OUR PEOPLE STRATEGY

Annual Review 2021/2022 & Year 2 (2022/23) Delivery Plan

Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

Warwickshire
County Council

Our People Strategy
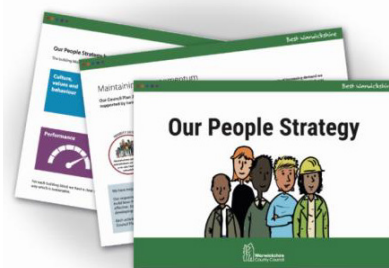## Warwickshire's Story

Message from Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive

At Warwickshire County Council, we are continuing to make Warwickshire the best it can be for everyone and our people are at the heart of our success. We are proud of our people and their shared passion to make a meaningful difference and we want them to be proud to work here. We understand that by being a good employer, we will attract and retain the very best, who will enable us to perform at our best.

I am delighted to share with you the progress that has been made in the first year of the refreshed Our People Strategy and our commitment to future improvements through the coming year to ensure that Warwickshire is a great place to work, where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

Our behaviours

Our behaviours were first introduced in 2016 and these haven't changed. Our behaviours frame how we should behave at work. They help us to understand how we should go about our work and the way we should interact with each other and our customers.

do what we say.

move with purpose and energy.

focus on solutions.

help people and communities to find their own solutions.

build strong working relationships.

be the best we can be.

Towards the end of 2020, the council refreshed its Our People Strategy, to drive through the vision of Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

Embodying our Values and Behaviours, the Our People Strategy is built on 6 building blocks:

Our People Strategy building blocks

The building blocks provide the foundations for the delivery of Our People Strategy vision. We have identified six key building blocks:

Culture, values and behaviour	Leadership	Organisational Development and Design
Performance	Reward and recognition	Talent development and career opportunities

For each building block we have a clear set of outcomes we need to achieve so that we can fulfill our vision and transform as an organisation in a way which is sustainable.

Our values - the Warwickshire DNA

To support the achievement of our vision, five key organisational values have been identified:

High performing

Collaborative

Customer focused

Accountable

Trustworthy

At a glance

The Our People Strategy provides direction and focus for a range of projects and initiatives under six building blocks. 2021/22 activity, measurement of success and priority actions for 2022/2023 against each building block are summarised as follows:

Culture, values and behaviour

Progress – Our wellbeing work has seen the achievement of Thrive bronze accreditation, launch of our approach to wellbeing and an updated Attendance at Work Policy. We have developed the future approach to engagement, whilst continuing to run regular check-in's with our people and prioritising actions based on their feedback. We continue to develop and progress an ambitious Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) action plan.
Measures – Attendance levels have remained within target, Our Colleague Survey scores have remained strong with our wellbeing indicator at 83% and 11% above 2019 levels. Solid progress has been made against our EDI indicators.
2022/2023 – Focus will continue on wellbeing, engagement, and EDI, these being key areas in which we aim to positively differentiate as an employer. The coming year will see further development of our culture in support of the Council Plan.

Leadership

Progress – Our foundational work towards improved people management data and metrics will better equip leaders. We have continued to develop leadership capability through our Senior Leadership Forum (SLF). Positive gains have been seen in the approachability of senior managers, their role modelling of values and colleagues feeling trusted to do their jobs.
Measures – Our High-Performance Culture engagement measure brings together several leadership areas and has remained at a consistently high level.
2022/2023 – Focus will continue on leading with data and developing our leadership offer.

Performance

Progress – Contributions have been made in the further development of our Performance Management Framework, Business Planning, individual Appraisals and Personal Development Plans
Measures – Our High-Performance Culture and Engagement scores have remained consistently high.
2022/2023 – 360-degree feedback processes will be in place for all SLF members and if capacity allows, we will review and develop our performance and appraisal frameworks.

