

# OUR PEOPLE PLAN

ORGANISATION  
DEVELOPMENT  
AND PEOPLE  
2018-2021

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Essex County Council

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# FOREWORD

## GETTING READY FOR CHANGE

### Our People Plan

Our People Plan is our new workforce strategy which will define how we will continue to build the capability, skills and culture we need for our workforce of the future. The public sector workforce is facing uncertain times and in three years' time will look very different from today, requiring us all to work very differently to continue to serve the people of Essex. Our own workforce will be smaller in size, and therefore will need to find innovative new ways to continue to deliver.

To enable higher productivity from a smaller workforce we need to invest in our people now, recognising the efforts we will all be making. This will ensure we can continue to retain the best employees as well as attracting new talent, in local government, especially at a time when we foresee further challenges and opportunities in the future. For example, investing £3.3m into Essex Pay for 2018/19, focused on achieving pay equity, goes well beyond our usual annual investment in pay. We will continue to develop our pay, reward and recognition plans so we can continue to recruit, retain and develop our workforce.

We need to continue learning from each other, building on the outstanding results we have already seen in areas of our council, for example where Ofsted's inspection of children's social care services found that inspirational senior leaders have created a culture in which social work practice can develop and prosper. The People Plan sets out how we will continue to invest in learning, performance, recognition and talent management which are critical facets of achieving these results across the entire council.

Getting this right is essential if we aim to continue to be a high performing county council despite the uncertain times ahead. Our employees will be encouraged to try new things, share learning experiences which is fully supported by a best fit performance methodology, relevant to the type of work they do. Recognition will be more flexible, better timed and more appropriate than ever before. We'll be looking at developing our talent, helping our employees achieve their career goals within the organisation.



**Gavin Jones**  
Chief Executive

In our [Organisation Strategy](#) one of our key strategic aims is to transform the council to achieve more with less. Becoming a smaller, leaner organisation with a flexible, highly skilled workforce is vital to respond to our changing operating environment. This People Plan is a key building block to ensure we have the right workforce and workplace environment. Once this is in place we will then be in the best position to achieve our three other strategic aims: enable inclusive economic growth; help people get the best start and age well; and help create great places to grow up, live and work.

You will see we have clear ambitions for excellence and are striving for an excellent workforce, where we lead by example, have the right people in the right jobs, and continue to provide what our customers expect from us. We want to be an employer of choice for local people and beyond, with a culture which underpins our strategic aims and priorities and where our employees are motivated, rewarded for the jobs they do and continuous learning is part and parcel of everyday life.

We have 'grown up' as an organisation from where we were before and our employees are our biggest investment.



**Pam Parkes**  
Director, Organisation  
Development and  
People

But we realise, when it comes to employees' roles and needs, one size does not fit all. So we're moving away from standardisation across the organisation to looking at what is the 'best fit'. We are also moving away from stifling policies and procedures to more fluid frameworks and standards which will offer greater local autonomy and less frustration. Although uncertainty and significant change is likely to be the norm for many years to come, we also face an exciting future.

What we can promise is to continue investing in developing our employees and nurturing talent, to enable our people to be the best they can and deliver the best possible services to the community. This People Plan is owned by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), they have a common purpose to deliver the workforce strategy and of course, are affected by it – ensuring that the careers of our most senior employees, to our most junior are equally important to our future.

We hope this investment and the objectives outlined will result in a People Plan that will help serve the whole of Essex, not just Essex County Council (ECC).

# INTRODUCTION



## WHAT IS THE PEOPLE PLAN INTENDING TO ACHIEVE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO THE ORGANISATION NOW?

**Our workforce has been constantly transforming and we have already achieved a great deal. However, to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead within an environment where we have increased demand for our services and greater financial constraints, we need to continue this critical work at a faster pace than ever.**

It is important our People Plan addresses the variety of factors influencing demand for council services. These influences include the strategic priorities for the council, changes in the demography of Essex residents and amendments to legislation requiring us to provide new or different services or to provide our current services in a different way. Technology is also advancing at a rapid pace and now digital skills are on a par with the maths and English levels you are traditionally expected to have.

Increasing demands on our services, decreases in funding and new ways of using technology are already known

and this document will look at how we deal with this, but we also must be ready for those things we can't predict. For example, Brexit is an unknown force, but it could signal changes to employee legislation, visas or migration. But we can prepare for it, getting ready for change and ensuring we are fit for purpose.

By understanding the potential impact of these real and possible changes on our residents and our services, we can plan how to prepare and equip our workforce for the future.

