

# Our People Strategy 2024 - 2028



# Contents



# Foreword

I am very proud to lead a workforce with such a diverse range of skills, experience and backgrounds who deliver such important services to Hertfordshire residents every day.

Hertfordshire County Council is one of the largest employers in the county and it is a priority for us to be an Employer of Choice, not just in Hertfordshire but nationally. That's why we're continuing to find innovative ways to attract, develop, and retain the very best talent.

We recognise that to be an Employer of Choice we need to listen to our people; recognise that socio-economic and global events have redefined what many people are looking for from paid employment; understand how people feel about the environment in which they work, and what wellbeing and a good work life balance means to them.

The pandemic and other economic factors have accelerated our need to innovate and challenge previously held assumptions about the manner and place in which

we work. We recognise that no one size fits all so we want our workplaces to act as a magnet, where people can work flexibly and collaborate, and we can be an inclusive Employer of Choice where *everyone* feels a strong sense of belonging.

Change is at the heart of local government, especially in the current financial climate and we fully appreciate that change can be challenging at times. However, change is what drives innovation, and so we encourage our people to engage and be part of our change programmes enabling us to best serve Hertfordshire residents over the long term, who are at the heart of everything we do.

This People Strategy sets out our four People Strategy Pillars for achieving this aim, with a strong focus on ensuring that equality, diversity & inclusion are woven

into all our decision making and practice. Hertfordshire County Council is a great place to work, where our staff really do make a difference every day.

Whether you are an existing member of staff or thinking of joining us, thank you for taking the time to engage with our People Strategy.



**Scott Crudginton**  
Interim Chief Executive

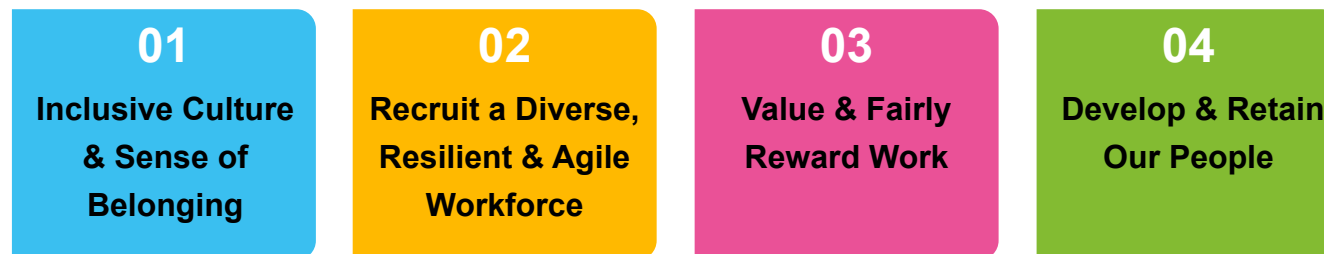


Hertfordshire County Council serves 1.2m residents and our workforce is key to delivering our Corporate Plan.

# Executive Summary

The council has a responsibility to recognise that in these times of financial pressures it needs to be financially sustainable and have a modern workforce which works together effectively as “one council”.

This People Strategy focuses on our workforce with four People Strategy Pillars:



To deliver the People Strategy we are committed to all our colleagues’ development and wellbeing. To plan for now and look to the future each Directorate has a Strategic Workforce Plan which includes our people priorities, based on the four People Strategy Pillars.

These workforce plans will have a strong focus on the wellbeing of our people along with ensuring that equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded into everything we do.

The People Strategy will be informed through evidence and evaluation of key workforce data and will ensure Hertfordshire County Council is an Employer of Choice, where colleagues want to come, stay, develop, and thrive.



## Who are we, what are our values?

Our workforce consists of over 8,500 talented and compassionate individuals who work every day to make a difference to our community. This includes frontline officers out fighting fires, teaching in our schools, supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs, protecting residents against scams, providing new bridges and roads, and maintaining our existing 3000-mile-long road network. Making a difference also takes planners, lawyers, ecologists, support officers and volunteers working in the background to ensure that taxpayers' money is used wisely, and the fairest decisions are made through the democratic process. This wide variety of services and roles across the council requires us to have a joined-up “one council” approach to recruiting, rewarding, retaining, and engaging our workforce, to get the right people in the right role at the right time. Inclusion is in our DNA and we celebrate difference and promote opportunities for everyone.