Organisational Development and Design

Progress – We launched our agile working offer, based on service delivery, choice and trust, and have provided a package of support and guidance for its implementation. This has supported the pandemic response. Activities to implement and support our service redesigns have continued.
Measures – The take up of agile working contracts continues to rise each month.
2022/2023 – Focus will continue on developing the agile working approach, and if capacity allows, we will enhance the use of establishment data to support improved workforce planning.

Reward and recognition

Progress – Implementation and development of the employee benefits platform; phased roll out of the 'High5' peer- to-peer recognition system. Continuation of our Long Service and STAR recognition schemes.
Measures – Employee retention has maintained at sustainable rates whilst marginally above target.
2022/2023 – Our focus will be to drive utilisation of existing processes with recognition being a key part of our Employer Value Proposition (EVP).

Talent development and career opportunities

Progress – Recruitment activity has been extended in support of service redesigns and pandemic response. Indeed and GlassDoor profiles have been developed alongside recruitment microsites. Induction and onboarding processes have been enhanced to complement our EVP and support agile working. Foundational work on career pathways is underway in several services. A Children and Families workforce academy is in place. A Chartered Management Apprenticeship has been introduced.
Measures – The service has been strengthened in several key areas to improve frontline service delivery and respond to the pandemic. Headcount increases of 4.2% arising from increased service demand and Covid response have driven additional recrtuiment activity.
2022/2023 – Continued focus on positive differentiation as an employer through our purpose, EVP, approach to EDI, the leadership we provide and the culture we build.

Achievements against - Priority Projects

Following the launch of the Our People Strategy the following projects were identified as the Priority Projects for the next two years:

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Agile Working
- Induction and Onboarding
- Creating a sustainable and resilient workforce

- Employee engagement
- Developing a recognition platform
- Embedding our employer brand
- Reviewing our recruitment processes

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
Our EDI plan is moving at pace alongside supporting and advising other service areas as business as usual. Strides have been made in Learning and Development, partnership working, growing our Staff Networks and ensuring we have the infrastructure in place to provide data to inform our decision making and track progress. 2022 priorities include Our People Data campaign, inclusive recruitment and onboarding, and talent development. Our new look annual review format was presented to Staff and Pensions in September 2021.

Agile Working
Agile Working was formally launched in March 2021. Colleagues have continued to work in an agile way and within pandemic guidelines. A series of communications and guidance have been provided and pilot teams have trialled new working arrangements. From our check-in surveys, we know that the majority of our people would like a mix of home and office working.

Induction and Onboarding
Our online Induction offer has been updated and feedback is being sought from recent new starters on their induction experience to inform further developments.

Sustainable and Resilient Workforce
The project has achieved Bronze Thrive accreditation, Attendance at Work Policy launched and Our Approach to Wellbeing developed.

Colleague Engagement
Our Check-in surveys have continued through 2021, whilst a review of the long-term approach has been developed. The new look, including our "Approach to engaging with our People" have been developed. An annual review of engagement will be shared with the Staff and Pensions Committee in June 2022.

Recognition Platform
A phased roll out of the High-five peer to peer recognition platform has commenced with nearly 600 colleagues on board so far.

Embedding our Employer Brand
The Employee Value Proposition (EVP) has been developed and is now embedded in attraction and recruitment activities. Opportunities are continually explored to improve the EVP messaging including the use of external platforms, microsites and colleague case studies.

Recruitment Review
A review of the recruitment process has been completed with pre-employment checks and issuing of contracts being centralised within Human Resources.

