

# Our people and culture strategy

Delivering the Future Together

2024-2026

# Introduction

**Our people are our most valuable asset. The last few years have been unprecedented and our people have risen to the challenges showing resilience and strength to push through and deliver for the residents of Oxfordshire.**

**With the arrival of our new Chief Executive, Martin Reeves the new Delivering the Future Together vision for 2023-2026 has been agreed.**

**We will be focus on becoming an employer of choice, a partner of choice and a place shaper of choice. We will need to manage this within our financial envelope, becoming even more commercially astute.**

## **Our future challenges**

As we move into the future, the nature of the challenges we face and how we respond will be very different. Having leaders that can create and lead an organisation that is innovative, collaborative and inclusive, which embraces continuous improvement and holds itself to account will be important in addressing these challenges.

It is essential that we adopt a change mindset and continuously strive for improvement by looking up and out for innovative ideas – using insight from our own internal sources to deliver change in these challenging times.

We need to be confident and work at pace and we need to support each other by creating a trusted, transparent and inclusive environment where people feel safe to grow and innovate.

We need to work collaboratively and innovatively with each other and with partners across Oxfordshire and beyond. Working beyond our walls with volunteers, commissioned services, maintained schools and academies, and the employees of our strategic partners will create better solutions and experiences for the residents of Oxfordshire.

## **Oxfordshire County Council Delivering the Future Together**

### **Employer of choice**

**All our colleagues recommend working here. People aspire to work for us and proactively seek employment.**

### **Partner of choice**

**We choose the right organisations to develop purposeful relationships to deliver the best outcomes for our residents.**

### **Place shaper of choice**

**We convene public, private and community groups to shape the county. Our residents take pride in where they live and are happy with the facilities and services available to them.**

# Our key opportunities

Shaping our organisation to be efficient and work within the budget

Working at pace

Becoming a skilled and valuable partner

Delivering opportunities for residents, children and adults

Transforming our organisation so it's fit for the future

Creating a thriving and sustainable environment for our people to flourish

Delivering to our strategic priorities

Creating an inclusive and positive work environment

Becoming an employer of choice to attract and retain the best people

Developing our workforce so they have the skills for the future

Being a digital first organisation

Being a place shaper of choice

# Leading through our values and behaviours

**Our values are at the heart of all we do here at Oxfordshire County Council. We all share a common purpose to deliver excellence for the residents of Oxfordshire.**

Our values act as a guide to how the organisation and our people should approach everything we do.

Leading through our values every day, putting them front and centre of every behaviour, decision and action will unite us as we strive to deliver this excellence together.

By doing this we will attract and retain great talent, we will reward great performance, we will create a positive environment where people can thrive and grow, we will nurture talent and create excellent leaders for now and the future.



# 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

## We want to nurture and develop talented people with the skills we need for the future, alongside welcoming new colleagues who can fill skills gaps and bring new ideas.

We are mindful that how we recruit is changing rapidly. Candidates' expectations about ways of working and organisational culture are important, alongside health and wellbeing and good pay and benefits, so we need to take a different approach to attract talented candidates and ensure our organisation reflects the demographics of the people we serve.

We need to strengthen our attraction as an employer and develop a strong brand for Oxfordshire County Council so that we create a desirable place to work that is diverse, inclusive and promotes equality.

## We will:

- Raise our employer profile so we become an employer of choice.
- Reimagine our recruitment processes so they are quick, effective and offer a great experience for all involved.
- Be fair and equitable in our resourcing and reward practices to ensure diversity and inclusion.
- Deliver dynamic and digitally enabled onboarding and induction.
- Enhance our rewards and benefits offer so that it is valued by our people, as well as being competitive and attractive in the market.

## What success will look like:

- Quick and effective recruitment processes.
- Increased retention rates.
- Our organisational diversity profile is reflective of the people of Oxfordshire.

# Thrive Enabling people to thrive and perform

## We want highly engaged people, who enjoy coming to work and feel challenged by, and appreciated for, what they do.

People work at their best when there is strong and effective leadership, as well as a positive, encouraging and inclusive work environment. We will create opportunity for people to connect and make sure their voices are heard, to create an environment of trust, inclusivity, fairness and transparency.

We want employees to use their skills and ideas to help us provide better services and adopt innovative strategies as we become leaner, more efficient and higher performing.

## We will:

- Promote a positive and inclusive working environment where people can have open discussions to create a culture of trust, collaboration and ambition where we can all belong and thrive.
- Offer wellbeing services to support our people.
- Manage change well.
- Develop modern, simple to follow toolkits and policies.
- Train and support managers to manage and achieve early resolution of people related matters.

## What success will look like:

- High employee engagement and a positive organisational culture.
- High performing teams.
- Well managed absence supported by wellbeing services.
- Strong people management skills to seek early resolution.

