do over the next four years to support the delivery of the County Plan.





## CORE VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

The council's THRIVE core values are the guiding principles and beliefs that shape our culture and behaviour within the council. They are our DNA and the "way that we do things around here".

Our values strive to promote a thriving workforce by fostering a culture of trust, teamwork and collaboration, being honest and responsible, inclusive, valuing people and resources and leading with empathy. They provide a framework for us all to align our actions with the council's vision and priorities creating a positive and supportive work environment where individuals can thrive both personally and professionally.

Our behaviours are how we act to get things done and help us to reach our potential.



## THRIVE VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

### HONESTY

Demonstrating truthfulness, integrity, and transparency in all communications, decisions, and relationships. Being trustworthy, reliable, and accountable for your actions. Acting with sincerity and fairness, even in challenging situations.

### RESPONSIBILITY

Taking ownership of individual and collective actions, decisions, and delivering on commitments. Being reliable, fulfilling obligations and being accountable for outcomes and results. Proactively contributing to the achievement of your own, the team and council goals.

### INCLUSIVITY

Embracing diversity, equity and inclusion by recognising and valuing the unique perspectives, backgrounds and experiences of our staff, customers and residents. Creating an environment where every individual is valued, respected and can belong.

### VALUE

Upholding high standards, ethics and integrity to guide our actions and decisions by demonstrating commitment to creating and delivering value in our work by recognising and appreciating each other, our resources, processes, customers, community and environment.

### EMPATHY

Demonstrating a genuine and caring understanding of others' feelings, perspectives, and experiences. Listening attentively, acting with compassion, supporting with respect and kindness and considering the impact of our actions on others.

### TRUST

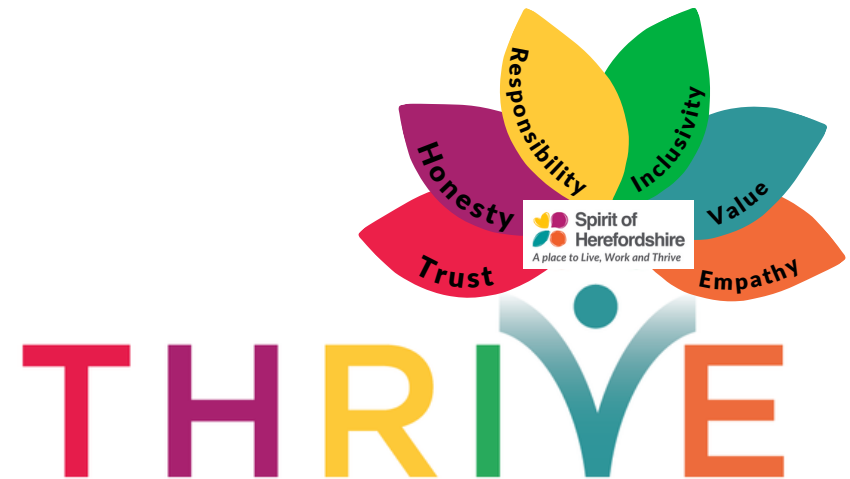
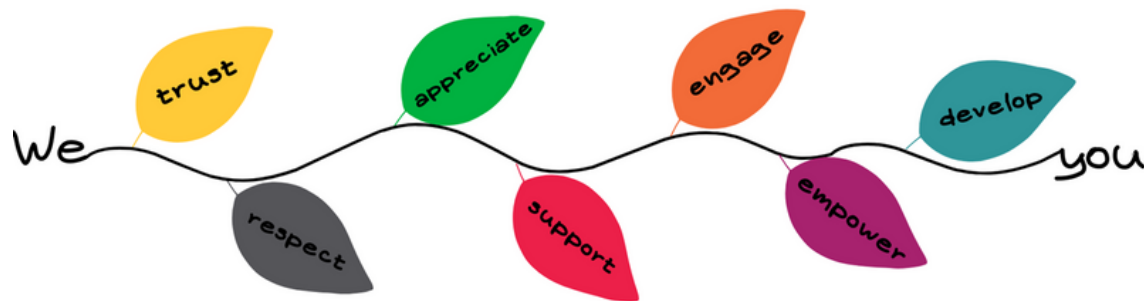
Developing and maintaining relationships based on a culture of transparency and open communication. Supported by integrity and the confidence that you are reliable and fulfil commitments.



