
Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

PEOPLE STRATEGY 2020 – 2024

Be our BEST to improve people's lives



The Council's Corporate Strategy sets out a clear framework for what we will focus on and how we will work over the next four years:

- ONE:** We have one overriding purpose – to improve people's lives. This might sound simple, but it brings together everything we do, from cleaning the streets to caring for our older people. It is the foundation for our strategy, and we will ensure that it drives our commitments, spending and service delivery.
- TWO:** We have two core policies – tackling the climate and nature emergency and giving people a bigger say. These will shape everything we do.
- THREE:** To translate our purpose into commitments, we have identified three principles. We want to prepare for the future, deliver for local residents and focus on prevention.



This People Strategy recognises the critical role that employees and our community partners have in every aspect of what the Council delivers. The Strategy supports the Council's framework as set out in the Corporate Strategy and outlines a plan of action for the next four years which will drive the development and effective management of our workforce delivering a core set of services.

Employer brand – Be Our BEST

Considerable change has already taken place across the Council and we are building on our successes and giving everyone who works for the Council the opportunity to be their best in line with the organisation's needs.

We have established a new employer brand built around our BEST values to create an identity so that we improve the way that we attract and retain our staff, create a strong culture and promote the behaviours that will help us deliver our Corporate Strategy



Bold

Our staff are bold, stand up for our principles, are accountable and take action whilst being fully aware of its likely consequences. Being bold means staff do not hesitate and are not fearful in the face of adversity but instead take courageous action.

Empowered

Our staff are empowered, have the knowledge, confidence, means, or ability to do things or make decisions for themselves and others. Being empowered means staff are trusted to deliver services, are outcomes driven and have the authority to be enablers.

Supportive

Our staff are supportive, give help and encouragement to our residents and their colleagues. Being supportive means staff are questioning and curious whilst being caring, friendly, kind and willing to help.

Transparent

Our staff are transparent, honest and open and collaborate with partners and each other to achieve the best outcomes. Being transparent means staff act with integrity, do not hide or conceal anything and are clear and easy to understand.

The People Strategy identifies five priority areas for 2020-2024. For each priority there is an overview of what our focus is and what we plan to do to achieve that priority.

A more detailed annual action plan will be developed and monitored to deliver this strategy and set out detailed deliverables, timescales, ownership and accountability.

Attraction, retention and workforce planning

Employee engagement and performance

Talent and development

Preparing for the Future

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Why is this a priority?

We know that we have no choice but to change the way we do things as an organisation in order to keep pace with increased demand, rising costs and reduced funding.

To do this, it is essential that our staff have the right skills to deliver improved ways of working and that we have a workforce that is fit for purpose – this includes developing skills for the 21st Century Public Servant, commercial awareness, contract management and working digitally. We also need a clear process for annual workforce planning which is aligned to our corporate priorities and driven by our business needs, not by our processes.

We are looking to attract and retain staff in an increasingly competitive employment market. We therefore need a clear employer brand and approach for attracting the right people with the diversity of skills the organisation and our community needs. Now more than ever, we need a strategy to ensure that the staff we have are motivated, productive and engaged in meaningful work. We know that the opportunity for good learning and development is a strong motivating and retaining factor for employees at B&NES and we want to build on this, which could include retraining existing staff into growth areas.

What is our focus – what are we planning to do?

- Carry out modernisation of our recruitment processes, including the introduction of a new careers website, use of social media, and flexible ways of applying for jobs including recruitment processes tailored to particular target groups.
- Carry out a large-scale modernisation of our pay and grading structure and mechanisms, including looking at the feasibility of performance related progression and reviewing the use of market supplements.
- Develop a clear and attractive employer brand using real life stories to recruit the best staff and highlight the value of working in local government in Bath, Keynsham, and Midsomer Norton: (this will include apprenticeships and hard to fill roles such as social workers, drivers, civil enforcement officers, engineers, accountants, pensions roles, and education staff).

- Focus on understanding the local workforce and job market and work in partnership with local schools, colleges, universities and the third sector to promote opportunities for local employment at B&NES.
- Develop a clear total reward and recognition offer to celebrate our successes and retain talent (including learning and development, community volunteering opportunities, staff benefits, pensions package, and saying thank you for 'going the extra mile') in line with our values.

How will we measure success?