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Measuring Success

Our People Strategy progress is tracked by a number of Key Business Measures (KBMs), indicators (KBIs). These are supplemented, where appropriate with other project specific measurements.
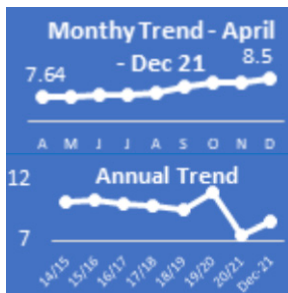
Sickness absence days per FTE employee increased slightly over the year whilst remaining within the target of 8 days per FTE (+/- 1 day)

Stress/anxiety/mental health sick absence days per FTE: our position remains consistent and around 0.5 below the 3 days per FTE target

Employee Engagment 74%
2020/21 = 76%
Target = 78%

Employee Engagement has reduced slightly from a high of 76% in 2020 whilst still being 4% above the 2019 comparator

High Performance Culture 76%
2020/21 = 76%
Target = 76%

Our High-Performance Culture measure scores 76%, which remains consistent with previous years and on target.

Gender Pay Gap 2.6%
Target 0% (+/-5%)

Our Gender Gap average at March 2021 was 2.6%, a reduction of 0.1% compared to 2020 and considerably below the national average pay gap of 15.4% which has increased from 14.9% in 2020.

Ethnicity Pay Gap -0.8%
Target = 0% (+/-5)

Our Ethnicity Gap average at March 2021 was -0.8%, a reduction of 1.8% from -2.6% compared to 2020 and within target. There is no national and public sector mean benchmarking data as there is currently no statutory duty to report.

Agile Working Contracts 45%
Increased from 22% Dec 20

The % of our people who are on agile contracts has increased throughout the year and is currently at 45%.

Our Retention rate has reduced and is slightly below the target of 90%; this is expected given the wider national recruitment and retention challenge.

Other Measures

- 2054 colleagues registered voluntarily for our employee benefits site (Vivup) in the first 12 months of operation and satisfaction with the benefits of working for Warwickshire have increased by 5% to 77%.

- 573 colleagues have registered for the recognition platform (High-five) which is currently subject to phased roll out and 76% of colleagues now believe that good performance is recognised and appreciated in their team, up from 67% in 2019.

- 88% of our people agree that internal communications keep them informed of what the Council is doing.

Other significant outcomes from our engagement surveys have include:

- 92% agree that their immediate manager trusts them to do their job.
- 64% agreed that Senior Managers are approachable, an increase on 16% from the previous year.
- 83% of colleagues believe that Warwickshire County Council values equality and diversity.

Pandemic Response

Throughout the year our primary objective has been to keep our people safe and well. The service has consistently responded to requests for other priorities to support the pandemic response:

- Working with our Communications Team and Senior Leaders our colleagues have been regularly appraised of developments.

- Risk and Impact Assessments have been developed and implemented alongside enhanced HROD & Health Safety and Wellbeing support and advice.

- Intranet pages have been developed to become a "go to" resource for our people and Leaders.

- Systems for recording of Covid and Flu vaccinations have been developed.

- Covid testing centres have been resourced.

- Audit of the effective application of risk mitigations for temporary Covid working arrangements and learning for the future to be an attractive employer received substantial assurance when audited.

Additional Achievements

Faced with an uncertain and changing landscape we responded positively to feedback, reprioritised and adapted our planned and business as usual activity in year:

- The new approach to modernising our Policy Framework has been agreed, with the first product – Attendance Management being launched in February 2022. Resources are being put in place to roll out across the whole HR policy framework.

- In collaboration with our Business Intelligence team, a number of dashboards are in development, with the first three (Workforce, Absence and Recruitment & Retention) in test phase for planned rollout in spring 2022. Metrics will enable our manages with real time access to a wide range of employee related data.

- The Vivup voluntary benefits platform provides our people with multiple savings and benefits, and we continue to look for other opportunities to improve. In excess of 2,000 colleagues have chosen to register.

- A volunteering and wellbeing day has been piloted across all service areas in year.

- Supplementary wellbeing activities introduced including development sessions – Cope Happy, Thrive Happy and Succeed Happy.

- Direct engagement with our colleagues has been further enhanced through Big Conversations, livestreams and workshops focusing on key priorities including Community Powered Warwickshire and Sustainability.