# WORKFORCE COMMITMENT

In addition to our core values we have a council wide workforce commitment - our commitment to you. This supports how we will work together and behave.

No matter who, or where you are in the council we will trust, respect, appreciate, support, engage, empower and develop you. This is so that you can be your authentic, best version of yourself at work and thrive.







# WORKFORCE STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

## Learning and Development



Maximise the potential of our workforce by prioritising continuous learning, enhance employee capabilities to foster growth and support career progression.

## Culture and Belonging



To achieve a truly inclusive workplace that embraces, celebrates and values the diverse backgrounds, perspectives, experiences and talents of our employees.

## Agile and Adaptive Workforce



Building a workforce that can quickly adapt and respond to new challenges, embrace and navigate change, and thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape.

## Inspirational Leadership



Grow and develop respected, empathetic and compassionate leaders at all levels, empowering them with the skills to inspire, guide others, and drive the council forward.

## Wellbeing and Engagement



Supporting a thriving and resilient workforce through physical, mental, emotional and social health, fostering and empowering a positive, engaging and safe work environment.

## Employee Experience



To become an employer of choice, recognised for fostering a dynamic and inclusive workplace that attracts, retains and empowers top talent through exceptional and meaningful employee experiences.





# CULTURE AND BELONGING

## OBJECTIVE:

To achieve a truly inclusive workplace that embraces, celebrates and values the diverse backgrounds, perspectives, experiences and talents of our employees.



## MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Employee survey results
- Workforce diversity metrics
- Representation in leadership roles
- Employee network participation
- Exit interview data

## What we will do:

1

Promote a positive and inclusive working environment with values, behaviours, policies and practices that enable our people to thrive.

2

Encourage the formation and development of employee networks where employees from different backgrounds can come together, share experiences, and contribute to the council's diversity and inclusion initiatives.

3

Improve our data collection and reporting and use insight to understand experiences and identify areas for improvement.

4

Recognise and celebrate cultural events and diverse achievements within the council to foster a sense of belonging and pride among employees.

## How we will do it:

- Ensure that the council offers a robust policy and process for dealing with complaints and acts of discrimination, as well as safe spaces for all staff.
- Review and revise our recruitment process to ensure we attract diverse talent.
- Introduce new council values and behaviours and embed these within everything that we do.

- Recognise networks as essential partners in shaping the council's diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Provide regular training and education programs for all employees to raise awareness about diversity, unconscious bias, and inclusive behaviours.
- Create a diversity calendar that includes important cultural and religious events from various backgrounds.

- Act on employee survey data and gather feedback for areas of improvement.
- Concentrate on building trust to reduce the gaps in data.
- Intelligently use data to shape new and evolving workforce initiatives.

- Develop diversity and inclusion training for all employees to raise awareness and promote a zero-tolerance culture of understanding and respect.
- Promote leadership development programs that identify and nurture diverse talent for future leadership positions.
- Implement and support initiatives that improve the gender pay gap.



# EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

## OBJECTIVE:

To become an employer of choice, recognised for fostering a dynamic and inclusive workplace that attracts, retains and empowers top talent through exceptional and meaningful employee experiences.



## MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Employee survey results
- Retention rate improved
- External awards and accreditation
- Reduced vacancy rates

## What we will do:

1

Develop a strong employee value proposition (EVP) that reflects the council's culture, values, aspirations and vision that make the council an attractive place to work.

2

Invest and promote the *Spirit of Herefordshire* recruitment brand to increase awareness of job opportunities within the council and county.

3

Ensure that the council is a place where our current workforce are satisfied, engaged, committed and want to stay and flourish for the residents of Herefordshire.

4

Provide exceptional employee benefits and experiences throughout the employee life-cycle.

## How we will do it:

- Evolve the council's recruitment website ensuring that it provides comprehensive information about the council culture, employee benefits, and career opportunities.
- Review the monetary and non-monetary benefits that the council offers.
- Promote the council at local and national careers showcasing different pathways into the council and employment.