- Some staff turnover in the right roles and for the right reasons (e.g. promotion, career development)
- Posts are successfully recruited to at the first attempt from a local workforce where appropriate
- Staff recommend B&NES as a good place to work (confirmed through the staff surveys)
- Our workforce is more representative of the local demographics
- Targeted retention/workforce planning in critical service areas



Why is this a priority?

To achieve the right outcomes for our community, we want to develop the culture, leadership and environment for staff to work to their full potential and to be their best.

We value all our employees and we want to build and encourage an inclusive culture where everyone feels able to participate and achieve their best. We also want to promote and enhance diversity across the organisation.

We want to continue to develop opportunities for meaningful two-way communication – regularly listening to what staff have to say and encouraging staff to tell their stories.

What is our focus – what are we planning to do?

- Establish a Staff Engagement Group and refresh the Employee Equality Groups so that the employee voice is heard
- Build on our strong Trade Union relationships and maintain transparency, openness and constructive challenge on all aspects of work
- Introduce a Strategic Leader Development Programme.
- Review and make recommendations to continually develop effective working relationships with SLT and political leadership
- Create a culture where coaching is our preferred leadership and management style and regular, good quality performance development conversations (PDCs) take place with strong alignment to corporate performance management methods promoting clear lines of accountability
- Baseline our staff engagement data with a staff survey in Autumn 2019 followed by smaller regular pulse surveys on key topics after this – and a commitment to being open and transparent with the findings and action plans
- Resolve conflict at work at the earliest stage and lowest level possible using trained mediators from HR & OD, the Trade Unions and managers

- Develop a refreshed set of values that staff can identify with and become a common language. Embed into our processes and display in our offices and depots as well as digitally.
- Refresh the way in which we communicate with staff and managers.
- Create videos of our staff telling us what it is like working for B&NES and promote on social media
- Develop tools and skills for managers to ensure they have a key role in team communications

How will we measure success?

- Employee engagement score in staff survey is higher than 60%, using “B&NES keeps me informed” and “I have the opportunity to influence decisions that affect me” questions in the staff survey
- We are able to measure and articulate the impact of our coaching and evolve our strategy accordingly
- 100% of staff have had a PDC in the last year and quality is monitored.
- 100% of staff have completed the core training required for their role
- Mediation has been used to resolve more than 50% of workplace conflict (self-reported through staff survey) and the number of grievance cases has decreased (through case management data)
- Membership of Employee Equality Groups has increased proportionately and increased two-way dialogue between the groups and senior management
- Trade Union recognition agreement in place with regular joint meetings



Why is this a priority?

In order for B&NES to be a success, we need to develop the right leadership and management skills, knowledge and behaviours at all levels, not just for the B&NES employees, but for our partners and the community too.

This means developing the considerable and varied talent we have and retaining key staff who are our leaders for the future.

We also know that, as the role of local government changes, we need to be adaptable and flexible as a workforce. This means supporting our staff and wider community to be their best and have the right skills and knowledge to respond to this.

What is our focus – what are we planning to do?

- Enhance and embed the @ My Best programme to create defined career pathways for all from apprenticeships through to senior leadership
- Develop regular tailored development opportunities for particular groups e.g. Development Plus for Women and Stepping Up for BME and disabled staff
- Continue to grow the number of apprenticeships (both new and upskilling) we have and the routes which people can access them
- Define and embed leadership behaviours through 360° feedback, targeted development, coaching and action learning sets
- As part of workforce planning, develop a succession plan for the organisation as a whole, identifying talent and creating opportunities internally where possible through secondments and project work
- Put in place structured work experience programme across the council, that will provide access for local students from local schools and colleges as well as those returning to work after a break
- Support the Project Search programme which helps young adults with learning disabilities to gain the skills they need for employment
- Develop MBA programme to support future leaders, delivered via the apprenticeship programme

- Embed coaching skills via a well-established coaching pool and develop coaching as our preferred leadership style
- Implement the upgrade of learning zone and develop performance management reporting

How will we measure success?

- Through the measurement and impact of return on investment
- Attendance on Stepping Up and other programmes aimed at enhancing opportunities for women and those with diverse backgrounds
- Succession plan in place that is being enacted
- Attendance on work experience programmes meets our targets, is increased gradually year on year and outcomes are recorded.
- We have identified our skills gaps and have made significant progress towards closing them
- Evaluation of learning outcomes that are reviewed for continuous improvement
- 100% utilisation of our apprenticeship levy funds deployed strategically including to partner organisations
- Evaluation of the impact of the work experience programme for both participants and staff
- Improvement in the proportion of staff who have received appropriate training and development (staff survey)



Why is this a priority?

