

# People Strategy 2020-2024





**Byron Rhodes**  
Chairman,  
Employment Committee,  
Leicestershire County Council

## Foreword

The context around our last People Strategy in 2017, was about us facing unprecedented financial and service challenges. We talked about the significant change we were facing, alternative delivery models, a ‘digital first’ approach, and our strength in partnership working.

As we look back on the first half of 2020 we’ve had to face a new set of financial and social challenges due to coronavirus. Our focus during the pandemic has been on supporting our workforce through these significant challenges so that we can continue to deliver quality services. Going forward, our focus is to build back stronger – to a new way of working rather than a direct return to business as usual.

Staff wellbeing has become even more important in the last few months – we’ve put a wide range of supportive measures in place, as well as ensuring that managers have signed up to our managers’ charter with its focus on ‘keeping in touch’.

What hasn’t changed is that it is our people who continue to drive the council’s success, through their day-to-day effort, creativity, determination and commitment to the people of Leicestershire, to help us achieve our aims through these challenging times.

It’s arguably a good time to create and launch a new People Strategy - whilst much of our focus over the last few months has been on the immediate and short-term, it’s important that the council moves forward positively in the medium and long-term.

We’ve evaluated the impact of the previous People Strategy and the results have helped to shape our ongoing priorities. We’ll focus on three key themes – performance management, leadership, and workforce and culture. We base our culture on a clear set of values and behaviours for everyone, and expectations for our leaders and managers.

A ‘digital first’ approach to delivering our services has become even more important over the last few months – driven by the needs of our community and customers.

All of this cannot be achieved without the dedication of our employees – and we’d like to thank every member of our staff for their continued work in providing quality services to the people of Leicestershire.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Byron Rhodes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## Our Vision

Leicestershire County Council is a values led organisation that people are PROUD to work for.

## Our Objectives

### Leicestershire County Council....



...is a place where people want to work



...has a diverse workforce where everyone can be themselves



...has a confident, capable and engaged workforce



...promotes a culture of mental and physical wellbeing



...nurtures growth, talent and development



Positivity



Trust and respect



Flexibility



Openness and transparency

## Building back stronger

The effects of coronavirus on our work and workforce are far reaching – but in order to build back stronger, we will:

### Support our leaders and managers



We want to support our leaders to be the best they can be – innovative, continuously improving and trying new ways of delivering services.

Through workplace culture we'll harness enthusiasm and a desire to achieve results. We'll make sure we are achieving great feedback from the people we serve – and when we don't, we'll listen, so that we can improve.

We'll also continue to focus on our Managers' Charter, prioritising communication and engagement.

### Continue with efficient ways of working



We want to be efficient and effective in how we work – with increased levels of performance and productivity at the heart of this.

We'll focus on our offices and buildings as a resource and think about how we use them in the best way. We'll continue to encourage working from home and supporting a greater work/life balance for our staff with employee health and wellbeing at the forefront.

### Secure financial stability



Even before the coronavirus crisis hit, rising demand for services was already piling pressure on our budget – and a budget gap of £40m by 2024.

Thanks to taking tough decisions since 2010, we're in a good position compared to other local authorities, but the effects of coronavirus on our finance are far reaching.

We can get through this if we take action quickly – but this means managers will need to drive efficiency in the way we work.

### Be carbon neutral by 2030



Our goal is for the council's operations to be carbon neutral by 2030. That means that it is everyone's responsibility to consider the negative impact that they have on the environment – whether as an individual or as part of the service they deliver. We need to change how we do things – reducing travel for work, going paperless, reducing or reusing waste before recycling. We also need to focus on the bigger impacts that we have – our property, services and day to day operations.

### Think digital first



In 2020 we've embraced technology more than ever before. We continue to improve our digital literacy and technology available to staff, together with ensuring improved accessibility to new ways of working and services to our staff and residents.

We need to think digital first when delivering our services, and ask ourselves what the digital solution is, so that we can be more cost effective and maximise all the benefits that technology brings.

