

Harborough District Council

Workforce Strategy

2019-2024

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The Council Vision and Priorities
3. Background
4. Our Vision
5. Strategy
6. Key Workforce Strategic Priorities
7. Skills & Behaviour Development
8. Recruitment & Retention
9. Pay, Reward & Recognition
10. Well Being & Engagement
11. Performance & Change
12. How will we measure success?
13. What happens next?

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our customers expect increasingly high standards of customer service and there will continue to be funding pressures and a focus on efficiency, which will lead to the Council considering better use of technologies and creating a flexible and aligned workforce.
- 1.2 This strategy considers the major people issues that affect or are affected by the Council's vision, aims and values, set out through its Corporate and Service Plans and addresses how we can most effectively respond to these challenges within available resources for both our organisation and our employees.
- 1.3 Local authorities will be working together more in the future to deliver services in an integrated way, in direct response to the needs of local people and communities. Whatever the direction of future local government, there will be a greater focus on local interaction and a variety of working arrangements including more partnership working. This strategy reflects the overall direction the Council wishes to pursue in achieving its objectives through its people.

2. The Council's Vision and Priorities:

- 2.1 Working with communities in a vibrant, safe and prosperous District

The Council's Three Priorities 2018/19 to 2020/21

- The Place
- The People

- Your Council

2.2 This workforce strategy enables the Council to focus on how we will seek to meet the vision and priorities that shape everything that we do. The workforce will continue to adapt to new ways of working and changing capabilities. The workforce profile also guides some of the actions we need to undertake.

3 **Background**

3.1 The most recent census figures from 2011 showed that the Harborough District Population had 85,382 residents. The 2014 population projections from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimate a population of 88,008 in 2014 and forecast an increase to 99,814 in 2031 which equates to an 8.2% increase. The bulk of this increase is expected to come from immigration to the District from within the UK. There is also expected to be an increase in the number of people aged 65 and over, with an increase to almost a quarter (24.3%) of the population of the District being within this group by 2024.

3.2 The 2011 Census highlights the changes to the population structure in the District since 2001 and we need to keep a close ongoing eye on the statistical data available to us in the future and adapt our approaches in recruitment, retention and skills development accordingly. In just ten years we can already see small but significant changes to our population:

- The population of school age children and students increased by almost 11%
- Strong evidence of an ageing population with 17.8% of the population aged 65 and over compared to 15.7% in England
- The mean age of the District's population increased from 40 in 2001 to 42 in 2011.

3.3 In addition, with some national skill shortages up and down the UK, we need to keep abreast of the changes to the wider population statistics particularly in neighbouring Districts and Counties to ensure we attract the necessary skills and experience from outside of the District when necessary.

3.4 Each year the Council produces information in relation to the make-up of our workforce. At the end of July 2019, the Council had a total of 221 employees, the following statistics were obtained from our 2019 annual voluntary employee monitoring survey, combined with data collated from the human resource information system. A total of 155 Council employees completed the questionnaire, which represents just over 79% of our workforce.

3.5 What is our workforce like?

- **Age** – The following is a comparison of the District population against the workforce in terms of age group from 2011:
 - 18 to 24 year age group – 4.9% of the workforce compared to 9.1% of the population
 - 25 to 44 age group – 41.8% of the workforce compared to 34.4% of the population
 - 45 to 59 age group – 44.2% of the workforce compared to 32.1% of the population