We know that we need to modernise and improve how we work. Our Preparing for the Future Programme will enable us to effectively deliver our core services, meet the significant savings and efficiencies we need to make and make the Council more agile. As part of this, our staff should be able to access systems and information digitally and have the necessary skills and technology to do this.

We also need to ensure that staff have the skills and capability to manage our commercial activities effectively; to balance income generation with service provision, to commission and manage contracts effectively and ensure value for money.

What is our focus – what are we planning to do?

- Contribute to delivering the collaborative Preparing for the Future Programme; including digital and blending working programmes, corporate travel and future workspaces
- Engage with services to implement blended working practices ensuring that managers take ownership
- Provide the right technology and equipment for all staff to work effectively and efficiently, whatever their job role
- Develop and enhance digital skills to drive efficiency, engagement and productivity and introduce digital champions to upskill staff
- Recognise the different approaches required to deliver services in new and different models through:
 - Working with our communities (e.g. community libraries, volunteering)
 - Integration (CCG)
 - Mutual arrangements (e.g. Youth Connect)
 - Commercial services (e.g. One West, Heritage, Parking)
 - Partnership arrangements (e.g. WECA, Adoption West)
- Embed a business partnering approach across professional services teams
- Provide targeted coaching programmes to support implementation of this work using our internal coaching pool
- Lead the skills workstream of the new 5 year IT Strategy

How will we measure success?

- The Preparing for the Future programme has delivered its objectives
- All staff will be digitally enabled with access to information and resources via the right technology for their role
- Staff have the commercial awareness and skills to operate effectively
- There will be a business partnering model in place across HR, Finance, IT, Marketing, and Business Support
- Centralisation of services takes place delivering efficiencies
- Staff embrace blended working practices and maximise effectiveness of collaborative working



Why is this a priority?

In this complex environment, we must ensure legal compliance in terms of Health and Safety at all times, ensuring that our estate is a safe place to work, but also to go beyond this to enable staff to be healthy and engaged in their work. We care about our staff and know that they will perform if they are safe and happy at work, and have a healthy, balanced approach to all aspects of their lives.

We continue to provide a high-quality traded Health, Safety & Wellbeing service to schools and multi-academy trusts which provides an income stream to the service and supports the wider work we do.

What is our focus – what are we planning to do?

- Develop a detailed employee wellbeing strategy and action plan
- A comprehensive programme of wellbeing activities which focus on mental wellbeing, menopause, musculoskeletal health and healthy lifestyles
- Development of a Corporate Health Champions project
- A full audit and update of all risk assessments across all areas of the Council's business
- Ensuring accountability and responsibility for all health, safety and wellbeing matters is at the right level in the organisation identifying roles and responsibilities for supervisors, team leaders, managers and leaders
- Review of key performance indicators for Health, Safety & Wellbeing throughout the Council and regular monitoring and measuring to ensure compliance
- Be clear on our governance arrangements and ensure accountability is at the right levels, with an annual report to the Council each year.
- Develop comprehensive 2 or 3 year SLAs with schools to provide a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service that is robust and planned in the medium-term.
- Offer a series of learning opportunities on stress and resilience, mental health awareness and mindfulness
- Measure progress against the Workplace Wellbeing Index

How will we measure success?

- All staff are clear about their individual role and responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing whatever their level in the organisation and have received training and updates as appropriate
- The key performance indicators will be reliable and used to inform decision making
- We will score well and make progress against the Workplace Wellbeing Index
- All types of sickness absence levels are monitored and reduced, with additional focus on long-term absences relating to mental health
- High satisfaction levels amongst all wellbeing activities and training
- Corporate Health Champions across all service areas
- Stress Risk Assessments completed in all service areas
- Positive increases in staff wellbeing based on staff survey and PDC results
- Increase in access to Employee Assistance Programme through app downloads and portal visits
- SLAs are signed and renewed with schools
- Appropriate risk assessments are in place across the organisation and reviewed on a regular basis



*Be our BEST
to
improve people's lives*