# Our People Strategy is about...



Click on each topic to see the videos of what our employees are saying

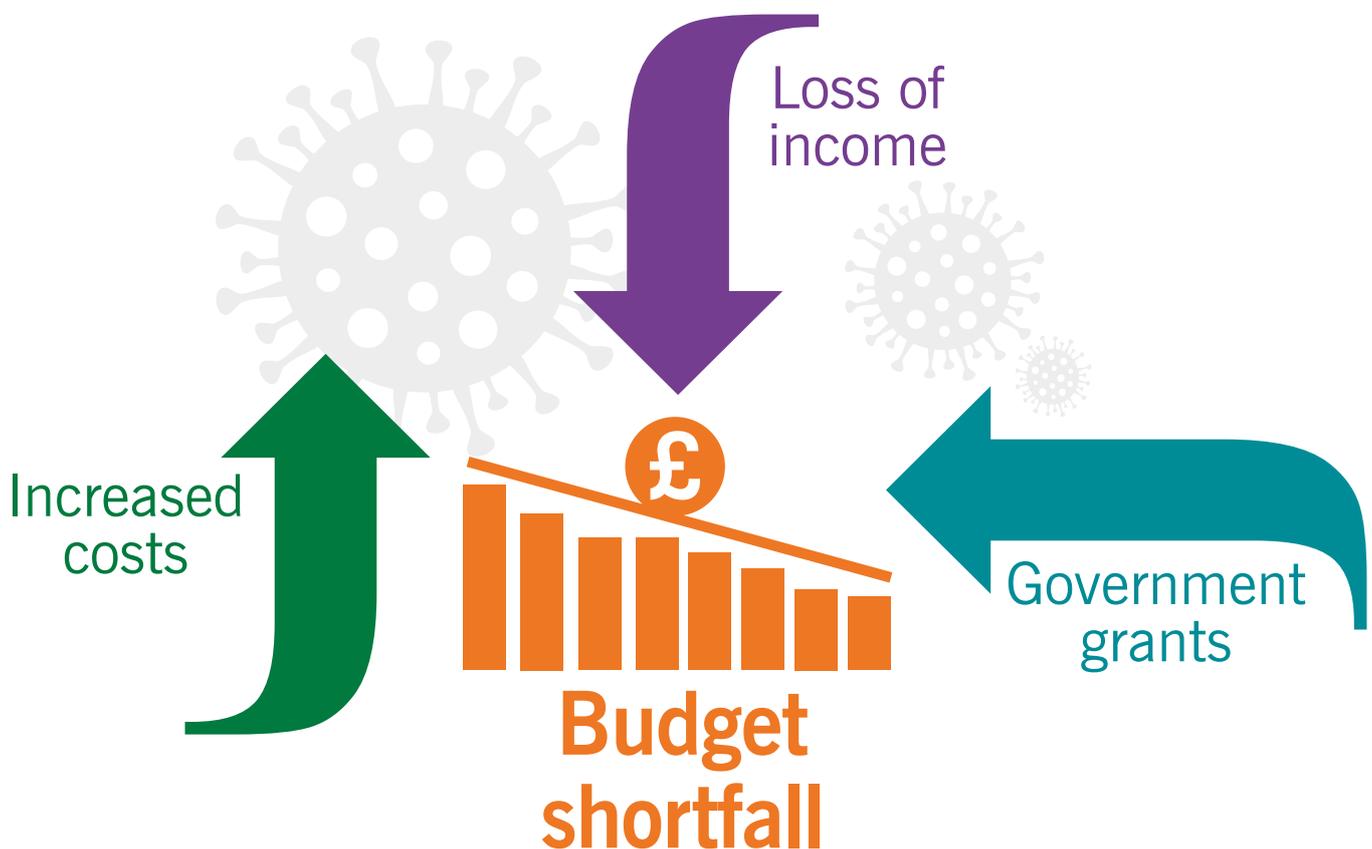
## Financial context

The County Council has been operating in an extremely challenging financial environment following a decade of austerity and spending pressures.