## OUR APPROACH

- We have gained strategic insight from the Organisation Strategy, discussions with leadership teams across the council, used internal data and insight along with external research, including from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). We have also looked at where we have succeeded in areas across the council and how we can collectively benefit from shared learning and opportunities.
- We have identified that we need to understand what capabilities we currently have across the organisation and what we need for the future - considering what's controllable (such as new services, new products), and what's less within our control (such as economy, social, political context and talent supply).
- Identifying the emerging themes that will help us transform our workforce and our priorities, including strategic leadership, established learning organisation, pay including recognition, employee and team performance and talent management including attraction.



Displays a passion for making a difference. Creates and shares an ideal image of what we can become and motivates others to see exciting possibilities for the future.



Thinks creatively, takes calculated risks and learns from mistakes. Is curious and challenges the status quo, seeking opportunities for original solutions.



Supports and encourages others to experiment with new ways of working in an atmosphere of trust, respect and dignity. Accountable for own development and sharing best practice with others.



Creates and develops networks and involves others to first understand their point of view and then join together in a common purpose. Crosses internal and external organisational boundaries to improve and deliver shared solutions and services in ways that achieve mutual gain.



Provides a quality service by displaying professional excellence and expertise taking into account diverse customer needs. Seeks best value for money and pursues commercial opportunities as they arise.

**Organisational Behaviours**

The Big Conversation engagement activities in the summer of 2017 were focused around the organisational behaviours – inspires, innovates, enables, collaborates and delivers - and ensuring they are fit for purpose.

Our employees were very supportive of these behaviours aligning to the already confirmed leadership behaviours. Positive feedback was received on how these resonated with employees and were the right behaviours to drive us forward in line with the Organisation Strategy.

Specific interventions will be put in place to embed the new behaviours alongside initiatives to ‘shift’ the culture to provide the right environment for them to thrive.

# THE FUTURE

## WHERE WE WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE

**Of course, we will never really arrive at the future because as soon as we get the next plans in place the situation facing us will have changed again.**

It is important we see this as a journey. If it is done properly we will be able to predict the demands ahead and how we will meet them. This means we can potentially avoid full scale restructures in the future because we would adapt and mould our workforce as we go. It would be the business planning process which would inform those tweaks, not a huge reorganisation.

**We will know when we have succeeded when:**

In three years' time we want all our people to be living our values in the way they do their work and how they work with others. We know we face challenging times ahead and we want to ensure we continue to equip our people with the skills and knowledge they need to deliver high quality services to our residents.

**Other ways we will measure our success include:**

- We are working towards one common purpose and work collaboratively towards it, we have learnt from areas that already do this well and shared that across the council
- We have harnessed a passion for public services in our employees who are continually learning and sharing experiences across the council
- Great leadership is displayed throughout the council and our managers are advocates of change, driving improvement and innovation through the organisation
- We have a diverse workforce which better understands the needs of our residents and can provide fair and accessible services for them

- We have healthy people and workplaces so you feel highly engaged, valued and able to focus on providing the best service you can
- All employees are offered clear training and development, regardless of what stage they are in developing a career with us
- We have maximised the benefits and rewards available so we can recruit, retain and motivate high performing people with the right values and behaviours for our residents
- Change is no longer seen as frightening, but part of our normal working lives.



## HOW WE WILL GET THERE:

**The People Plan has been created as a critical building block of ECC's Organisation Strategy. It identifies where we want and need our workforce to be in three years' time to impact on what and how we deliver and therefore affects the entire county of Essex.**

The People Plan has four key strategic themes:

### **Creating the right conditions**

When our employees come to work we want them to have the best possible experience with nothing stopping them from giving their all each day. We want employees to feel a personal commitment to our organisational objectives and behaviours, but equally importantly to also enjoy a sense of personal satisfaction and wellbeing.

### **Getting ahead of the curve**

We want Essex to get and stay ahead of the curve. We will achieve this by harnessing the power of people analytics to determine and influence what the DNA of our workforce looks like in five years' time.

We already have a good foundation to do this as we collect vast amounts of data. We will maximise the value of our people data and deliver robust action plans to ensure we create the future workforce we need.

### **Optimising the employee experience**

We want the best people working for ECC. This is why we will be working hard over the coming months to strengthen our attraction as an employer and developing a strong brand for Essex. We want to be a desirable place to work that is diverse and promotes equality. We want to ensure that we continue to retain the best people we already have working for us, while attracting outstanding talent.

### **Enabling growth and development**

As part of our Organisation Strategy we have identified the need to develop new skills and ways of working. We are very conscious of the challenging times we are living in – staying still is not an option, the skills we currently have are not the ones we will need in the future. This means as an organisation we need to become better at supporting our employees to renew their skills, and this needs to be done at a faster pace.



