

Our People and Culture Strategy

Year 1 Progress

People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

July 2025

Our vision and priorities

Our vision

We develop high performing, innovative, highly engaged and agile teams – employing the best people and reflecting the communities we serve.

We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents.

Our priorities

ATTRACT

Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people

- It is essential that we are able to attract, recruit and retain our talented people to deliver excellent services for the residents of Oxfordshire.

THRIVE

Enabling our people to thrive and perform

- Creating a positive and inclusive work environment built on fairness, trust and transparency will allow our people to thrive and perform.

GROW

Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future

- Providing growth opportunities both on and off the job to build our knowledge, skills and behaviours will help us all deliver the future together.

LEAD

Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future

- Empowering our leaders to embrace the skills and behaviours needed to achieve high performance and effective outcomes.

Attract

Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people

Delivered

- New in-house Talent Acquisition and Resourcing team established
- New Applicant Tracking System implemented, Tribepad
- New Employer Value Proposition and employer brand developed
- Moved to a new contingent labour provider (HAYS)
- Enhanced job evaluation process through training and digitisation
- Analysed pay structure equality across the Organisation

Impact

- Positive feedback from numerous services about recruitment support.
- Successful hard to fill campaigns (e.g. Social Workers and Occupational Therapists vacancies decreased from 82.7 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) June 24 to 46.99FTE Jan 25)
- Agency spend stabilised and usage has decreased (annual agency spend has stabilised at £27.9M September 23 – December 24 and usage has decreased from 579K to 563K hours rolling 12 months September 23 – September 24)

The word "Thrive" is written in a black, hand-drawn, cursive-style font. It is enclosed within a hand-drawn orange oval that has a few overlapping lines, giving it a sketchy, organic feel.

Enabling people to thrive and perform

DELIVERING
the Future Together

Delivered

- New conduct, capability, grievance and sickness policies, toolkits and manager training developed
- Employee engagement survey 2024 completed

Impact

- Decreasing trend in sickness absence (9.1 to 8.6 days rolling 12 months ending June 24 – Dec 24)
- Reducing voluntary turnover rate (13.1% to 11.7% rolling 12 months ending June 24 – Dec 24)
- Increase in employee engagement index (666.4 to 674.4 Feb 23 – Feb 24)



Grow

Enabling people to grow and evolve for the future

Delivered

- Management trainee scheme expanded (LGA impact and Chartered Managers Degree Apprenticeship)
- Work experience scheme introduced
- Internships programme developed
- 12.3.2 performance Management tool refreshed
- Promoting secondment opportunities – including for Director and Head of Service level posts
- Reciprocal mentoring scheme launched first cohort

Impact

- Increasing trend in apprenticeship levy spend (68.5% to 80.1% rolling 12 months ending Sept 23 – Dec 24)
- Increasing trend in internal movement and promotion (4.8% to 7% rolling 12 months Sept 23 – Dec 24)
- 25 pairs participated in reciprocal mentoring and excellent feedback received



Lead

Enabling people to lead and transform for the future

DELIVERING
the Future Together

Delivered

- Organisational redesign streamlining tiers 2 – 4, Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service
- Implemented a range of people management controls to support financial sustainability, including tighter oversight of agency usage, honorariums, and overtime
- Leadership specialist has also been engaged to support the development of inclusive and high-performing leadership practices

Impact

- Redesign of tiers 2 and 4 has delivered £1.76 million in savings.
- Agency spend stabilised and usage has decreased
- Leadership capability has improved, evidenced by more strategic and collaborative decision-making at senior levels.