- Essential Human Resources and OD services have been maintained throughout the year within performance targets.

- Increased resourcing demands met with 4.2% headcount increase as services have been strengthened.

- Service Redesign programmes have been supported in response to service and Covid demands.

- HROD continues to support schools and public service customers with additional payroll and HR services as part of our commercial strategy.

- Recruitment process changes implemented, and support tools developed to enhance the hiring manager experience and improve compliance for offers, contracts and pre-employment checks.

- Progressive capture capability developed within the CRM system to enhance customer wxperience and reduce demand.

- Reviewed payroll processes resulting in improved audit outcome and movement from limited to substantial assurance.

Review of the Our People Strategy and 2022/23 Delivery Plan:

- Our People Strategy was refreshed in 2020 and endorsed by Staff & Pensions Committee in December 2020.

- A commitment made to an annual Delivery Plan in support of the 5 year Our People Strategy.

- Our continued focus is progression towards our vision of creating a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

- Given the dynamic nature of the people agenda we are recommending the continuation of an annually developed and reviewed plan in support of our Council Plan.

- This plan largely focuses on strategic elements to advance Warwickshire County Council in addition to service developments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD).

- These factors will shape the overall HROD plan; further influenced by business-as-usual activity which is both variable and carries significant resource demands.

- Activities have been prioritised to enable resources to be allocated to areas of maximum benefit and flexed to meet changes in organisational demand.

- To meet our vision WCC will need to attract, recruit, motivate and develop the diverse talent required to deliver our Council and supporting Service Business Plans.

- We have identified the need to positively differentiate through our purpose, EVP, approach to EDI, the leadership we provide and the culture we build.

Building Block	Priority Areas *Several of the priority areas initiated in year 1 of our plan will continue into 2022/23. New priorities are denoted by (n), and those in italics will be secondarily prioritised.*
Culture, values and behaviour	**Culture, values, and behaviours** • **Sustainable and Resilient Workforce** - supporting the wellbeing of our workforce to enable our people to be well and in work and development of plans towards silver Thrive accreditation. • **Employee Engagement** – providing a framework where we can listen learn and act on the feedback from our people, to enable an engaged and high performing workforce. • **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** – enabling everyone to feel valued, included, safe, supported and welcome, and places inclusivity at the heart of everything we do. • **Culture to support Council Plan (n)** – Ensuring our culture enables delivery of the Council Plan and our people embody and embrace the culture values and behaviours.
Leadership	**Leadership** • **People Metrics** – Leading with Data - Providing managers with the information they require to understand the issues in their workforce and effectively manage them. • **Leadership Offer (n)** – equipping our leaders to provide agile and situationally responsive leadership.
Performance	**Performance** • ***Reviewing performance management and appraisal approach (n)**– Providing a positive and rewarding framework for our people to embrace a high-performance culture*
Organisational Development and Design	**Organisational development and design** • **Agile Working Approach** – work is what you do not where you do it, with the customer and service delivery at the heart. • ***Establishment enhanced activity (n)** – developing how we use our establishment to enhance workforce planning*
Reward and recognition	**Reward and recognition** • **Employer Value Proposition** - promoting what working for our organisation is all about to attract and retain the best people. • ***Recognition platform** - implementing and monitoring our peer-to-peer recognition platform to enable our people to give and receive recognition.*
Talent development and career opportunities	**Talent development and career opportunities** • **Induction and Onboarding** - improving how we induct and onboard our people who are new to the organisation and/or their role. • **Apprenticeship Pay (n)** - aligning apprentices' pay with National Minimum Wage rates and to address attraction and recruitment challenges. • **Recruitment, Retention and Talent Approach (n)** – flexible resourcing solutions to maximise talent, attraction and retention.