# CREATING THE RIGHT CONDITIONS

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**When our employees come to work we want them to have the best possible experience with nothing stopping them from giving their all each day. We want employees to feel a personal commitment to our organisational objectives and behaviours, and equally importantly to also enjoy a sense of personal satisfaction and wellbeing.**

We want the relationship between our employees and the council to be based on trust, integrity, two-way commitment and clear communication.

We aim to have both the best employees in local government and a culture that creates the right conditions for success. Our employees are our most important asset, and we recognise we will be asking a lot from them over the next few years, as we work together to deliver our ambitious Organisation Strategy.

We will be looking at four key areas:

- **Employee engagement** – we want employees to understand how their role fits into the council’s vision and strategic objectives
- **Culture shift** – we want to build on many great elements of our current culture and look at how we can support our organisational goals more effectively, recognising that some things may need to change and seeking employee input on these
- **Performance management** – we want to improve our performance management approach and better understand what motivates our employees to perform at their best
- **Reward and recognition** – we want a modern, fair and transparent pay and reward structure that is flexible and competitive for the future.

## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

### Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

We are operating in an increasingly uncertain and complex world. We need a strong and committed workforce and culture if we are to deliver our ambitious Organisation Strategy and realise our vision for Essex. Employee engagement is about feeling pride and commitment in working for our organisation, drawing on knowledge and ideas to improve our services, and being innovative in our approach.

### The impact we expect this to have

We want and need, everyone to be fully on board on this journey. We want our employees to have a voice in our journey so all views are taken into account as decisions are made. To feel pride and commitment in working for the council, to be a great advocate for our organisation and a reason to go the extra mile. Our employees will be ambassadors for the council and activists in our local communities.

### How we propose to achieve this

- Be much more explicit about our purpose as an organisation and our expectations of employees
- Create an ongoing conversation with our employees, gathering and analysing their feedback in real time with the help of new and responsive technology and tools
- Transform our internal communications strategy and approach, ensuring the employee voice is heard throughout the organisation
- Develop our managers’ capability to motivate, support and empower team members

### New investment areas

- Employee communication channels
- Internal campaigns to address our key workforce priorities
- Feedback gathering and reporting technology to drive actionable insight
- Better use of our employee communities, networks and forums.



## CULTURE SHIFT

### Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

Workplace culture begins with its people and cannot simply be achieved through a top-down mandate. Nor can shifting culture be achieved overnight – it takes a sustained effort from all levels of the organisation over a long period of time. It lives in the collective hearts and habits of people and their shared perception of ‘how things are done around here’. We already have a positive culture in areas of our organisation which we need to harness and spread throughout the entire council.

### The impact we expect this to have

Our employees all have different identities – social workers, engineers, park rangers, accountants and so on – but we need to find the ‘Essex way’ of doing our jobs. As a learning organisation, we have reflected on lessons learned from our previous organisational restructure in 2013 and recognise that addressing culture is as important as an effective design in embedding change. Each of us will have the opportunity to shape and develop the culture of our organisation and make it something of which we can be proud.

### How we propose to achieve this

We propose to:

- Define our direction of travel and the ‘culture’ we want to create, using our Organisational Development Forum as critical friends
- Embed our organisational behaviours in our day-to-day practices, highlighting success stories
- Focus on all the facets and symbols of culture, such as our governance arrangements, how we communicate and engage with each other, how we celebrate our achievements and deal with things that have not gone so well
- Create the right physical and work environment to be able to deliver strategic priorities
- Strengthen employee communities to enable them to be a catalyst for change, such as our Change Champions or the Young People and Apprentice Network

- Identify opportunities and obstacles in our corporate systems and processes, including our communication channels and our current performance management system
- Enable teams to experiment, try new approaches and share experiences and lessons learned, encouraging us to be open to challenge and risk within a safe and supportive environment.

### New Investment areas?

- Development of employee communities (both new and existing)
- Embedding organisational behaviours with branding and visual symbols
- Review/change of critical systems including governance frameworks and practice to enable cultural shift
- Training and development for all employees with a focus on our managers and leaders to support them in driving culture shift and role modelling our behaviours.



## PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

### Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

In looking to refine our existing performance management approach, it is important employees understand our organisational objectives and the behaviours underpinning these. These not only drive performance and help us get to where we want to be, but allow us to create a culture that aligns with our strategic direction. This may not be a one-size fits all approach; we will be creating a framework and prototyping different approaches, across different employee groups to get the best-fit system in place.