- 60 and over age group – 9.2% of the workforce compared with 24.4% of the population. However, population figures include those of pension age, who have already retired, so cannot be directly compared.
- **Health Problems or Disability** - Of the employees who volunteered this information, 17.7% stated that they have a health problem or disability which limits their day to day activities and has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months compared to 20.4% of the local population in the 2011 Census. However, the local population figures include those who are economically inactive due to their disability and therefore would not form part of the labour market.
- **Ethnic Group** - Of those who declared their ethnic group 93.4% of our employees said that they are white, compared to the District population in 2011 of 95.2%. 2011 Census figures showed 4.8% of Harborough District residents described themselves as Asian, Black, Mixed or Other ethnic group which is lower than the 6.6% of Harborough District Council respondents who described themselves as belonging to one of these ethnic groups.
- **Religion and Belief - Religion or Belief** – 2011 Census figures show that 65.5% of the District population are Christian, in this year's questionnaire 48.7% of employees declared this as their religion. 43.9% of our employees stated that they have no religion, which is much higher than the 2011 Census population figure of 24.6%. The workforce percentage for other religions (which includes Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and 'other' added together) was 7.4% which is over twice as high as the district population figure of 3.1% in 2011. Proactively responding to our diverse workforce, a dedicated private prayer room is available for those who would like to use it.
- **Sex (Gender)** - Results indicate that 69.9% of our staff are female and 30.1% male, compared to 49.6% and 50.4% of the Harborough District population (Census 2011 statistics). The workforce figure is comparable to other Local Authorities and public sector organisations and is virtually unchanged compared to last year. This disparity may be due to the number of part time positions at the council. Office of National Statistics UK Labour Force data for October to December 2018 show that nationally 41% of women in employment worked part time compared to 13% of men. 38.3% of respondents to our survey stated that they work for Harborough District Council on a part time basis rather than a full time basis and so it would be expected that there would be a higher percentage of females overall. Human Resources collate data from all recruitment activity, regular reviewing to ensure that opportunities for full time and part time positions are allocated appropriately.
- **Sexual Orientation** - In this year's survey, 92.3% of respondents described themselves as heterosexual/straight, 4.5% as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other' and 3.2% did not wish to declare their sexual orientation. Modest government estimates suggest that at least 6% of the population are lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- **Gender Reassignment** – 98.7% of respondents to this year's employee questionnaire indicated that their gender is the same as that assigned at birth. A number of staff chose not to answer this question. There are no accurate population figures, but a GIRES (Gender Identity Research and Education Society) report in 2011 suggests that 1% of the population experience some degree of gender variance and that about 0.20% may undergo transition.

- 3.6 The objectives and actions from the Workforce Comparison 2019 included undertaking further analysis in relation to gender balance of employees by:
- Completing analysis on results from the employee equality monitoring survey with regard to the gender balance between employees working full time and part time
 - Completing further analysis on results from the employee equality monitoring survey with regard to the relationship of respondents by gender and salary grade.
 - Completing analysis on results from the employee equality monitoring survey with regard to the breakdown of gender and age groupings.
 - Continue to monitor quarterly equality recruitment data to ensure characteristics of new employees appointed by the council are representative of the characteristics of applicants who apply
- 3.7 In general terms Harborough District Council are doing well in matching our district population statistics, however there is always room for improvement. Whilst recruitment on merit is important to the organisation, we will continue to look closer into the reasons for any gaps between our staff demographic and our district population and seek solutions to this imbalance should it present a problem.
- 3.8 A significant proportion of staff live within the Harborough District so are customers as well as staff.

4 Our Vision

- 4.1 The vision for Harborough District Council and community is to have a workforce that understands and is committed to the organisations priorities, is innovative and creative, diverse and inclusive, responsive to customers, ready and willing to respond to changes in the work carried out and how it is done.
- 4.2 Working positively together across teams will help staff feel more knowledgeable and engaged in the services the Council provides. At a time of transformation in local government in general the Council, as an employer, will need to continue to review the organisational design and seek to operate in a more “matrix” or collaborative model which reduces bureaucracy and allows staff to operate more flexibly. We will be working more closely with partners to plan and deliver services across traditional boundaries. Staff will require more flexible terms and conditions and reward systems to reflect a changing labour market. This in turn means that we will be clearer on responsibility and accountability with a more focus on outcomes.
- 4.3 Great leadership is essential, it needs to be visionary, ambitious and effective and the development of leadership needs to be at all levels of the organisation. The skills and values required of leaders and managers now and in the future need to focus on:
- Personal resilience and wellbeing
 - System thinking (taking an holistic approach that focuses on outcome and not process)

- Relational agility (how we engage with other perspectives and networks and use them to understand and solve complex issues)
 - Socio/political understanding of place
 - Commercialisation
 - Digitalisation and transformation of services
 - Coaching for results
 - Empathy with customers and colleagues
 - Clear communication and engagement with colleagues
- 4.4 In addition to good leadership, staff play a huge part in the future success and resilience of the Council in order to achieve our vision. In line with the organisation's competencies and performance management, staff will have a clear understanding and focus on what is expected from them, they will engage proactively in organisational change such as the Smarter Service Programme to enable the smooth and efficient transformation of services which benefit the customer and staff alike.
- 4.5 Performance management is also key to help ensure we are focussing on the right things and recognising good performance and that we are also able to address performance issues promptly and effectively at corporate, service and individual levels. The appraisal process is an essential part of performance management and will continue to operate throughout the organisation. We will develop, implement and maintain a consistent framework which ensures that all staff, through their line managers, understand their role and responsibility within the organisation and how they are accountable for their actions and behaviour. We will enable managers to coach, reward and lead supportively and manage their staff to be able to perform well. The Corporate Management Team and the Service Management Team will engage more with our staff. People need to be appreciated and the management teams will encourage ideas and innovation from everybody linking into the Smarter Service Programme, which is focussing on opportunities for end-to-end transformation of services in line with changing customer needs.
- 4.6 As an organisation, Harborough District Council has its own culture, character and personality and every colleague and Councillor makes a contribution to that personality.
- 4.7 Our Staff Values, devised by our staff, have been developed to articulate this personality and the experience we offer our customers.
- 4.8 These values are at the heart of everything staff do and also link directly into the reward and recognition scheme STAR (Stronger Together Award of Recognition).
- 4.9 Harborough District Council's values are:
- 4.10 Stronger Together We...
- Value & Are Valued
 - Challenge & Innovate
 - Are the Best We Can Be
 - Are Open, Honest & Accountable For our Customers, Colleagues, Members and Partners
- 4.11 It is through the skill and effort of our staff that we will achieve our corporate aims. This strategy will enable the organisation to attract, recruit, develop and retain the