	• **Tier 1-4 recruitment process (n)**- *reviewing the process applied when recruiting and assessing Tier 1-4 (Leadership & Management) appointments.* • **Apprentice first approach (n)** – *providing a framework so that apprenticeships are routinely considered for entry level roles.* • **Corporate Learning and Development Offer (n)** – *ensuring that our corporate learning and development offer is relevant and meets the organisation's needs.*
	Service Development and Assurance • **Policy, legal and compliance** – Reviewing our people policies to reflect the changing tone and voice of the organisation whilst ensuring they cover legal requirements. • **Pay Framework and National Living Wage (n)** – Determining how to accommodate the change to National Living Wage within our pay framework. • **Horizon scanning, forthcoming policy and legislation** – Ensuring the organisation to ready to adopt any changes – examples include exit cap, carers leave and flexible working rights. • **HR System (n)** – Planning for contract renewal including options for potential successor • system. • **Lone Workers (n)** – Identifying, sourcing, and introducing a technological solution which improves the safety and security of lone workers. • **HROD Service Development (n)** - Continuing to develop and improve our OneHR service offer and manage demand. • **HR Commercial Strategy (n)** – Developing our strategy so our traded services remain strong in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Measuring Success 2022/2023

Our high-level success measures form part of the Warwickshire Performance Framework and will be mapped through our Key Business Measures (KBM's) and Key Business Indicators (KBI's).

The following Key Business Measures and Key Business Indicators will enable us to track our success and prioritise activities for future years.

Key Business Measures

(KBMs)
• Attendance – Days Lost per FTE colleague (rolling 12- month average)

Colleague Engagement:
• Overall % agree I feel safe to be my authentic self at work.
• Overall % agree that they are proud to work for Warwickshire County Council
• Overall % agree that wellbeing is promoted at work
• Overall % agree the councils internal communications keep me informed of what the council is doing

Key Business Indicators

(KBIs)
• Attendance – Days lost per FTE colleague to stress, anxiety, or mental health (rolling 12-month average)
• Colleague Retention – percentage retention rate (rolling 12-month average)

• Gender Pay Gap – Mean Average
• Ethnicity Pay Gap – Mean Average
• Disability Pay Gap – Mean Average
• High Performance Culture – % agree colleague survey

KBMs and KBIs will be supported by further indicators in development as part of our Data Metrics Project

Conclusions

- **2021/2022 has been a challenging but successful year for delivery against the Our People Strategy whilst managing the dynamics of the pandemic. Particular successes include:**

  - Achieving Bronze Thrive at Work Accreditation.

  - Foundational work to modernise all our policies, as well as how we articulate "Our Approach" in key areas such as wellbeing, engagement; track performance and celebrate success through the use of Annual Reviews: Health, Safety & Wellbeing; Sustainable and Resilient Workforce; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, and; Colleague Engagement.

  - Defining and launching our Agile Working Offer.

  - Developing approaches for listening to the voice of our people.

  - Developing people metrics dashboards, which when launched will support managers to lead with data.

  - Piloting the Hi-Five recognition platform.

  - Reviewing our recruitment services, and enhancing the service offer to managers.

  - Continuing to embed our Employer Value Proposition.

  - Maintaining high levels of performance in key areas in an ever-changing environment.

- Alongside the longer-term strategic deliverables we have continued to support our people and enabled them to continually deliver for the people that we serve.

- Our measures have mainly remained on target, with some particular successes in terms of stress and mental health absence, EDI and the gender pay gap. We are tracking on target in terms of absence, high-performance culture and ethnicity pay gap. Our plans aim to address engagement and retention, where the outturn is tracking marginally outside target.

- In addition to supporting the Our People Strategy our HROD Delivery colleagues strive to enhance the service offer to our customers whilst continuing to deliver a wide range of essential HROD services across the Council and beyond.

- Many of our major projects and initiatives will continue into 2022/2023 and are supplemented by a number of new key activities that will enable the Council to be the best it can be and support the delivery of our Council Plan.

- We will continue to develop the HR service that we can all be proud of, with exceptional service delivery for our customers today and tomorrow.