

People Strategy

2024-2028

Introduction

Overview

The People Strategy has amalgamated the previous incarnations of Organisational Development Strategy 2000-2004; People Strategy (2016-20); Apprenticeship strategy (2022-24); Learning and Development Policy and Action plan (2022-24) and a Wellbeing Strategy (2022-26).

The Council recognises that its employees are its most valuable asset, and the People Strategy outlines our approach to attracting, maintaining and developing our employees to ensure we continue to deliver excellent, value for money services to the borough. The People Strategy focuses on four themes that identifies key areas of the organisation which align with the Corporate Plan and vision, including our 'GREAT' values:

- **G**oing the extra mile - a strong, caring focus on the needs of all communities
- **R**eady for change - innovation and readiness for change
- **E**mployees - valuing employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone
- **A**lways improving - continuous improvement and delivering value for money
- **T**ransparent - integrity and professional competence

Consultation

Heads of Service, Trade Unions, Senior Officers and Front-line employees have been consulted and results of the annual employee survey have been considered.

The majority of feedback received indicated the following:

- The strategies should be condensed into one central strategy.
- The strategy should be jargon-free and in an easy-to-read format.
- Increased use of more modern passive communication technology methods (TV's/Monitors on walls ect.) & smartphone/tablet systems to shorten lines of communication between employees/managers/support staff and add value through capability.
- Focus groups for neurodiversity and addressing retention issues.
- Reviewing recruitment methods – e.g. CV's rather than application forms.
- Consider a 'notice board' of training opportunities.
- Identifying grievance patterns and areas of concern and addressing the causes, including organisational culture.
- Open two-way communication between Managers and front-line employees to encourage employees to feel consulted and engaged.
- Staff Survey summary

Achievements

Since the previous strategies, we have achieved a number of significant goals which will shape the People Strategy going forward:

Mindful Employer Charter

The Council renewed its commitment to the Mindful Employer Charter following a 10-year review and is in place until May 2025.

Disability Confident Leader

The Council successfully gained 'Leader' status under the DWP's Disability Confident Scheme, following external review in 2022, for a period of three years.

Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme

In 2023, the Council attained Silver Award status under the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition scheme, as a result of introducing additional support to employees serving in the Reserve Forces.

E-Learning

A total of 5,186 courses were completed in 22/23 and 5,281 were completed in 23/24 Financial Year with 10 new courses being introduced.

Apprenticeships

As of September 2024, the Council has seventeen apprenticeships ongoing, with a further four in the pipeline. A total of 42 Apprenticeship courses have been undertaken since the inception of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2018.

Work Experience

Since 2022/23 Financial Year, 28 Work Experience placements have been provided by the Council, including a four-month placement working in partnership with a disability support agency.

Employee Benefits

The Council continue to provide a comprehensive employee benefits scheme, offering access to Tax-free bicycles to work, discounts at supermarkets and high street/online retailers. The Council also added an Ultra-low emissions lease car scheme including electric vehicles.

Employee Assistance Programme

Care First continued to provide the Council's employees with free counselling, and this was made available 24/7/365, including telephone support and face to face sessions.

Hardship Fund

In response to the cost of living crisis, a Hardship Fund was created in 2022 to support employees with grants and zero interest loans assisting 40 employees.

Mental Health First Aiders

The Mental Health Employees Champions became qualified Mental Health First Aiders in 2022 to support employees in each department and signpost to the appropriate support when and where needed.

Wellbeing Passport

A new wellbeing initiative was launched in 2024, formalising support arrangements for employees requiring reasonable adjustments in the workplace due to disabilities or neurodiverse conditions.

Coaching and Mentoring

Since March 2022, the Council's HR Manager has delivered coaching and mentoring programmes to Senior Managers and aspiring Managers, focusing on career development.

Institute of Leadership of Management

The Council has provided ILM Level 3, Level 5 and Level 7 training to employees in the subjects of Leadership and Management and Coaching and Mentoring. A total of 43 employees have gained ILM qualifications since 2022.

Awards

The Council won a Diversity and Inclusion Award at the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Apprenticeship Awards in 2023, along with being nominated for Large Employer of the Year. In 2024, Broxtowe was nominated for Social Justice Employer of the Year at the National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards.

The Strategy

The Council has identified four key themes that underpin the purpose and goals of the People Strategy:

- Training and Development
- Equality and Diversity
- Wellbeing
- Organisational Development

Each of these areas focus on practical support from the Council to ensure that our people are at the heart of what the Council's Corporate Plan is aiming to achieve and will effectively promote a 'GREAT' culture.