Our people follow our [RISE values](#) and behaviours and “RISE to the challenge” in everything they do. The acronym RISE represents our intention to improve Residents' lives, work with Integrity, act Sustainably and champion Equality and fairness and we apply the same values within our workplace. Our Fire & Rescue Service also follow the [Core Code of Ethics Fire and Rescue Services England \(local.gov.uk\)](#).





## Why do we need a People Strategy?

### Employer of Choice

As one of the largest employers in Hertfordshire our aim is to be an Employer of Choice, but what does that mean? Well, we want to be an organisation that people want to join because our culture and what we stand for resonates with them. In order to achieve this we need an overarching council strategy which identifies our people priorities and puts in place a structured workforce plan to achieve these based on our four People Strategy Pillars. Each pillar has particular aims which we are committed to achieve and measure through our key people data and our people feedback mechanisms such as our Colleague Survey, Staff Network Groups, Employee Representatives Group, and our Diversity & Inclusion Board.

### What does success look like?

We need to get the “people basics” right, creating a workplace that allows everyone to be who they really are and feel a real sense of belonging to the council. It also means that we need to recruit a diverse, resilient, and agile workforce to be able to adapt and thrive in the ever changing global and public sector landscape. To achieve this we need to make sure that we develop and retain our people and value and reward them fairly for the work that they do. If we achieve our aims for these four People Strategy Pillars, we will be an Employer of Choice in Hertfordshire and beyond!

### 01 Inclusive Culture & Sense of Belonging

#### Aims

- A welcoming workplace where colleagues can make connections and feel they belong to “one council”
- Leaders role model inclusivity and create a culture of openness, fairness and equity
- Colleagues’ physical and mental health and wellbeing is at the forefront so they can thrive at work
- A diverse environment where colleagues can collaborate, innovate and express their ideas and opinions
- Colleagues feel recognised and valued, and their achievements and contributions are widely celebrated

#### Measures

- Colleague Survey analysis
- Starter and Leaver data analysis
- Equality data analysis
- Number of vacancies filled internally
- Feedback from Staff Networks, Employee Forums, and Diversity & Inclusion Board

### 02 Recruit a Diverse, Resilient & Agile Workforce

#### Aims

- Attract and recruit people who are passionate about public service delivery
- Attract and recruit people who are innovative, flexible and able to embrace change
- Increase diversity to harness the opportunities a diverse workforce can provide
- Increase employee retention through internal career pathways and development opportunities

#### Measures

- Starter and Leaver data analysis
- Evaluation of public sector targeted recruitment success
- Equality data analysis



## 03 Value & Fairly Reward Work

### Aims

- Colleagues feel valued, motivated, and can see how they make a difference to the organisation
- Pay structures in place which ensure colleagues are paid fairly and transparently for the work they do
- Colleagues offered attractive rewards and benefits including desirable public sector pension
- A range of support and resources on offer to improve financial, physical, and mental wellbeing

### Measures

- Starter and Leaver analysis
- Number of colleagues taking up the rewards and benefits on offer
- Colleague Survey analysis
- Monitoring Job Evaluation Appeals

## 04 Develop & Retain Our People

### Aims

- Inspirational leaders who take responsibility for organisational culture are developed at all levels
- A skilled and knowledgeable workforce whose development is aligned to our organisational priorities
- A progressive culture where colleagues are curious and can develop and progress their careers
- A high-performance culture where there is individual accountability for development and progression
- Talent is recognised and cultivated to enable development, progression and succession
- Colleagues are supported to balance their work and life beyond work

### Measures

- Training feedback mechanisms
- Tracking performance improvements
- Colleague Survey analysis
- Starter and Leaver data analysis
- Equality data analysis
- Number of vacancies filled internally

## Workforce Plans

Each Directorate will incorporate these aims and measures into a Directorate Workforce Plan which will be overseen by each Directorate Board; along with the Diversity & Inclusion Work Plan which will be overseen by the Diversity & Inclusion Board.