### The impact we expect this to have

We want to motivate employees to ‘bring their best self to work’ and for performance and personal development to be a continuous conversation. Ultimately our objective is to enable our workforce to be the best they can be for the residents of Essex.

### How we propose to achieve this

We propose to:

- Review our approach to managing individual performance, using external research and best practice, feedback and input from employees and managers across the organisation, and ‘organisational raids’ to learn from others who already do this really well
- Consider moving away from a traditional cycle of performance and rankings, with backward looking reviews, to continuous feedback focused on employee development and the use of more modern technology
- We aim to have proposals and recommendations for our future approach, including replacing the current Perform system, by the end of 2018, with changes being implemented for April 2018.

### New investment areas

- Technology to support a new performance management approach
- Management capability for effective performance conversations
- Positive success measures being shared and linked to team and organisational performance.



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

CULTURE SHIFT

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

REWARD AND RECOGNITION

## REWARD AND RECOGNITION

### Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

Market conditions today are very different to those in 2010, and our organisation requires a reward structure which is flexible and competitive for the future. It needs to be designed to ensure fairness of pay relative to the role, help support and promote employee development and continue to attract the best talent to Essex.

### The impact we expect this to have

A shift in focus from annual performance bonuses to immediate rewards to recognise great work and behaviours, splitting reward from annual performance ratings and increasing flexibility in how you receive your benefits package.

### How we propose to achieve this

We propose to:

- Continue to implement Essex Pay for roles at all levels, addressing employee dissatisfaction about pay disparity and unfairness
  - Review our current recognition and benefits offer to create a more fluid and flexible benefits package that meets the changes in individual employee needs and lifestyles
  - Align our reward and recognition programmes with individual performance, business performance and work culture
  - Work with our managers and senior leaders to enhance and strengthen their approaches and techniques in providing timely and effective feedback
- Review our employee recognition frameworks, looking to develop multiple frameworks where everyone can find something that works for them.

### New investment areas

- Essex Pay
- A review of our recognition awards frameworks
- Annual review of market conditions.



# GETTING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

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## PEOPLE TECHNOLOGY

## STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PROGRAMME

## PEOPLE INSIGHTS

**We need to get ahead of the curve. We will achieve this by harnessing the power of people analytics to determine and influence what the DNA of our workforce looks like in five years' time. We already have a good foundation to do this as we collect vast amounts of data. We will maximise the value of our people data and deliver robust action plans to ensure we create the future workforce we need.**

Data and technology are at the core of this People Plan, but our current technology is not fit for purpose and our analytics activity has little focus on our workforce and its future.

We need to make sure ECC has the right infrastructure to stay ahead of the curve, to make sure we are an efficient organisation, attracting the best talent and creating a high performance culture.

To achieve this, we will be focusing on three areas:

- Investment in people technology
- Strategic workforce planning/partnering
- People insights.

## PEOPLE TECHNOLOGY

### Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

Our current people technology is not fit for purpose. We need to think bigger and better to bring the right solution into ECC. This process needs to start at understanding our requirements. Some of our transactional HR processes rely on labour intensive manual work, which is not efficient. Typically, managers or their teams don't interact well with the system and therefore self-service is not effectively used and our technology doesn't deliver what our customers are telling us they want.

### The impact we expect this to have

By investing in new technology that delivers a fully-fledged HR information system, we can expect several benefits:

- An efficient workforce – focused on change and creating high performing teams rather than administration
- A better user experience, focused on self-service for every transaction with less reliance on people operations
- Better employee experience with people related process contained in one place, better user information all in one place with one version of the truth
- Performance management, learning management and recruitment all contained to one system with employee experience at the heart of the requirements
- Self-serve analytics
- Efficient and smooth delivery of projects such as organisation design.

### How we propose to achieve this

- Develop our high level requirements
- Making sure we get the right solution to fit our employment practice and delivery of the rest of the workforce strategy
- Procurement process with decision making from inside the Organisation Development & People (ODP) function with strong relationships with technology teams – making sure we get the right solution, for the right cost
- Supplier selection process which focuses on requirement matching
- Implementation and integration of new technology into ECC
- System engagement and embedding
- Benefits realisation.

## STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PROGRAMME

### Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

#### Organisational design

Our functional staffing structures are designed to fulfil our organisational strategic aims. Building on the 2017/18 Organisation Design Programme, the implementation of our new structure will largely be completed by August 2018. We need to embed our established organisation design approach as a business as usual activity, ensuring how we are organised is part of the business planning cycle.

We will also continue to build capability so the approach established throughout the redesign becomes a management competence, ensuring ECC has the right shape and size for the future.