staff with the qualities that are needed. It also sets out how the organisation aims to engage with staff through effective reward, good management, leadership, culture and environment. The strategy also aims to enable effective management of staff in terms of workforce size and composition.

- 4.12 People managers will be trained and skilled in coaching and mentoring and through embedding this culture throughout the whole of the organisation, the focus will be on results focussed decisions and outcomes and not task based outputs.

5 Strategy

- 5.1 The aim of this strategy is to reflect our corporate vision and how we will engage with key stakeholders to support this vision.

- 5.2 To demonstrate our commitment we will:

- Lead a council wide approach to support, reward, develop and manage staff so that consistent levels of high performance are the norm and staff feel trusted, happy and motivated.
- Build capacity and resilience to achieve successful change, building the leadership capabilities of managers.
- Establish and maintain effective relations with staff and trade unions to enable employee engagement.
- Develop and foster an environment of respect for equality and diversity where discrimination is not tolerated.
- Develop a workforce action plan incorporated within service and business planning which underpins the Council's aims and encourages a results focussed approach.
- Develop excellent HR systems, policies and procedures which actively support and enable managers in their responsibilities.
- Develop a customer service ethos whereby we support and add value to the work of key partners, stakeholders, colleagues and the management team.

6 Key Workforce Strategic Priorities

- 6.1 Every council values what make their place different; their special circumstances and their unique approaches. These unique qualities are reflected in their workforce and the challenges our sector faces. But we all have one thing in common, continuing to develop a workforce that is:

- Productive – affordable, efficient, motivated, engaged, technological literate and flexible.
- Joined up – properly integrated across all the different organisations, partners and stakeholders.
- Involved in co-designing and co-creating services – so that the ideas and experience of the people most involved in services day to day can be fully utilised.
- Truly valued and respected – supported through the stages of life and career and able to enjoy good quality benefits as well as fair pay.

- Diverse – reflecting the communities it services and making use of all the talent in these communities.

7 Skills & Behaviour Development

- 7.1 Harborough District Council recognises the importance of its employees and their development in its core values and the achievement of its key objectives. It is therefore committed to developing its people and its culture.
- 7.2 Our ability to lead and manage through change and transformation is key to delivering effective services. We will continue to work with teams to ensure they have the capacity, skills and tools to deliver services in a flexible manner, with continuous improvement in mind for the customer. Development of our staff is an investment in the future of Harborough District Council. Learning & Development and talent management will mainly focus on improving employee performance and in turn service delivery through skills and behaviours. The Staff Values underpin the behavioural competency framework and sets about to deliver culture change, culture identity and improvement. The Corporate Management Team and the Service Area Management Team are key developers of their employees and everyone shares responsibility for their own learning & development, formalised through the appraisal scheme and competency behaviour framework. Development opportunities will be accessible, fair and accessible to all. Development activity will be managed and delivered at the most appropriate level, taking into account economies of scale and cost effectiveness.

7.3 Actions

- Identification of skills, behaviours and needs to meet organisational priorities through a workforce assessment
- Development of skills required to work effectively with partners across sectors
- Development of a programme to meet these needs through an adaptable development plan
- Embedding values and culture changes through programmes such as Smarter Services, continuing to link these to reward and recognition

7.4 Outcomes

- Performance improvement
- Engaged staff focussed on the customer
- Workforce plans for the longer term to add resilience, capacity and succession planning
- Learning and development clearly linked to organisational priorities and workforce objectives
- An organisation, attractive to partners and stakeholder due to having skilled, efficient, solutions based and positive staff

8 Recruitment & Retention

- 8.1 In order to achieve the priority to ‘Provide the right public services to the right standard’ the Council needs to respond to financial challenges, change and transform and remain cost effective in our provision of resource; retaining our talented individuals in tandem with delivering workforce transition. The organisation needs to be reflective of our community, be focussed on equality and diversity and

balance attraction of new staff and all that they bring with our existing staff through opportunities and fulfilling work.