01

# Inclusive Culture & Sense of Belonging



This pillar is focused on the diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing of our people.



## Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) is the thread that runs through every intention of this People Strategy. Key components of our People Strategy are brought into our colleague's lives via our D&I Action Plan. We champion inclusive recruitment and are proud to be a [Disability Confident Employer](#). We scrutinise performance management and rely on Equality Impact Assessments, to not only embrace our Public Sector Equality Duty, but to influence the decision-making process. These threads have been woven over time, in an environment where we have worked together to co-create a culture of education and learning from one another, sharing lived experience to ensure when you work here or access our services that fairness and equality is embedded and part of our DNA.

We pride ourselves in fostering a sense of belonging to enable every individual to bring their whole self to work and the rights associated with their unique characteristics are protected, their intersectionality is recognised, and they are encouraged to adhere to our corporate values and RISE to the challenges we face as people.

The People Strategy takes a proactive approach to the creation of a workplace culture that is more than just a place of work. We aim to foster an environment where all our colleagues, regardless of their background and lived experience, can contribute their best work, and influence the way we go along together to get things done. We go beyond merely complying with regulations and seek to embrace diversity in all its forms, including but not limited to race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability.

## Wellbeing

As a Council we encourage, promote and support colleagues to be healthier, happier, and more productive. We acknowledge the importance of allowing time to check in, reflect and support each other at the earliest opportunity. Caring for our people means caring for our residents.

We know that there are times when colleagues need support with emotional, financial, and legal advice, and to assist with this, we provide a wellbeing support offer that includes access to an Employee Assistance Programme for all colleagues. Coupled with this we maintain and continuously develop an informative and accessible internal Wellbeing Hub with a range of information and signposting to support colleagues to look after their wellbeing and find the right support for some of life's challenges. We are very aware of how important a strong sense of belonging is and we have very active Wellbeing Staff Network groups that offer peer support and friendship to those who need it e.g. baby loss, menopause, and carers.

We support colleagues to identify and access reasonable adjustments to support them in their role and give colleagues opportunities to actively engage in wellbeing initiatives that include activities such as walking challenges, flu vaccinations and health checks. We are very aware of the importance of our colleagues' mental health and offer a range of recovery and wellbeing interventions to support existing and emerging needs around mental health.



As an employer we recognise the importance of a positive work life balance, and we support colleagues to achieve this through a range of flexible working opportunities and policies.





02

# Recruit a Diverse, Resilient & Agile Workforce



This pillar is focused on how we attract people who are passionate about public service and want to share our vision and values.



In a highly competitive job marketplace, it is vital the council is an employer of choice and has a diverse, resilient, and agile workforce. Importantly, we need this workforce to be made up of people who are passionate about working in the public sector and who really want to make a difference no matter what role they are in.

Hertfordshire County Council is unique in its rich and diverse breadth and range of work that colleagues can get involved in from front line workers such as Social Workers, Fire Fighters and Care Workers, through to service support roles such as Lawyers, Accountants, and Project Management. We welcome and encourage a diverse range of candidates which we seek to attract by using innovative and creative ways of advertising on a wide range of platforms, including our internal and external job site, social media, and specific advertising platforms/journals to promote our career opportunities. Accessibility and transparency is paramount to the council and so we have created a variety of accessible promotion materials including short videos, infographics, and written posts, along with clear job advertisements of the job opportunity highlighting the pay, job requirements and benefits we offer.

We think it is important to look to the future and so we work with external partners such as local schools, colleges, and universities and attend local job fairs to help us attract future employees. We also build 'talent pools' of candidates who are interested in working for the council and who have the right skills for other opportunities, and have an internal jobs board to encourage career progression.







This pillar is focused on rewarding our people for the valued contribution they make to the services that we deliver.



We know how important it is for our colleagues to feel motivated to deliver high quality services to the citizens of Hertfordshire and although studies show that pay is not the only motivating element of employment, we are committed to ensuring that all our colleagues are fairly rewarded for their work and feel their work is recognised and valued.

