

North Somerset

# PEOPLE STRATEGY 2021-2024



Open, Fairer, Greener

We act with integrity, we respect each other, we innovate, we care, we collaborate



# FOREWORD

## FROM JO WALKER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I am pleased to introduce you to our new People Strategy.

This Strategy has been developed to set out how we will develop the capabilities we need to meet our future challenges and to adopt new ways of working.

In order to support the council's Corporate Plan and to continue to provide excellent services to our community we need to ensure we employ people who demonstrate our values/behaviours and are skilled, trained, motivated and supported to meet their needs.

As a council we have to find new and innovative ways of delivering our services whilst, like all local authorities, meeting our financial challenges and pressures. I believe that our people are key to our success and I want to build an environment in North Somerset where we all feel part of the vision and values. I give you my commitment to work in an open and transparent way and to embrace new ways of working and I ask that you do the same. Together we can continue to provide excellent services to our community whilst seeking to find new and more agile ways of working that benefit us all.



### Open

We will provide strong community leadership and work transparently with our residents, businesses and partners to deliver our ambition for North Somerset.

### Fair

We aim to reduce inequalities and promote fairness and opportunity for everyone.

### Green

We will lead our communities to protect and enhance our environment, tackle the climate emergency and drive sustainable development.

North Somerset Council's People Strategy sets out how the council will work with staff and stakeholders to direct its resources in order to have the most impact in supporting the delivery of the Corporate Plan and the council's vision and values.

As part of the strategic agenda this People Strategy sets out our plan for the current and future workforce, including how we will develop the capacity, capability and wellbeing of our workforce to achieve our strategic outcomes: ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of our services and creating a high-performance culture.

The strategy sets out the overarching approach which applies to our employees and workers and includes our approach to Human Resources, Wellbeing, Health & Safety, Diversity & Inclusion and Corporate Development.



## VISION

North Somerset Council is a high performing council and a great place to work. We have a value driven, engaged, agile and motivated workforce.



The Council now employs circa 1400 people. This compares to over 2400 in 2006. These figures do not include school staff, illustrating the scale of change.

## OUR VALUES



## CONTEXT/WORKFORCE

We have engaged with our staff throughout the pandemic and tested a very different way of working in response to Covid. We now have the opportunity to embed the flexibility that these changing work arrangements have brought, along with the right leadership and support, so that a new organisational culture can continue to develop in a consistent and sustainable way.

## DIRECTION/PRINCIPLES

This People Strategy uses quantitative and qualitative data and insight to focus on areas of our Corporate Plan and those that managers, staff and service users tell us are important to them and will have the greatest impact on the performance of our people. The delivery of services and the employee experience are at the core of this strategy. It aims to embed our values and behaviours, reflecting our commitment to work collaboratively, empowering and trusting staff to deliver high performing services within a modern working environment that is inclusive, safe and sustainable; supporting development and personal growth and recognising the part we can all play in supporting the council to become carbon neutral by 2030.



## THEME 1: Ways of working

Staff have told us that they value our new ways of working, which is creating a more flexible, agile and effective organisation. Developing our approach, building on the positives from the previous 22 months, whilst addressing the challenges, will allow us to improve communication and collaboration – leading to higher engagement and faster decision making. A more flexible and agile approach, enabled by our digital strategy will allow us to prioritise the needs of the service, whilst empowering teams and individuals to have more control over their work/life balance and ensuring we have the tools to carry out work in this model. This will ultimately help us to become an employer of choice, improve our ability to recruit and retain people and develop a pipeline of talent.

- We will review our HR policies to reflect and support the changing work environment.
- We will develop new policies across the service which are aimed at engendering and supporting a more agile and flexible workforce.



## THEME 2: Leadership

In our ever-changing climate we need to embrace change with leaders at all levels working collaboratively and managing an agile workforce who are motivated to achieve outcomes, with aspirational and ambitious mind sets. Our leaders will inspire our workforce and set a culture that has the council's values at the forefront of everything it seeks to achieve.

Working proactively with our staff, managers will support them through the ongoing pandemic whilst delivering the reset on ways of working. There will be engagement and support to help equip managers to work with their teams in a 'hybrid' approach as we look to the future.