8.2 The Council's resources may be joined with others or deliver services via a variety of methods. In order to respond to external drivers the workforce needs to be able to adapt.

8.3 A comprehensive set of policies, procedures and toolkits are available to provide transparent and clear support in a safe environment for the entire workforce during the lifetime of their career with the Council. These include Policies such as Whistleblowing, Training & Development, Organisational Change and a suite of Family Friendly policies.

8.4 Action

- To embed workforce planning and review the staffing and capacity requirements
- Embed further flexible working practices to ensure responsiveness to customer needs and provide a work life balance for staff
- Retain our awards, *Disability Confident* and *Bronze Armed Forces Certificate* through positive and proactive recruitment and employment practices
- Highlight the positive elements of working for Harborough District Council, its culture and personality and attract applicants who are passionate about working at a local community level and the difference they can make
- Develop further creative and accessible recruitment and retention practices that appeal to a wide and diverse audience and creates a positive image for Harborough District Council in the local community including opportunities to study an apprenticeship, volunteering, job shadowing and student placements.
- Identify skills shortages and address job design for roles that have increasing national skills shortages
- To further develop the success of the apprenticeship programme forging closer links with schools, academies, colleges and universities
- Encourage the retention of a valued older skilled and experienced workforce through flexible working, continued access to learning and development, progression, coaching, mentoring and leadership opportunities

8.5 Outcomes

- A more predictable resourcing plan and responsive workforce
- Opportunities to attract and grow talent through succession planning, talent management and on-going learning and development
- Encourage returners and under represented groups to work for us
- Move away from traditional recruitment and selection methods to provide different and more creative redesigned roles that address skills and experience gaps and tap into all demographics

9 Pay, Reward and Recognition

9.1 The organisation needs to continue to be able to recruit and retain talented individuals; pay, reward and recognition is very much an underlying part of this. We will continue to listen to our staff and devise reward systems within the financial circumstances ensuring transparency, fairness, engaging with staff and recognising achievements. Balancing pay, terms and conditions, motivation, talent and reward within a fair process is difficult. Much work has been undertaken previously

regarding pay during a pay and grading review in 2008, the focus now turns to reward and recognition.

9.2 Through the STAR award scheme, we will continue to highlight and celebrate the contribution made by individuals and teams across the Council.

9.3 Actions

- Develop flexible reward packages within current financial constraints ensuring recognition of achievements.
- Continuously review terms and conditions in light of the current employment market to ensure we remain competitive and offer attractive benefits to attract talent
- Ensure our pay system is fair and non discriminatory through the fair application of job evaluation
- Embed further the STAR award scheme
- Continue to invest in Learning and Development at all levels of the organisation

9.4 Outcomes

- Staff understand the benefits of working at HDC
- Staff and teams are valued for outstanding work and behaviour and thereby aid retention and succession planning
- The ability to attract good quality candidates and introduce the Council as a credible local employer through various recruitment channels and sources including apprenticeships and work placements
- A skilled modern workforce with up to date skills and the ability to adapt to a changing political environment
- A wider cost effective benefits package for staff

10 Well-Being & Engagement

10.1 Staff wellbeing is an integral part of our employee support mechanism. We have strong and positive employee relations with our recognised trade unions to ensure our staff feel informed and have clear methods of providing their views.

10.2 The organisation has travelled beyond the customary remit of health and safety towards a more holistic approach to the wellbeing of all staff through various approaches including flexible working, health promotion, mental health first aid and stress awareness. Our approaches will reflect the diversity across our workforce to ensure it is effective, proportionate and relevant.

10.3 Actions

- Provide mechanisms suited to the workforce and culture of the organisation.
- Work closely with the Corporate H&S Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer to ensure linkages with compliance and strategies.
- Continue to manage the relationship with the occupational health provider to ensure quality and valued information is provided to support staff and the organisation.
- To encourage staff to use the employee assistance programme (EAP) for advice, guidance and support, and provide specific individual support when necessary.
- Support the development of wellbeing initiatives, the outcomes of workforce surveys, and the values and behaviours of how we interact with staff.
- Continue to engage closely with the recognised trade unions, working collaboratively to maintain good relations.

