

PEOPLE STRATEGY

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

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STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

- We will work with our businesses and communities to promote and invest in our assets – a beautiful coastal district with great connections to London and Europe.
- We want to develop a thriving economy for our residents and attract new people; supporting activities to develop jobs, homes and healthy living.
- We will design our services from our customers' perspective and use technology to best effect.
- We will use the next two years to work together with customers and staff to further modernise the council so we achieve our ambitions and continuously improve the way we do business.



TRANSFORMATION

The council is undergoing a 2 year transformation programme through to March 2020 and continuous improvement thereafter, with the aim of developing a council that is efficient and fit to serve its community and meet the aspirations of residents in the context of reduced resources.

Over the next 2 years the project will establish a new working model that aims to:

- **Improve service delivery**
- **Improve resilience**
- **Improve efficiency**

In the last 12 months a set of design principles were developed by staff and endorsed by Cabinet members:

- Focus on the customer
- Fewest steps for the customer
- Keep customers informed
- Digital by default
- Resolve first time
- Collect less and tell us once
- Use skills and expertise effectively
- Efficient working
- Use technology to ensure compliance
- Real-time measurement to improve
- Supporting customers to do more
- Proactively prevent and shape demand

PEOPLE PERSPECTIVE

The Council's Digital Strategy will form a key part of the Council's transformation project by helping to transform and improve the way in which our people work as well as the customer experience. In order for the council to move towards technological solutions that support service delivery, resilience and efficiency it is important to consider our people, their teams and the changing working environment that they will be part of in the future. Supporting our digital ambitions whilst supporting and enabling our people and teams to continue to perform at their best is our priority.

Expectations are changing (both in terms of our expectations of our people and their expectations of us) and to enable that change a new focus on behavioural competencies has led to a framework based around our existing core values:



Our leaders and managers will role model and live these behaviours, inspiring and energising the council providing clear direction, purpose and support. Our style will be open and honest utilising coaching skills to give and receive valued feedback.

We want our people to feel supported, appreciated and valued throughout and beyond the transformation programme and stimulated by the opportunities that the changes will bring. Our people will be treated with respect and integrity and will be encouraged to maximise development opportunities that arise from the changes.

Ultimately, we need and expect a shift in our culture, whereby working and thinking flexibly will be our norm with people who are willing to learn new skills, able to contribute ideas, be innovative and influence decisions. We will become an organisation of commercially-aware and technologically-enabled employees who rely on customer insight and a test and learn approach to devise lean processes and approaches to our work.



OUR APPROACH

The people strategy has been created to support the Council's corporate plan and to enable us to achieve the ambitious transformation programme. We will do this in a number of ways:

- Our focus will be on aligning developments and decisions impacting people to the Council's transformation objectives and corporate priorities
- Our resourcing approach will build a workforce that is fit for the future
- Our council will become one of the best places to work in the area
- Our behaviours-led culture will generate, encourage and reward flexibility and innovation
- Our culture of flexibility and innovation will develop with people who feel supported and who have the confidence to challenge why we do things and the ability to implement digital (and other appropriate) solutions to make us more efficient
- Our People Strategy will be delivered by the Human Resources team in partnership with our leaders, managers and people

Our people strategy will be set out within six main themes that are underpinned by our culture. A separate detailed implementation plan is being developed which will set out clear actions, timescales and measures of success.

PEOPLE STRATEGY THEMES



Structure & Roles

Ensuring that within the ever-changing world of work we are identifying and implementing the most appropriate organisational structures to meet demands.

Where are we now?

The council has operated within a traditional bureaucratic and hierarchical structure which can lead to service area silos and decision making is often referred up the hierarchy. Job descriptions exist for virtually every role and are extremely detailed with evaluations carried out via the NJC scheme.

What will we do in the future?