#### Strategic workforce planning

Creating diverse, high performing teams that deliver more for less is one of our strategic objectives. Strategic workforce planning (SWP) will help us deliver this objective – creating the Essex workforce of the future.

SWP is an emerging trend within HR. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) quote workforce planning as a “core HR process and presents an important opportunity for HR to ‘raise the bar’ and be involved in building the strategic plan for the future of the business.” SWP is about combining data, decision making and action planning so we can help shape the future workforce we need.

#### Work design

While organisation design and workforce planning provides the right people in the right roles, work design enables efficiency in what our people do on a day-to-day basis so they are engaged in meaningful work in the most efficient way.

As part of this strategy, we will use the Lean Six Sigma methodology and other continuous improvement techniques to ensure a structured and rigorous approach to work design while ensuring long term results through capability building. We will provide training and mentoring for managers and key employees in each function to ensure continuous improvement becomes a broader organisational competency and forms part of all that we do. This approach will also complement our focus on service redesign.

### The impact we expect this to have

We want a proactive approach to organisational design, at the heart of our business planning and strategic thinking. To keep the focus on our new approach, we want to establish a new discipline for the governance of organisational design that maintains the efficacy of our design principles but keeps us agile. We want the skill of organisational design to be a key management capability.

Understanding the end to end employee journey and how that impacts our changing workforce enables a better approach to recruitment, retention and leavers. From the data, we will identify gaps we can do something about, then we can use the data to influence what workforce we want in three or five years’ time, action plan and deliver.

Alongside the right people in the right roles, we need to ensure what they do is efficient. Work design will scrutinise our business practices throughout the organisation and drive us to do things in the right and the most efficient way.

We want our work practices and process to compare in the upper quartiles within their industry and professional sectors. Ensuring the value in what we do is maximised for the cost we spend. Benchmarking activity should demonstrate ECC as a high performer.

### How we propose to achieve this

- A better grip of our people data, ensure we are capturing the right things, at the right time for the right purpose
- Influence the future direction of IT architecture, making sure we have the strongest foundations to start from
- Develop a workforce planning tool fit for ECC
- Roll out of strategic workforce planning across ECC – including developing and embedding an ECC succession planning framework
- Consolidate all action plans centrally and ensure our partners are included in the process (eg recruitment).

PEOPLE TECHNOLOGY

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PROGRAMME

PEOPLE INSIGHTS

## PEOPLE INSIGHTS

### Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

Data, analytics and insight are not words traditionally associated with HR functions; however, it's emerging in a big way. Better ways of capturing data mean HR functions are using data in ways never seen before - from enhancing performance conversations, improving the employee experience and looking at their own team's performance.

We need to make sure Essex continues to strive to be as efficient as possible, even with a bigger people agenda. To deliver this workforce strategy, having the right data will enable us to secure investment, track progress and help future decision making of the entire organisation.

### The impact we expect this to have

- Becoming proactive rather than reactive – by spotting trends including risks far enough in advance to make sensible thought-out decisions
- Improved employee journey – for example by looking at recruitment performance, on-boarding and induction in a data-led way we can suggest improvements from a factual position rather than anecdotally
- Making sure employee engagement action planning includes continuous reporting, ensuring we are improving as an employer
- Make our statutory requirements as efficient as possible can by utilising new technology and new ways of working
- Enabling us to have a “data” culture where ODP thinks in a different way, creating high performing teams.

### New investment areas

- Building the in-house capability of people insight and analytics
- Centring people technology around the right information at the right time.

# OPTIMISING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

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EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

TALENT ATTRACTION

DIVERSITY

**We want the best people working for ECC. This is why we will be working hard over the next three years to strengthen our attraction as an employer and developing a strong brand for Essex. We want to be a desirable place to work which is diverse and promotes equality.**

Our people are our greatest asset and we will be demanding a lot from them over the next few years as we shift our culture. We want to invest to make sure we have the right skills and capabilities and to ensure we can continue to attract the best talent. We will do this by enabling our employees to work effectively, feel valued, creating the right working environment and infrastructure with fit for purpose tools. We need to secure the right people to meet changing requirements by fully understanding the people we have and the people we need.

This means creating the conditions to enable a supportive and motivational work climate, encouraging employees to build collaborative and productive partnerships which will shape and drive efficiencies and innovation and sustainable transformational change.

**To achieve this, we will focus on three areas:**

- Employee experience

- Talent attraction/entry routes to ECC
- Diversity.

**EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE**

**Why is this important to the organisation at this point?**

We need to offer an attractive ‘employee deal’. This will not only set out what’s unique about our organisation and what we stand for but will demonstrate the unique employee benefits offered in return for the skills, capabilities and experiences you bring to our organisation.