Training and development

- Identify and deliver training and development opportunities for all (contained within a learning and development action plan updated every two years). This will reflect needs identified in annual personal appraisals.
- Improve Leadership/management quality
- Improve management and employee communication skills
- Improve customer service skills at all levels
- Improve management of Change and Transformation
- Further develop the excellence of our Apprenticeships programme.

We will achieve this by:

- Utilising Apprenticeship Levy funds
- Providing Management training in key areas
- Delivering HR inductions programmes for new Managers
- Providing coaching and mentoring programmes for leaders
- Provide regular customer service training
- Delivering 'tool-box' talks to front-line services such as the Depot
- Delivering annual ILM courses for employees

Our progress will be monitored by:

- Number of training and development opportunities delivered
- Number of internal promotions
- Number of performance appraisals undertaken
- Number of coaching and mentoring hours delivered
- Number of Apprenticeship opportunities offered
- Number of Apprenticeships gaining permanent employment
- Feedback received from training and 'tool-box' talks

Equality and Diversity:

- Increase the number of employees from black and minority ethnic backgrounds to reflect the population of 11%
- build on achieving excellence in becoming a disability confident leader
- Pursue equality in relation to pay reporting – for example reporting pay broken down in pay bands to increase transparency in respect of ethnicity characteristics
- Further reduce the gender pay gap
- improve understanding of diverse perspectives, and the quality of equality impact assessments.

We will achieve this by:

- Exploring partnership opportunities with ethnic minority jobsites
- Identifying job vacancies where black and minority ethnic backgrounds may be underrepresented and advertise accordingly
- Reducing the gender pay gap
- Reviewing and maintaining our Disability Confident Leader status with peer validation
- Providing training courses to increase awareness of equality and diversity in the workplace

Our progress will be monitored by:

- Number of applications received from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Number of shortlisted applicants from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Number of appointments from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Percentage of the workforce represented by black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Gender pay gap information
- Ethnic pay gap information
- Number of equality impact assessments undertaken
- Number of equality and diversity training courses delivered (including e-learning)

Wellbeing

- Support employees' mental health and wellbeing
- Continue to improve our management of work related stress and anxiety
- Review support for employees going through bereavement
- Increase our understanding of how to support and manage employees with neurodiverse conditions
- Consider measures to support employees to achieve good physical health, for example active lifestyles, smoking cessation, weight management.

We will achieve this by:

- Continuing to provide an Employee Assistance Programme to employees
- Delivering training courses to Managers and employees on stress in the workplace
- Provide occupational health services
- Providing annual flu jabs free of charge
- Rolling out the Wellbeing Passport initiative
- Offering annual well-person checks
- Undertaking health surveillance checks for safety-critical roles
- Providing regular training on neurodiversity in the workplace
- Providing comprehensive bereavement support including compassionate leave and career breaks
- Asking Heads of Service to make the organisation aware of specific retention issues in their area.
- Exploring management focus groups for neurodiversity
- Providing stress risk assessments for employees
- Exploring partnership initiatives with L Leisure and the Communities Team on Lifestyle support

Our progress will be monitored by:

- Number of employees absent with mental health, stress or bereavement
- Number of occupational health referrals
- Number of health surveillance checks undertaken
- Number of training courses delivered on mental health, stress and neurodiversity
- Number of career breaks
- Number of stress risk assessments undertaken
- Number of employees utilising cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme
- Number of employees utilising L Leisure memberships
- Number of Wellbeing Passports completed

Organisational Development

- Improve retention and career progression especially in skill shortage areas
- Review the appraisal system
- Review rewards for long service
- Consider introducing “career grades” to enable longer term career progression
- Develop more succession planning approaches.

We will achieve this by:

- Utilising market supplements to retain key employees and skills
- Identifying skills gaps within departments
- Reviewing the recruitment methods used and their effectiveness
- Identifying vacant roles that can utilise career grades to attract and retain talent
- Explore opportunities with Learning Pool to improve the Appraisal System
- Increasing long service awards with personalised letters
- GMT recognising long service leavers
- Identifying patterns of grievance submissions and reporting quarterly to GMT

Our progress will be monitored by:

- Reducing employee turnover
- Number of annual appraisals undertaken
- Number of internal promotions
- Number of applications per vacancy
- Number of employees retained through supplements or career grades
- Career progression opportunities for Apprentices