- Develop flexible career pathways and support development programmes & opportunities to support our people develop their careers with us.
- Design jobs to reflect the benefits and impact of our digital investment and that enable people to apply their skills, knowledge and behaviours to the best effect.
- Develop flexible, generic job descriptions supported by role families.
- Implement a flatter hierarchy that encourages matrix working and is designed to empower people to make appropriate decisions at the appropriate level.
- Support the introduction of technology with training & development programmes that enable and encourage working in a flatter hierarchy.
- Build flexibility into how we deploy our people.
- Enhance our job evaluation system with detailed local conventions.

Workforce Engagement

Engaging our workforce is key to enabling effective two-way communications and aiding retention

Where are we now?

Over the last 2 years our employer net promoter score has dropped from -27 to -36 which is symptomatic of the uncertain backdrop at the start of transformation. However we have maintained a strong working relationship with the trade unions and increased our focus on internal communications & engagement with the annual engagement survey leading to clear action planning to continuously improve engagement. In addition, the staff recognition scheme has been well received and gained support to continue plus a new reward scheme, F&H Rewards, has just been launched to enhance the benefits on offer to our people

What will we do in the future?

- Recognise and value engagement and celebrate successes & achievements wherever found.
- Ensure meaningful effective communications and more direct engagement with our staff on matters that affect them.
- Continue to work in partnership with our trade unions and staff representatives to develop and evolve our approaches to staff engagement.
- Continue to develop our rewards, recognition and benefits offer for our people and teams to recognise exemplary behaviours.
- Enable more social events to encourage & facilitate a vibrant culture.
- Maintain open and honest dialogue with staff, seeking views, ideas and commentary and keeping them informed via a range of engagement surveys and pulse checks using the most appropriate channels.

Recruitment & Retention

Attracting, recruiting and retaining the best people is key to the future of the council and we will therefore develop creative approaches to attracting and retaining talented and capable people across all of our service areas.

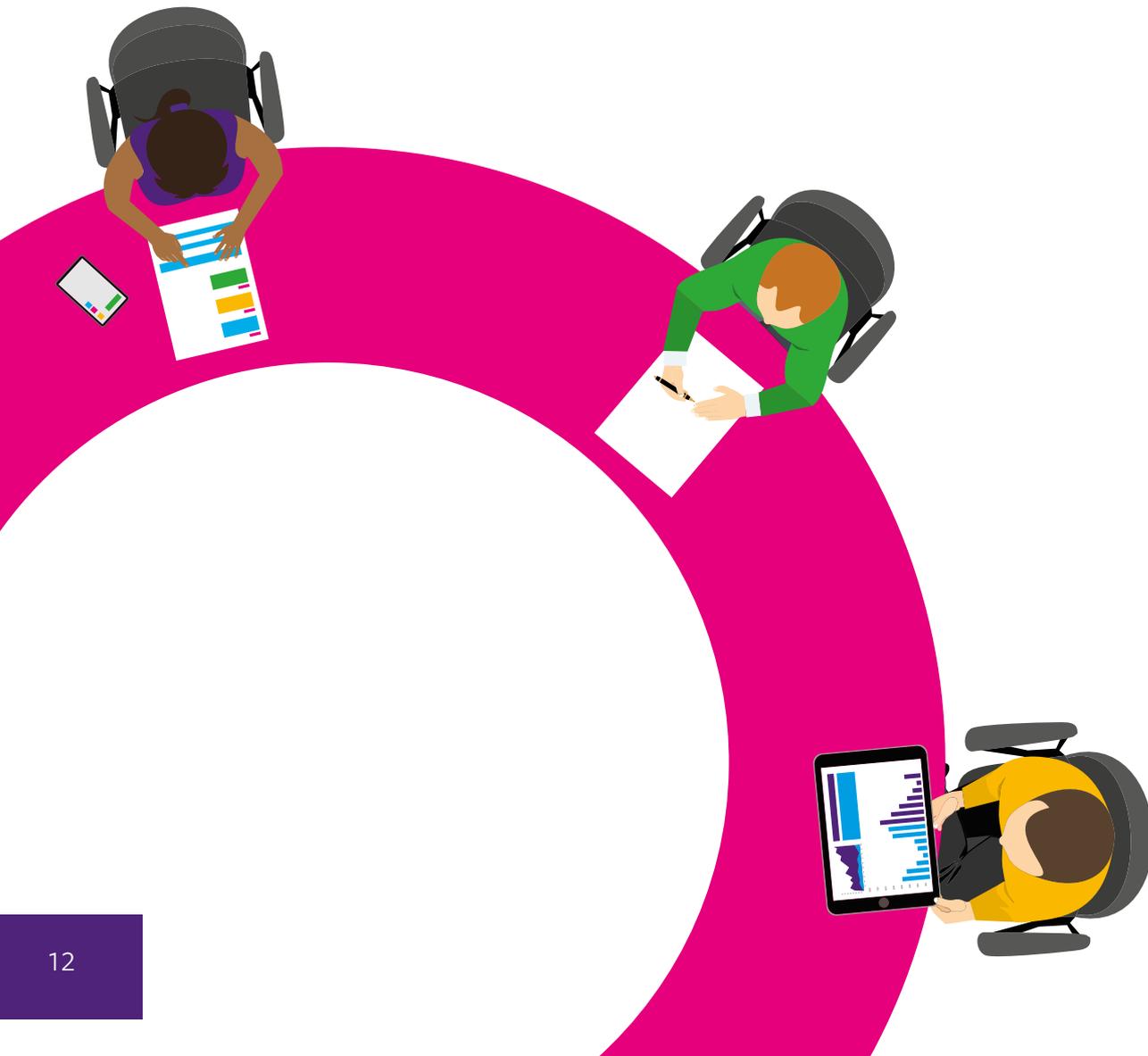
Where are we now?