- We will work on our values and behaviours and provide the frameworks to embed these in the work we all do.
- We will develop a mentoring approach, based on a new strategy, that is focussed on recognising the importance of providing mentors and being mentored.
- We will retain and develop our existing leadership capability, whilst ensuring we attract new people with the qualities needed to be successful in this council, making a real difference to our services.

## THEME 3: Workforce/succession planning

We are committed to delivering the council's Corporate Plan and delivering outcomes for our residents and communities. We will forecast the future capacity needs so that we can resource our priorities and develop strong succession planning arrangements. We are a council with a broad range of skills, experience and professions. We need to harness these talents and support staff to realise their potential to sustain our performance and to encourage fulfilling career development. We will develop a service toolkit to assist managers to determine existing and future need and to use this information to inform workforce decisions. This in turn will allow a culture of high performance, accountability and continuous improvement to develop, whilst recognising and celebrating successes and achievements.

- We will review our approach to recruitment and retention practises and services to ensure they are delivered in the best way possible to secure and keep the right people carrying out the right tasks.
- We will develop a toolkit approach and assist services to develop their own succession plans, prioritising those services with highest risk (for example, difficult to fill roles) and lack of diversity.

## THEME 4: Health, safety and wellbeing

Individuals, teams and the council will aim to operate with high levels of service and personal resilience, focusing on more confident high performing services that can adapt more effectively to significant change. Focusing on the wellbeing of our staff and maintaining our low levels of sickness absence will be a priority. We have a range of health and wellbeing initiatives for our staff and we will continue to develop these.

- We will ensure that staff wellbeing initiatives are developed and implemented.
- We will ensure health and safety responsibilities can be achieved.
- We will support the development and implementation of the North Somerset Healthy Workplaces Accreditation Scheme.
- We will promote coaching and mentoring to contribute to wellbeing by supporting staff to achieve a work/live balance, to address anxiety and to adjust to changing circumstances.

Turnover – **3%**

Percentage of our staff declaring a disability **11%**

Full time – **66%**  
Part time – **44%**



## THEME 5: Learning and development

Our focus will be on providing learning opportunities that are aligned to the council's values and objectives, stimulating and enthusing talent. This will include refreshing and communicating more clearly our mandatory training programme and making additions, such as climate change agenda, to the programme. In addition, we will develop a mentoring and coaching programme which will help support staff to realise their potential. Access to dedicated support will encourage staff to consider their careers and to fulfil our role in developing staff through being a mentor/coach or being mentored/coached. Recognising the significant number of professional roles there are within the organisation; continuing personal and professional development will also be key.



- We will set out our commitment and approach to increase the number of Apprentices we employ.
- We will take a strategic approach to the apprenticeship levy by ensuring we use the monies to provide both Apprentices for new staff and Apprenticeships for existing staff.
- We will develop a cohort of trained coaches to provide coaching support to our staff.

## THEME 6: Inclusion and engagement

We want a workforce which embraces and values diversity and fosters a welcoming culture of inclusion, ensuring all staff feel safe and valued. Building upon our existing staff, stakeholder and community volunteer networks to reflect the organisation we need to be for the future, being inclusive, valuing and celebrating differences in our workforce and offering the best services to our residents and communities; and having a great working environment for our staff and partners will be important.