This has more recently been compounded by the impact of COVID-19. Short term this had the impact of increasing costs whilst reducing sources of income. Going forwards the financial position is uncertain but with Government debt at a record high the prospects are not promising. Effective financial planning and control has helped to mitigate the impact of the wider financial environment where possible. Therefore, despite being one of the lowest funded councils in the country, relative to a lot of local authorities we are well-positioned to continue to provide crucial services going forwards.

In such an environment we are even more dependent on effective leadership and our highly effective workforce. It is vital that we continue to invest in our staff to ensure the workforce is adaptable and continues to be flexible to accommodate future changes that will need to be made to our service delivery models.

This People Strategy will put in place a clear framework of actions and activities to support this.



## Our culture

We are a values-based organisation and we strive to bring our values to life in everything we do

We are a great organisation to work for – in our staff survey, our staff said...



- **Ways of Working** – Meeting our customer requirements is our key priority, and we aim to equip our staff with the technology they need to be able to work when, where and how they need to meet the needs of their service users. This might include working from home, or from a different location or at a time of day that suits them and the work they do. This supports our employees in achieving a positive work/life balance that in turn supports their wellbeing.
- **The Learning and Development** offer to all employees is truly blended. It utilises Digital solutions and provides bespoke, curated content on our Learning Management System, whilst also supporting more traditional classroom learning.
- **Annual Performance Reviews** – Everyone is entitled to an appraisal; this provides an opportunity for you and your manager to reflect on and support your performance, potential and development needs.
- **We know that people perform better when they can be themselves**, so we take pride in creating a work environment where people can be open with colleagues and comfortable and confident in being themselves to work.
- **We value our workers' groups** – for BAME, disabled, LGBT+ staff and those who are carers outside of work – and encourage staff to be involved. These groups have been instrumental in helping us to develop and implement good working practices that reflect the diverse nature of our residents and customers.
- **We have good working relationships with our Trade Unions** who provide valuable support and constructive feedback.
- **Wider collaboration and partnership working** with external organisations is also key to the continuing development of our services.

# Our workforce (2020 figures)



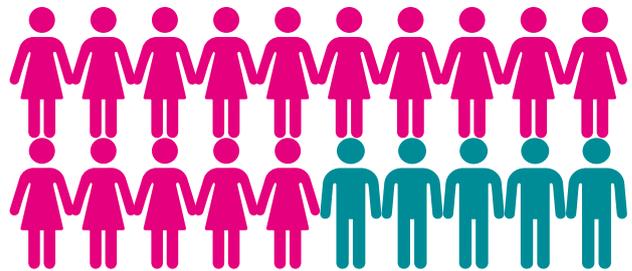
## Working hours



**2,942**  
full-time  
(48.3%)

**3,145**  
part-time  
(51.7%)

## Gender

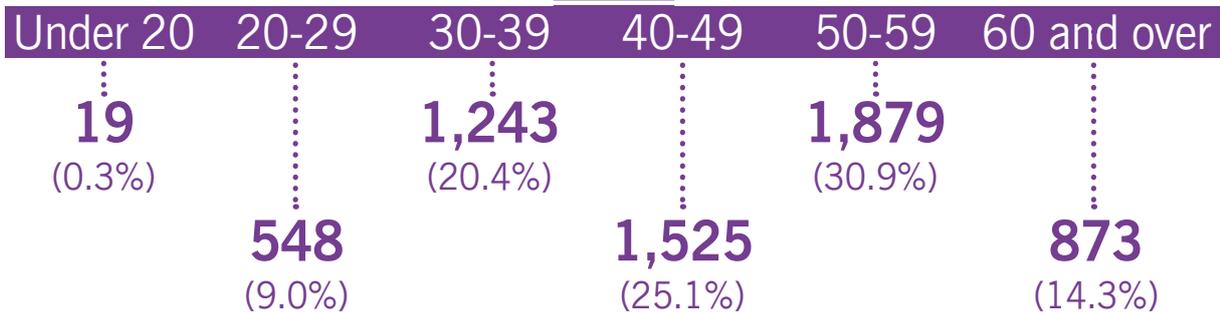


**4,539**  
female (74.6%)

**1,548**  
male (25.4%)

We also collect data on the gender identity of our staff (for those who wish to disclose), such as recording non-binary identities and asking staff (through our staff survey) if they identify as the same gender as they were assigned at birth. We first published a Trans Equality Policy to support our trans colleagues and their managers back in 2018