Much research from experts such as Hay Group, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Towers Watson has been carried out in this area, with the majority of organisations who introduce this deal recording higher employee engagement, greater financial performance and attracting and retaining top talent. In today’s economic climate the employee deal may well be less about pay and

financial reward but more about workplace culture, work-life balance and career opportunities - for example, flexible working patterns, employee empowerment and better recognition for your contribution.

Over the coming months and years, we will need to consider how we do this and maintain it because, as well as making us attractive to employees, it helps us maintain and build an effective workforce able to provide the best service to our customers.

**The impact we expect this to have**

From pre-hire to retire, using your experiences and views, we can maximise all the interactions an individual has with an employer over the long-term in order to create a deep sense of belonging and wellbeing. As part of this, we will be looking at issues such as employee physical and mental health but we want to widen our approach to encompass broader emotional and financial health too. We want to be an organisation where people care about people and this, in turn, will co-create high performance and stronger business outcomes for our residents.

**How we propose to achieve this - our three-year roadmap**

- Focus on workplace culture and design, career development and technology throughout ECC and

how contribution is measured and rewarded.

- Improving all other touch points throughout the organisation (environment, technology etc)
- Link our findings to future skills/ capabilities and education
- Scope the development of future opportunities (secondments) wider than ECC
- Broaden our wellbeing focus – from physical and mental health ‘treatment’ to prevention, culture, working environment (such as flexible working or sabbaticals), leadership and management, emotional and financial health
- Strengthen our attraction and induction approach, linking to our previous analysis, and talking to employees who are leaving us so we can find out why and build this into our ways of attracting future and retaining current employees.

**New investment areas**

- Continuous communication – internal and external – of the employee experience
- Workplace and technology improvement - review full core business process and people information systems
- Wellbeing strategy.



# TALENT ATTRACTION

## Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

The delivery of our strategic priorities over the next four years and beyond is critical to the success of our organisation. As the organisation evolves we need to think very differently about how we operate and the skills and capabilities in the future. We need people who can innovate, are more comfortable with risk and risk mitigation, more entrepreneurial and more commercially minded than ever before. To meet these requirements we need to create the environment to attract and retain the right people.

Talent and skill shortages are global issues. In the past, employees sought job security, good pay and a secure pension but due to many reasons there has been a shift in this. Employees are now demanding new careers, career models, technologies and innovations - including cognitive, artificial intelligence and social collaboration which are reshaping the workforce. We need to explore this as we need these types of people to work for us as they support our desire to be agile and innovative in the future. The key to this will be formulating a positive 'employee deal' which taps into the strong sense of

commitment our employees have to the communities they serve, and to address the barriers they believe inhibits their ability to deliver that commitment.

We also need to be looking at the best fit practice for our sector - benchmarking ourselves against leading organisations by turning the open talent economy into an opportunity, embracing technologies and developing new innovative entry models.

## The impact we expect this to have

Ensuring the organisation can identify and take advantage of diverse talent pools will become increasingly critical, as we identify new skills and capabilities needed to support the organisation's success.

## How we propose to achieve this - our three-year roadmap

We propose to:

- Identify the different models needed across the organisation, through a strong workforce planning process and segmentation analysis, to ensure we attract the right people, with the right skills, at the right place, and at the right cost. For example, grow our own talent, acquire it from the market and internal redeployment

- Explore and diversify how we resource our workforce and build our future talent pipeline, with closer alignment to current and future needs, and then design specific programmes to attract them, such as return to work or adapting job duties to make the most of individual skills or needs
- Build strong partnerships with schools, colleges and universities through work placements, internships and graduate programmes to help us broaden and expand our channels to attract future employees
- Take maximum advantage of new technologies - developing an attraction strategy, digital employee brand, attracting people to work in Essex, linking to partnership working and our economic growth
- Strategic use of the apprenticeship levy and broader routes to career platforms, to diversify our workforce profile, for example, in terms of age, experience, background or disability
- Create a compelling candidate experience - investing in areas such as our careers website, recruitment process and organisational induction.

## New investment areas

- Review of the resourcing contract in line with re-procurement timelines
- Career website and recruitment system improvement
- Apprenticeship programme to meet costs not covered by the levy, such as recruitment, salary and administration.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

TALENT ATTRACTION

DIVERSITY

## DIVERSITY

### Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

We understand the importance of having a diverse workforce. We have committed to recruit and retain one which reflects the communities we serve and ensures our people feel valued and respected. It is well known that a diverse workforce is the most productive, the most creative and best placed to serve local people.