- Continue to deliver Mental Health First Aid training across the organisation to raise awareness and breakdown stigma, identifying signs and symptoms sooner and provide early intervention and appropriate support for our workforce and our customers.

10.4 **Outcomes**

- Improved resilience within in the workforce
- Less absence through sickness
- Increased motivation and engagement culture, with an ability to positively embrace change
- A robust set of support mechanisms in place
- Trained and competent mental health first aiders providing vital early intervention when necessary.

11 **Performance & Change**

11.1 The ability to quickly and effectively transform, change and improve is essential to achieving service delivery improvements for the customer.

11.2 This is a reflection of the business climate in general. Service delivery models will change and evolve continuously demanding the need for a flexible and engaged high performing workforce. A clear and consistent approach to managing change will be used to help keep people aware of what is expected. We want to ensure our values are demonstrated every day through engagement and a culture which is collaborative, inclusive and creative. We want to know how well we are performing and take timely and appropriate action to address any risks.

11.3 We want to develop an agile and flexible workforce that embraces new ways of working and maximises the use of technology to support efficient working. The Smarter Services Programme will aim to address new and revised efficient ways of working, designed and driven by staff, supported by Senior Management.

11.4 **Actions**

- Review the change management processes ensuring managers understand and apply the principles supporting employees throughout.
- People managers effectively coach their teams for performance improvements and result based problem solving.
- Engage with partners and professional colleagues to share workplace issues and develop shared approaches in line with best practice.
- Continue to apply performance management frameworks, linking appraisals to Corporate Priorities and service team plans and manage individual performance consistently, promoting equality and diversity.
- Develop skills and capabilities within the workforce to improve agility and responsiveness and work effectively with other sectors, partners.

11.5 **Outcomes**

- Increased awareness from staff of the Council's and team priorities and the required collaborative work needed to achieve team and organisational objectives.
- A common understanding of change management helping staff to adapt better to different ways of working.
- Staff positively input and contribute to the Council's service delivery through operational and corporate plans.

- Increased and improved service delivery through a variety of efficiency models some of which will be a consequence of the Smarter Services Programme.

12 How will we measure success?

12.1 Measuring the effectiveness of the workforce strategy will be tracked through performance indicators such as:

- Employee engagement survey
- Employee turnover
- Sickness absence – long and short term and the number of formal absence reviews
- Ratio of indirect workforce to employed staff and analysing the reason for these resources
- Recruitment success rates
- Performance management is improved through better quality appraisals, SMART objectives and one to one meetings, and people managers utilising their skills as experienced coaches
- The number of staff with a performance development plan

13 What Happens Next?

13.1 As indicated above, the primary purpose of the Workforce Strategy is to ensure the Council's priorities are achieved but it should be seen as a "live" strategy that evolves as the Council's priorities change and the make up of the workforce changes and develops over time.

13.2 The strategy will be implemented through:

- **Service Plans** - each Service Team will develop a service plan, revised regularly, which will support the delivery of the Corporate Strategic priorities as presented in the Corporate Plan. The Service Team Plans will address specific workforce issues in their areas including process efficiencies, capacity and skills development. These plans will be monitored and managed within each service area and facilitated by the Business Planning team.
- **Action Plans, Policies and Programmes** – the Strategy will impact on a wide range of policies and programmes across the Council. Human Resources, Learning and Development incorporating organisational development and in conjunction with the Corporate Management Team, Service Managers, Equality & Diversity and Health & Safety, will initiate specific action plans to take forward the priorities for 2019 to 2024. Progress will be monitored using the measures outlined above.
- **Workforce dashboards** – a framework of key performance indicators and operational metrics using TEN will be produced and regularly monitored to inform members, Service Areas and the Council as a whole on progress towards collectively achieving the outcomes of our workforce strategy.
- **Annual progress review** - the Council will receive an Annual Report each year on progress against the Workforce Strategy and any proposed changes and

amendments in the light of other developments. Other measures of the Council's progress on its wider priorities will also indicate if the Workforce Strategy is meeting its primary objectives.

- 13.3 This strategy has been written to address the next five years, and will continue to evolve as the Council moves forward towards excellence, and amongst the constantly shifting external pressures and challenges facing our sector.
- 13.4 This is a live document that needs to be reviewed regularly, working collaboratively with the LGA, partners and networks to share learnings across our sector that have proved successful and address issues faced by all including national skills shortages, changing legislative frameworks and the changing demands of resident expectations. In addition, as the workforce adapts to these challenges and changes, their needs will change and this needs to be addressed to ensure that we are able to stay ahead in terms of attractive work experience and job opportunities, reward and recognition and development opportunities so we are an employer of choice within local and wider communities.