## Age groups



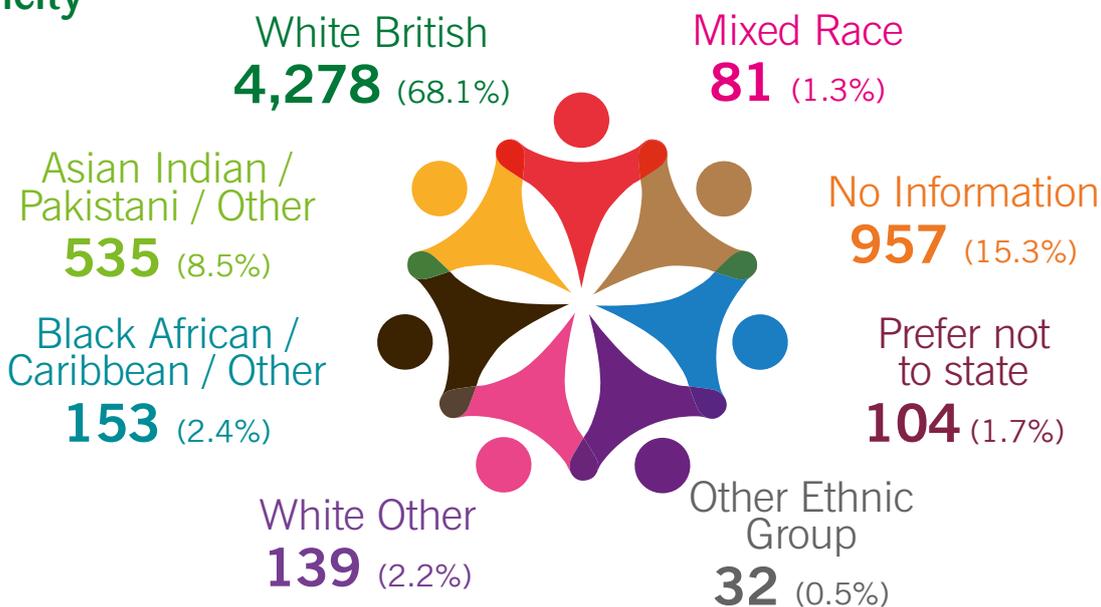
### Disability



### Sexual Orientation



### Ethnicity



# Our themes and the outcomes we are striving to achieve

## Leadership and management – outcomes

- Leaders and managers are clear on their responsibilities and are using products that help them to manage performance and fulfil their responsibilities effectively
- Senior leaders are accessing executive coaching that further develops their leadership capability and supports leadership through change
- Managers at all levels understand what relevant leadership development is available to them
- There is a clear development pathway that aspiring managers are accessing
- Managers are able to effectively lead their teams/ services through a period of uncertainty and change while providing a clear vision for the future.
- Supervisors are accessing appropriate learning relevant to their roles
- Managers are confident and capable in managing, communicating and engaging with smarter teams, managing through outcomes while supporting individual and team wellbeing

## Leadership and management – how we will achieve these outcomes

- Implement a new Aspiring Managers Programme that provides a clear development pathway and enables us to ‘grow our own’.
- Launch bespoke Supervisor Development Programmes that support supervisors across the organisation.
- Establish an Executive Coaching approach for our senior leaders that further develops their ability to lead through a period of substantial change.
- Develop learning and support resources for managers that encourage innovation, enabling them to be confident and capable in both managing smarter teams and managing through outcomes.
- Design and develop a clear Leadership & Management Framework on the Learning Hub ensuring that managers at all levels are clear what development is available to them .
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## Workplace and culture – outcomes

- We are known as a progressive employer due to our public service ethos, flexibility and inclusivity with a confident, capable and engaged workforce
- We are viewed as a place where people want to work, with roles that provide meaning and purpose.
- We attract, develop and retain a diversity of people who feel welcomed and supported and reflect our values
- We provide fair and competitive benefits and rewards for our employees with workplace benefits reflecting the culture of the organisation
- We encourage employees to be innovative, flexible and drive positive change within our organisation
- The mental and physical wellbeing of our employees is a priority and is embedded into our culture through our policies and practices.