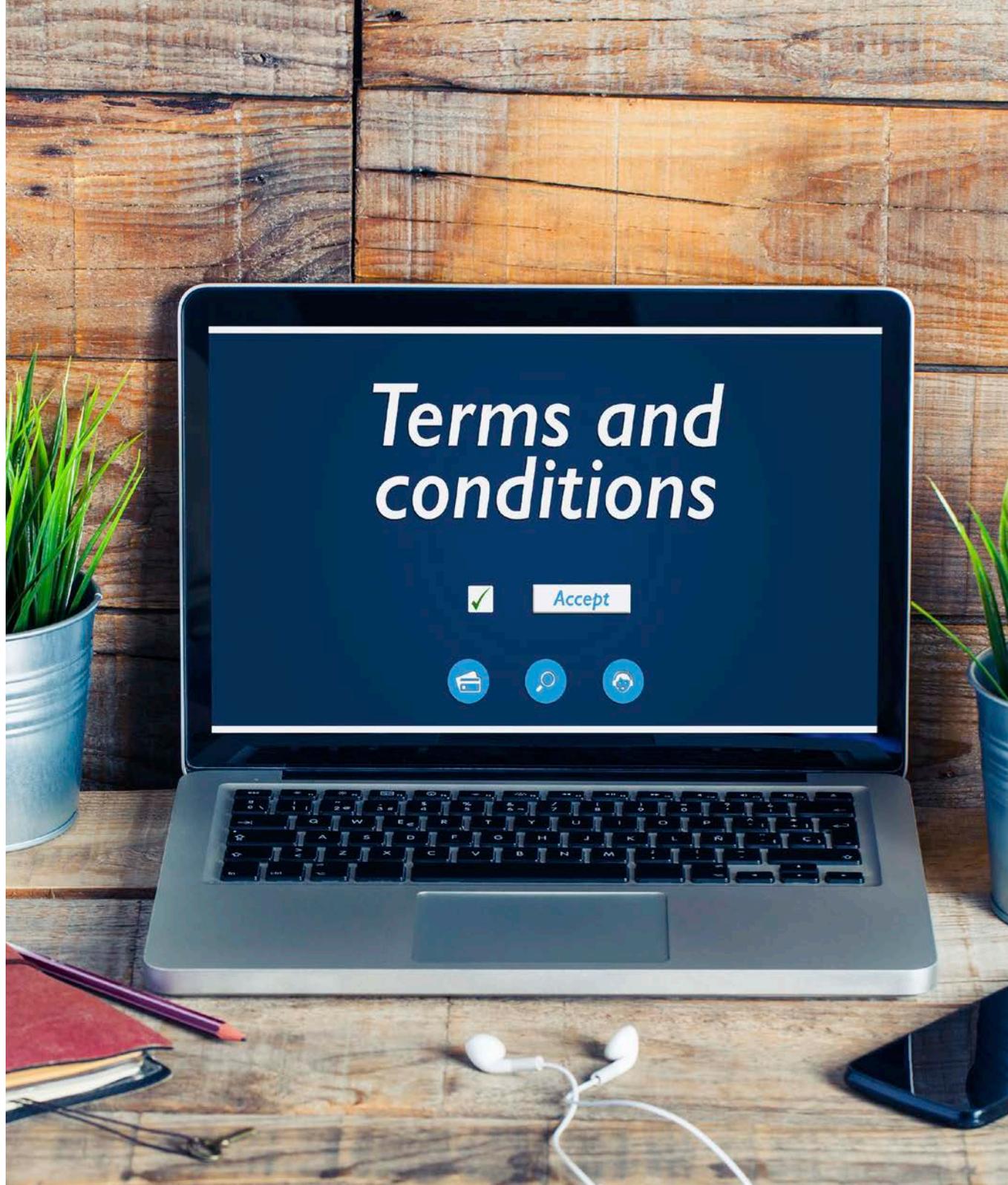
We involve staff and our recognised trades unions in timely and open consultation, negotiation and communications, allowing everyone to feel a sense of belonging and connection with the council and its values. We want our people to feel pride in working for the council and to understand how the services they provide are essential to our success.

- We will work closely with our unions and staff groups and maintain excellent working relationships.
- We will continue to encourage a diverse workforce, with a targeted approach where appropriate, measuring ourselves against the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- We will recognise the excellent work we all do and celebrate our successes and achievements on a regular basis.

## THEME 7: Terms and conditions

Our HR policies need to reflect a more agile workforce approach, with pay and benefits that are effective, affordable and transparent. These will reflect a whole council approach whilst giving discretion to staff and managers to allow them to perform effectively at all levels.

- We will review our Pay Policy on an annual basis and will publish this on our website.
- Where policies and practices change we will provide support to managers and staff to ensure they are able to embed any changes in a positive way.
- We will seek to develop arrangements that pro-actively contribute to the council's climate change agenda.
- We will continually review and enhance the range of flexible arrangements and benefits available.





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