To recognise what makes us different, as well as what we have in common, is pivotal to delivering our strategic priorities successfully. We also need to ensure our managers have the capability to manage people in an effective way, from recruitment opportunities, such as adapting job duties to making the most of the skills of disabled employees, to equal pay and access to training and development. We need to ensure our mental health strategy is understood across the organisation and we have the internal and external resources required to respond in a prompt and timely fashion.

### The impact we expect this to have

Everyone stands to benefit when we embrace and value the diversity of thoughts, ideas and ways of working that people from different backgrounds, experience and identities bring to the organisation.

Our People Plan is a chance for us to redress a number of imbalances in our workforce and create a team of people who are more representative of the Essex economically active population. For example, just 3.2% of our workforce/employees have told us they have a disability, yet we know that more than 13% of the working age population of Essex are disabled.

### How we propose to achieve this

- Continue to develop our Disability Confident programme
- Make better use of people analytics to understand current workforce profiles and reasons for that – for example, the decrease in female senior leaders compared with the overall workforce profile
- Targeted recruitment and retention programmes as part of our commitment to diversity and inclusion, such as quotas in apprenticeship programmes for disabled and care leavers

- Showcase, through video clips or other media, successes of placement candidates and teams to keep interest in providing new placements
- Develop training and awareness for managers and all employees where we all celebrate disabled colleagues and their successes
- Ensure what we are doing has a strong link to our wellbeing strategy, focusing on mental health, carers and disability.

### New investment areas

- Disability Confident programme – capability building and engagement
- Targeted attraction and recruitment campaigns
- Mental Health Strategy
- Training and development for managers.

# ENABLING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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**MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

**LEARNING ORGANISATION**

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

**As part of our Organisation Strategy we have identified the need to develop new skills and ways of working. We are very conscious of the challenging times we are living in – staying still is not an option, the skills we currently have are not the ones we will need in the future. This means as an organisation we need to become better at supporting you to renew your skills, and this needs to be done at a faster pace.**

Here at ECC we have always had a range of opportunities for employee growth and development to hand, such as skills training or coaching, mentoring or leadership development programmes. We want to ensure we continue to offer the right opportunities for everybody to develop and grow, and we want to work with everyone to ensure they can take ownership of their own development.

We want to change our approach to learning and development. We want to make employees, their development and the improvement of their performance, the centre of our learning framework. It is more than offering a pre-set list of courses or resources - it is about understanding what is needed and finding the best way to make it accessible. We are committed to building an organisation which enables every one of us to be the best we can be while working for the council.

**To do this we will focus on three areas:**

- Management and leadership development
- Learning organisation
- Career development.

**Why is this important to the organisation at this point?**

Leaders have always been expected to succeed in challenging context. Now they face even greater pressure as the speed and complexity of change accelerates. As we move forward in our journey to transform our organisation we need to develop a new leadership mind-set, one that rewards innovation, experimentation and learning. Our managers need to be change agents, advocating and enabling faster change across the organisation, championing our common purpose, delivering the ambitious agenda we have ahead of us.

**The impact we expect this to have**

We need to create a strong leadership pipeline, enabling the organisation to identify leadership potential early on, in all levels, and provide the right opportunities for development. We want to see our leaders consistently demonstrating our leadership behaviours (inspires, innovates, enables, collaborates and delivers). We want our employees to be the best they can be, and for that we need to further strengthen our managers’ capabilities to manage people and performance in a constantly changing environment.

**How we propose to achieve this**

- Continue to build our leadership development journey – where we support our leaders to develop and grow on the job, through real and practical opportunities
- Focus on the political leadership development agenda, to enable closer partnership working
- Increase leadership self-awareness across the organisation, at all levels, by providing diagnosis and assessment tools
- Strengthen the development support for our heads of service and service managers to close the gap between operational and strategic management
- Strengthen core managerial capabilities across all levels (such as people management, resources

management, strategic and business planning, financial management, partnership/collaborative working, performance management of individuals and teams, programme/project management, ongoing business change) with a clear focus on middle managers

- Design an induction/support programme for new managers, to equip them as quickly as possible to manage their teams effectively – people do not become fully-formed managers overnight but need to know what they must do to achieve
- Continue to identify opportunities to develop system-wide leadership capability.

**New investment areas**

- A leadership development programme for our senior managers (executive directors and directors) and middle managers (heads of service, service managers)
- Upskilling middle and senior managers to ensure successful implementation of new structures and ways of working
- Performance management upskilling for all managers, to support the implementation of reviewed processes
- Management development programme across all levels /functions, exploring the potential use of the apprenticeship levy.