The council currently operates traditional recruitment and selection approaches with an ad hoc approach to using social media and a lack of engaging internet presence to attract applicants. There has also been a piecemeal approach to recognising talent and retaining people. However, in recent years we have successfully operated the 'grow our own' programme, developed our apprentices and concentrated on internal secondments above external recruitment which has led to a relatively low level of turnover (14.4% in 2017/18).

What will we do in the future?

- Attract and secure the best talent with engaging and creative recruitment campaigns that reflect our ambitions, including fostering links with higher and further education institutions and local schools.
- Design innovative ways to recruit traditionally 'hard to fill' roles in conjunction with area specialists, including identifying development pathways.
- Create flexibility within our pay and reward mechanisms to become more attractive and competitive in our recruitment.
- Integrate our behavioural framework into our selection and development processes.
- Develop the capability of our recruiting managers.
- Develop our induction approaches to accelerate the integration of new staff into the council.

- Develop clear succession plans for professional and strategic progression.
- Continually identify, grow and manage our internal talent in line with talent segmentation, succession plans and personal development goals providing appropriate career pathways.
- Continue to develop and promote our approaches to agile working.
- Identify secondments as potential development opportunities, both inside and outside of the council, to aid retention of our people.
- Develop ways to track investment in our people against our level of retention.
- Build our employer brand to reflect the organisation we're aiming to become.



Learning & Development

The core strength of the council is in our people and therefore training, developing and supporting our people is absolutely crucial.

Where are we now?

There is currently a comprehensive offer to all our people via e-learning, soft skills sessions, targeted sessions for middle management development with formal ILM Levels 3&5 Awards plus developing aspiring managers studying the ILM L3 Diploma. However, training and professional development is largely identified by service area managers rather than a strategic overview of our requirements based on corporate priorities.

What will we do in the future?

- Develop career pathways to enable long-term development, progression and succession planning.
- Review, evaluate and refresh our approach to leadership and management programmes ensuring they reflect our values and behaviours.
- Develop the management capabilities of our leaders and managers.
- Develop a pool of coaches and mentors to nurture talent and support performance.
- Support the sharing of knowledge and ideas through cross-functional teams.
- Ensure that our people have access to training that enables them to meet the expected standards in their roles by identifying learning needs gaps.
- Continue to introduce and embed the behavioural framework.