## Workplace and culture – how we will achieve our outcomes

- Review and improve current recruitment methods with a focus on hard to recruit to posts
- Improved ‘branding’ of the county council as an employer, including enhanced communication over the benefits and rewards of working for us
- A redeployment process that minimises redundancies and retains key skills
- Good wellbeing practice is embedded with managers and our culture and staff know where they can access help when it is required
- A reduction of sickness absence and support for those staff who are required to work from home for extended periods of time
- External accreditation of our approach to diversity and inclusivity

## Performance management – outcomes

- Our managers are self-reliant – consistently managing performance to acceptable and sustainable levels
- Organisational expectations of Performance Management are clear and visible, owned and embodied by all managers
- Performance is owned and led from the top, with full transparency, inclusivity and engagement with senior leaders and managers
- Managers are able to drive performance by having a clear understanding of what they need to, supported by a robust framework, tools and network that are future proof
- Organisational values and behaviours are integrated and visible within all aspects of performance management

## Performance management – how will we achieve our outcomes

- Further embedding our values and behaviours across the organisation
- Review and improve the performance management cycle of APR and supervision
- Review, improve and embed the performance management framework
- Drive improvements in attendance, capability and probation management
- Review the best use of information for performance management



**To succeed and to ensure that these actions are embedded, all this has to be underpinned by strong and clear communication and engagement within and across the organisation**

## Our people strategy is underpinned by...

### Wellbeing

Supporting our colleagues with their health, safety and wellbeing is one of our key priorities and through conducting our staff surveys and most recently, two wellbeing surveys, we have identified a number of things we can do to provide support on those things that matter to our staff.

A comprehensive package of support with mental health and wellbeing is on our intranet – we are working to raise awareness of this and make access to it simple.

Needing to work from home so we could continue to deliver our services during the pandemic brought a number of challenges for individuals. Extensive flexibility was given to existing working arrangements to support those with home schooling, caring and work life balance. This had a number of direct positive impacts. Work in this area will continue as the Council does not wish to lose the benefits it has gained.



### WORKPLACE WELLBEING

We have a Mental Health First Aid programme which develops the knowledge and skills to help staff and managers to spot early signs of issues which may be impacting on colleagues' wellbeing and then to give the confidence to speak to them and to offer advice and support.

Other professional support is provided by the Council's in-house wellbeing service and an Employee Assistance Programme that offers telephone support on a 24/7 basis.



## Diversity and Inclusion

We want to improve as an organisation so we are open to listening and further learning, in particular about those equality and diversity issues that have a negative impact on our employees. As a council, we remain committed to making changes which will allow all of our workforce to flourish, develop and to ensure that all colleagues feel part of an inclusive approach.

This will include:

- Seeing an increase in satisfaction rates from staff in our surveys
- Continued development and representation of Workers Groups (BAME, DWG, LGBT+)
- Develop an action plan to improve recruitment, retention and progression to Grade 13+ of BAME employees
- Promote self-declaration of protected characteristics amongst staff
- Promote the completion of equalities training
- Completion of an Equal Pay audit, including areas such as Gender Pay Gap and Race Pay Gap





### Communications and engagement

We consciously plan our communication so it is timely, brief, factual, honest and clear. It is designed to make our workforce feel engaged and that everyone is in a position to be able to ask questions and seek further information.

**“....our people continue to drive the council’s success, through their day-to-day effort, creativity, determination and commitment to the people of Leicestershire, to help us achieve our aims through these challenging times.”**

### Conclusion

This strategy is supported and driven by a set of detailed plans which will be refreshed annually. We will carefully monitor progress and evaluate the impact of our actions and the initiatives to ensure that the strategy continues to provide the right solutions and outcomes for the council.



Find us on:   