# LEARNING ORGANISATION

**Why is this important to the organisation at this point?**

To become a learning organisation we need to change the way we support the development of new skills in our workforce – the focus needs to shift to support everyone to become ‘lifelong learners’. Learning from experience will be an integral part of our way of working, embedded in everything we do.

Our Chief Executive, Gavin Jones, made an explicit commitment that we will become a learning organisation where continuous learning is the norm. We want to create or strengthen accountability for learning and we all will play a pivotal role in this – managers will have responsibilities towards their own skills as well as their teams, while individuals will have responsibility for their own.

**The impact we expect this to have**

We want to ensure that, in our organisation, learning is work and work is learning. To achieve it, our organisational culture needs to encourage learning; no matter where, no matter who. As learning becomes integrated with work, the whole organisation needs to take ownership of development in order to create the right conditions to enable us to be more agile, flexible and adaptable.

**How we propose to achieve this**

- Use strategic workforce planning to identify critical capabilities we need to develop
- Experiment with new approaches and learning methodologies, to improve the learner experience
- Develop learning and development capability across the organisation, so every function can support the development of critical skills effectively

- Enable reflection and sharing of lessons learned across the organisation
- Design an organisational framework to develop critical capabilities to support our strategies, such as digital innovation, a commercial mindset, rethinking commissioning and continuous improvement
- Ensure all employees can demonstrate the foundational level of numeracy, literacy, digital and technology skills.

**New investment areas**

- Learning and development technology that enhances learner experience
- Enable learning networks across the council
- Foundational skills development programmes
- Critical capabilities development.



# CAREER DEVELOPMENT

## Why is this important to the organisation at this point?

We need to adapt our career strategies to be able to support people to learn faster and continuously reskill. We also need to be aware of how jobs, careers and skills are rapidly changing. The old model of employees being told what to learn by their managers or by a set career path must give way to a model where employees decide what to learn based on their team’s needs and individual career goals.

The perception that careers could only go “up” has shifted to the dynamic understanding of career progression going in every direction.

## The impact we expect this to have

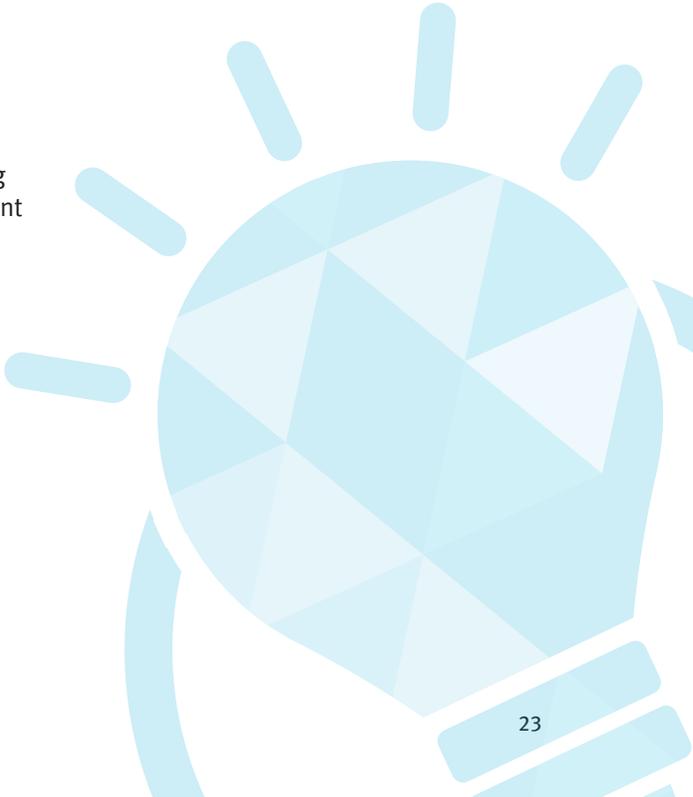
As the “shelf-life” of skills continues to decrease and work is constantly reinvented, we aim to enable everybody to maximise their careers by enabling them to continuously develop new skills. We will provide the right paths and opportunities so projects, assignments, secondments and exposure to different realities become the building blocks and careers are seen as a portfolio of projects and experiences.

## How we propose to achieve this

- We propose to:
- Create a culture of learning among management - recognising managers for developing their people and focus performance management on forward development, not just past achievements
  - Create career paths and self-assessment tools to help employees find career paths within the organisation
  - Focus learning and development programmes to enable employees to develop critical skills, such as digital knowledge, critical thinking and analytical skills, to complement their ‘professional’ skill set
  - Invest in programmes that help people move into new roles.

## New investment areas

- Review of performance management
- Self-assessment tools and technology
- Learning tools and technology
- Development of career pathways and professional competency frameworks.



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