- Ensure that new employees feel welcomed, informed, and inducted into the council's culture from day one.
- Develop positive candidate experiences by ensuring that the recruitment process is efficient, transparent, and respectful of candidates' time and efforts.
- Ensure hiring managers provide timely updates, personalised communication, and constructive feedback to job applicants.

- Building a positive and fulfilling employee experience that encourages retention and engagement.
- Retaining experienced employees, council knowledge and expertise, benefiting the council's performance and effectiveness.
- Offer opportunities for the workforce to develop and grow so that they flourish and have meaningful careers of choice with the council.

- Celebrate employee work anniversaries, successes, and important milestones to show appreciation and recognise moments that matter.
- Develop off-boarding to support for departing employees to leave on a positive note. Ensuring exit interviews are conducted to gather feedback and use that information to continuously improve the employee experience.
- Encourage benefits that appeal to a multi-generational workforce.



# WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT

## OBJECTIVE:

Support a thriving and resilient workforce through physical, mental, emotional and social health, fostering and empowering a positive, engaging and safe work environment.



## MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Increase in employee survey responses
- Increase in use of benefits
- Maintain low absence rates
- Wellbeing and engagement score increases

## What we will do:

**1** Understand and prioritise moments that matter for our workforce, ensuring that this contributes to strong council loyalty and exceptional customer service.

**2** Provide a range of competitive, valued and appreciated workforce benefits to attract and retain an engaged workforce.

**3** Embed employee engagement initiatives to increase morale and foster a positive council culture where the workforce feel cared for and motivated to perform at their best.

**4** Promote a safe, healthy work environment and experience for better physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

## How we will do it:

- Implement a robust recognition program that acknowledges and rewards employees for their hard work, contributions, and achievements.
- Regularly measure employee engagement and gather feedback to understand how employees are coping with changes and identify areas for improvement.
- Celebrate milestones and achievements such as work anniversaries, successes, and important occasions to show appreciation and recognition.

- Prioritise employee well-being by offering physical and mental health programs and campaigns.
- Embed flexible work arrangements, and resources to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- Review benefits to support wellbeing, ensuring our employment offer (EVP) is attractive and relevant.

- Develop appreciation resources and awards that showcase and celebrate individual and team achievements.
- Embed employee engagement, increase opportunities to ask and listen to the workforce through workforce surveys / feedback.
- As part of the digital transformation utilise new and modern approaches to support engagement.

- Focus on helping employees build resilience, enabling them to better cope with stress and challenges.
- Prioritising health and safety measures to reduce workplace injuries and accidents, promoting a safe and secure work environment.
- Create trusting relationships and conversations that allow the workforce to raise their health and wellbeing concerns, with staff supported appropriately where adjustments are needed.



# INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

## OBJECTIVE:

Grow and develop respected, empathetic and compassionate leaders at all levels, empowering them with the skills to inspire, guide others, and drive the council forward.



## MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Increase in internal promotions into leadership positions
- Increases in MyConversations being conducted
- Improved confidence in leaders and managers

## What we will do:

1

Promote and develop compassionate and inclusive leadership, providing leaders with the skills to lead their services and teams.

2

Grow our leadership capacity and capability through investing in skills and development opportunities.

3

Foster a supportive work environment and culture of psychological safety that encourages growth and innovation.

4

Develop a council leadership model that embodies the type of leaders and culture required to support our workforce, respects our residents and service users and delivers council priorities.

## How we will do it:

- Promote inclusive leadership by training managers and leaders to be inclusive and lead by example.
- Encourage and value diverse perspectives and create an open and supportive work environment.
- Encourage leaders to develop self-awareness and reflect on their leadership style and behaviour.

- Develop opportunities for leaders, at all levels, to gain valuable insights into their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Create opportunities for leaders to collaborate and work together on projects and initiatives across the council.
- Implement leadership development programs for leaders at all levels of the council.

- Empower leaders to make decisions and take ownership of their portfolios.
- Provide the necessary resources and support to empower leaders to make decisions. Trusting their judgement so that they take initiative and drive the council forward.
- Cultivate a growth mindset culture where mistakes and failures are viewed as learning opportunities rather than punishment.

- Review leadership development responsibilities and embed these into recruitment and leadership capabilities.
- Identify and nurture future leadership potential, ensuring opportunities to grow within the council.
- Leaders role modelling the council's values and behaviours by integrating these into their leadership approach, that enable their teams to thrive.