We regularly manage and maintain our flexible reward structures and mechanisms to ensure that they are market aligned and we offer salaries that are designed to attract and retain our people.

We provide fair, clear, and transparent reward processes which reward our colleagues in line with our values and behaviours. We encourage colleagues to grow, develop, and progress their careers with the council via our many career pathways which are linked to our Job Families.

We constantly horizon scan the pay and reward sector to develop and improve our rewards and benefits for our colleagues, ensuring we provide a diverse range of benefits to suit all colleagues at different stages in their careers. This includes accessing childcare, fitness and wellbeing benefits, financial advice and saving opportunities, supporting green travel, as well as guidance and support for those planning their retirement. We are always looking for ways to make our benefits packages as attractive as possible and support our colleagues where possible.





04

# Develop & Retain Our People



This pillar is focused on the development and retention of our people.



## Develop

We recognise how vital it is to develop and retain our workforce in order to achieve the council's objectives for Hertfordshire. We are proud that we can provide a unique opportunity for our colleagues to develop their careers through the vast breadth and range of careers and opportunities available within the council.

We also know how important it is that we develop inspirational leaders who lead from the front and take responsibility for the organisational culture, and we have focused leadership training and mentorship programmes in collaboration with our Diversity & Inclusion Team to support this aim. We also recognise and cultivate the incredible talent we already have within the council so that we retain our people and capitalise on the wide ranging skills they have developed whilst working within the council.

To fully support our colleagues with their ongoing development, we offer a wide range of development and training opportunities including core training online modules; in-person core training sessions; specialist training; a Corporate Graduate Programme; and a well-established Hertfordshire Apprenticeship Programme for those wanting to take up an apprenticeship. We encourage our colleagues to contribute to a high-performance culture and take accountability for their progression, aligning their individual development and aspirations to our organisational goals and values.



# Delivery & Governance



## How do we deliver the People Strategy?

### Managers & Colleagues

The People Strategy can only be fully realised with full buy in and ownership of managers and all colleagues. The key part managers and colleagues can play is helping with the overall organisational ambition to modernise and simplify the processes and work that we do to aid productivity and the best use of resources. The People Strategy will inform all people-related initiatives and policies and the decisions we make about our future Workforce Planning.

All areas of the People Strategy will be pulled through to each separate Directorate's Strategic Workforce Plan to ensure that we have a "one council" approach to our people and embed the 4 People Strategy Pillars.

We also recognise that the People Strategy has a number of key internal dependencies summarised as: Managed Service Contracts, Finance, Information Technology and Systems, Intelligence Team, Diversity & Inclusion Team and Project and Programme Management. These internal dependencies will be integral to the People Strategy from concept of ideas and projects through to delivery and implementation.





## Unions, Boards and Committees

The People Strategy will be delivered in close liaison with Unions, Staff Network Groups, Directorate Senior Management Boards, and Diversity and Inclusion Boards. This partnership approach will ensure users help to form the outputs and deliverables.

## External partners

To deliver our services every day we recognise the importance of working closely with partners such as the NHS, Hertfordshire Police, Strategic Development Partnership, voluntary bodies and the ten District Councils.

We are also proud to partner and be responsible for Herts at Home and Herts Living Limited. We will therefore also be relying on these partnerships to help us deliver our People Strategy.



## How do we monitor the People Strategy?

### **Governance, Monitor and Review**

Governance of meeting the People Strategy four People Pillars as set out above sits directly with each council Directorate Board and will be realised through each Directorate's Strategic Workforce Plan to support the overarching Corporate Plan. The aims and measures for the People Strategy Pillars will be monitored by each Service Directorate, Diversity & Inclusion Board and HR.

The People Strategy will be monitored and undergo an annual review led by the HR Senior Management team, in liaison and consultation with services, to include customer feedback and consider external factors, organisational priorities and continuous improvement.





# FARNHAM HOUSE



If you wish to know more about the council's People Strategy or the council as an Employer of Choice, please contact us:

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