- Explore and implement options that align with the apprenticeship levy which will enable us to sponsor people through formal qualifications.
- Identify suitable entry points and develop our approach to apprentices and trainees to ensure that we identify and develop talent at an early stage.
- Provide our people with appropriate learning and development opportunities encompassing commercial awareness, innovation, digital awareness, procurement, commissioning of services and partnership working.
- Produce an annual learning and development brochure that outlines the opportunities available to our people to support them in the personal and professional development.
- Produce an annual training plan that reflects our corporate priorities.
- Review the central and departmental training budgets to ensure appropriate budget allocation.
- Provide appropriate training and development opportunities for our elected members and identify opportunities for co-training with officers.



Performance

With an ambitious corporate plan and its associated priorities, ensuring our people are driven to perform to the best of their abilities will be key to our organisational success with high performing teams.

Where are we now?

We have a traditional approach to appraisals which are not valued by many managers and their teams; in addition, some areas are reluctant to start formal capability actions and the culture of feedback varies between service areas. Some service areas are very target and metric led, but this is not consistent and pay progression is not yet linked to performance.

What will we do in the future?

- Drive a high performance team culture in which individual development and career aspirations are supported and aligned to our behaviours.
- Promote a healthy workplace and support our people to achieve a work-life balance that takes account of individual circumstances and life choices.
- Ensure that our approach to appraisal, reward, recognition and promotion is fair, transparent and understood by all.
- Develop a contemporary performance management framework, integrating our behaviours, which recognises high performers and also provides challenge and support.
- Introduce opportunities for 360 feedback linked to the behavioural framework.

Reward & Recognition

Attracting, recruiting and retaining the best people is key to the future of the council and in order to both recruit and retain we must therefore ensure that we have the mechanisms in place to recognise and reward our people appropriately.

Where are we now?

Incremental progression through the pay grade is automatic with sporadic use of honorarium and acting up payments. Many roles have not been formally evaluated for a number of years and market supplements are not used consistently. The recognition scheme has forged a clear link to the corporate values. However there is a perception that our annual leave and some salaries are not competitive enough to match private sector companies or other local authorities.

What will we do in the future?

- Ensure our remuneration strategies recognise performance and rewards positive behaviours.
- Develop our approach to reward and recognition to ensure that it is flexible and fair but supports the council's strategic aims whilst rewarding the highest performers.
- Align our recognition scheme with the behaviours in order to recognise our people who demonstrate exemplary behaviours and values in their work.
- Continually review and enhance the range of flexible benefits available to our people.

Culture

The six people strategy themes are all influenced by the changing culture of our council.

Throughout our people strategy we will actively support this cultural shift by ensuring we:

- Promote a culture of accountability and collaborative team working.
- Empower and challenge staff to achieve excellence.
- Actively engage and empower staff to act within a collaborative culture which encourages innovation and creativity.
- Help our people to understand our values and behaviours and the expectations and responsibilities contained within them.
- Encourage our people to be adaptable and learn new skills.
- Promote a test and learn, agile, iterative culture where staff are encouraged to learn from their mistakes.
- Encourage an environment of mutual trust, transparent decision making underpinned by values-led leadership.
- Build on our constructive employee relations climate with trade unions and staff representatives within a clear and progressive policy framework.
- Review our internal policies and procedures to remove any unnecessary bureaucracy and encourage flexible / agile working practices for our service areas, providing managers with the discretion they need to manage their people with minimal intervention from HR.

REVIEW OF THE PEOPLE STRATEGY

The People Strategy will be reviewed annually by the Chief HR Officer in conjunction with the Assistant Director – Strategy, Performance & Communications and the Head of Paid Service.