# AGILE AND ADAPTIVE WORKFORCE

## OBJECTIVE:

Build a workforce that can quickly adapt and respond to new challenges, embrace and navigate change, and thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape.



## MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Successful implementation of change initiatives
- Increased employee ideas and suggestions

## What we will do:

1

Cultivate a change and growth mindset where employees embrace change and challenges as opportunities for personal and professional growth.

2

Work with employee networks to embed flexible futures and flexible working practices and policies across the council ensuring that we are an agile and responsive council.

3

Ensure that we have the right people, at the right time, with the right skills aligned to the council's vision and priorities using workforce planning and succession planning.

4

Ensure that the council is resilient and adaptable, better equipped to navigate uncertainty and change.

## How we will do it:

- Provide resources and support to help employees build resilience and agility in the face of uncertainty and change.
- Develop a council approach to change and resources to support cultural change.
- Foster collaboration across different teams and departments. Encourage employees to work together and share expertise to tackle complex challenges.

- Implement flexible work policies to accommodate the diverse needs of employees.
- Offer flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options or flexible hours, to promote work-life balance and increase job satisfaction.
- Empower cross-functional teams to make decisions and take ownership of their work, promoting a sense of ownership and accountability.

- Introduce a model of workforce planning to compliment annual service plans that identify future roles, skills and workforce requirements.
- Develop succession plans for critical roles to ensure a smooth transition when key employees leave or retire.
- Compare the skills and competencies required for future roles with the existing workforce's capabilities. Identify skill gaps that need to be addressed through recruitment, training, or development.

- Continuously review and update processes and workflows to ensure they are efficient and aligned with the changing needs of the council.
- Identify and train change champions within the council who can lead and support teams during times of transition.
- Celebrate the successes and achievements of individuals and teams who have successfully adapted to new challenges or changes.



# LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

## OBJECTIVE:

Maximise the potential of our workforce by prioritising continuous learning, enhancing employee capabilities to foster growth and support career progression.



## MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Engagement in learning activity
- Apprenticeship numbers increased
- Increased number of promotions for internal candidates

## What we will do:

1

Cultivate a learning culture where continuous learning and development is valued, encouraged and embraced at all levels within the council.

2

Invest in and nurture internal talent to meet the council's future workforce needs.

3

Maximise the potential of the workforce ensuring that there are opportunities, within roles, to grow, develop and thrive.

4

Provide career development and growth opportunities to retain staff as their career goals change.

## How we will do it:

- Provide a variety of learning opportunities, workshops, seminars and online courses.
- Develop an internal programme and culture of knowledge sharing, where employees are encouraged to share their expertise and experiences.
- Offer access to resources through the LMS and viva learning to encourage self-directed learning and skill enhancement.

- Create opportunities for employees to network and collaborate with colleagues from different services or locations providing a sense of community and enabling knowledge exchange.
- Invest in digital and data skills to support the council's transformation programme of work.
- Identify and recruit to new apprenticeship programmes to support our grow our own pipeline of talent for future roles.

- Expand the My Conversation performance framework to support staff and managers.
- Create learning communities or forums where employees can share knowledge, best practices, and insights.
- Develop a coaching culture throughout the council, supporting the peer to peer skills development.

- Offer mentoring opportunities to help employees advance in their careers.
- Provide opportunities for secondments, job and skills swaps across the council and with partners to gain diverse experiences.
- Define career pathways and progression opportunities within the council to illustrate how staff can grow in their careers.





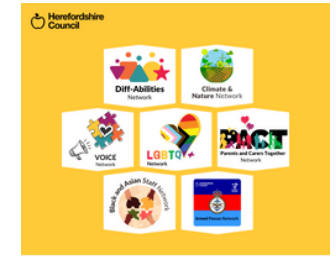
# 2021 - 2023 SUCCESSES



WORKING TOGETHER TO  
END MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



MOMENTS THAT  
MATTER



Spirit of Herefordshire  
A place to Live Work & Thrive  
Employee Networks







## ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Corporate delivery plan
- Employee survey action plan
- Gender pay gap action plan
- My conversation
- Induction