## Grow Enabling people to grow and evolve for the future

**We already have highly skilled and committed people working here. Looking ahead, we know the way we work and deliver services is changing and many employees need new skills both now and for the future.**

We want to foster an environment where employees lead their own areas of learning and development based on the role they do, the needs of their team and their individual career goals.

We aim to create a culture of learning, where everyone can continuously develop new skills and find career paths within the organisation so that we retain the best talent.

### **We will:**

- Evolve our mindset and behaviours so people are empowered to lead their own learning and development.
- Enhance our early careers offer to attract diversity and develop our skills for the future.
- Enable our people to develop their professional and technical skills to support high performance and embrace innovation.
- Support people to grow, move forward and develop their careers with us.
- Develop skills and learning to support transformation.

### **What success will look like:**

- Our people have the skills they need to do their jobs well.
- We grow our own talent.
- We are an innovative organisation, embracing new practices.
- Effective workforce and succession planning to support our organisation to flex and change to the environment in which it exists.



# Lead Enabling people to lead and transform for the future

**We want our leaders to be role models, championing our values consistently and adopting working practices that are sustainable and supportive.**

We will invest in the development of our existing and future leaders so they can achieve high performance and effective outcomes and support employees through transformational change.

We want to bring more diversity to our leadership and management roles so that we have a broader wealth of knowledge and varying perspectives to meet our challenges.

## **We will:**

- Identify and develop the skills and behaviours of our leaders and future leaders.
- Identify and develop diverse leaders of the future.
- Equip our leaders to lead transformational change.
- Resize the organisation to deliver our ambitions within our budget envelope.
- Empower our leaders to make decisions and have greater accountability.

## **What success will look like:**

- Our leaders are high performing and achieve effective outcomes.
- A diverse pool of future leaders are identified and developed.
- Our leaders are confident to lead the organisation through change.

# Our people and culture strategy focus: Year 1 – 2

## Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people

- Move to a new applicant tracking system to speed up recruitment\*
- Create an in-house resourcing team (moving away from the Integrated Business Centre)\*
- Define our employer value proposition and develop our employer brand to raise our employer profile\*
- Develop our recruitment marketing strategy and deliver targeted recruitment campaigns
- Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in our recruitment processes
- Make our onboarding and induction engaging and streamlined
- Understand why people exit and address any issues that are highlighted
- Complete a strategic review of reward to support being an employer of choice
- Improve our job evaluation process

## Enabling our people to thrive and perform

- Give managers the tools and skills to effectively manage performance, absence and change\*
- Improve the speed of response to issues raised by our people\*
- Enhance our wellbeing services through corporate wellbeing initiatives to improve people's resilience and reduce cost of living impact\*
- Develop modern, simple to follow toolkits, policies and digital systems to support our ambitions\*
- Support teams to build local responses to people data and insight to create a positive and inclusive work environment
- Enhance how we recognise our people
- Embrace and evolve our agile working culture
- Review how we engage and manage our volunteers

## Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future

- Continue to embrace the 12.3.2 performance management tool\*
- Enhance our early careers offer to improve our talent pipeline specifically to increase numbers of graduates and apprentices\*
- Develop skills and learning to support transformational change\*
- Create a talent development programme for underrepresented groups
- Launch a reciprocal mentoring scheme
- Embed a personal responsibility approach to learning and development
- Embrace workforce and succession planning techniques at local level to support skills development
- Support services to develop career development pathways so our people can grow and move forward with us

## Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future

- Introduce a range of people management controls to enable the organisation to operate within the budget envelope\*
- Resize the organisation to deliver our ambitions within our budget envelope\*
- Support our leaders to have the tools, skills and resilience to lead transformational change\*
- Equip our leaders with the skills and tools they need to lead an inclusive and high performing organisation
- Introduce 360 feedback for managers to support the identification of development requirements
- Identify and develop diverse leaders of the future through a future leader programme
- Adopt empowering and inclusive leadership practice that allows people to grow and deliver

Priorities marked with \* will be the main focus for year 1 ( 2024/25)

# Organisational people and culture KPIs

## Time to hire

Reduce our time to hire to secure new talent quickly and reduce backfill costs

## Agency spend

Reduce the spend and usage of agency workers across the organisation

## Voluntary turnover rate

Improve retention rates to keep our talented and skilled people

## Employee FTE

Track FTE numbers to keep within the budget envelope

## Employee demographics

Ensure diversity is represented appropriately in all tiers of our organisation

## Average days lost to sickness per employee

Reduce the number of sickness days per employee

## Apprenticeship levy spend

Spend the apprenticeship levy to support OCC and partners

## Internal movement and promotion

Track promotions and internal movement to show talent growth

## Gender and ethnicity pay gap (yearly)

Ensure fairness of pay across our organisation

## Employee engagement index (yearly)

Track overall improvement in OCC engagement

# High level plan - next 6 months

	December	January	February	March	April	May
<b>Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people</b>	Building In house resourcing team					
	Employer value proposition, branding, recruitment marketing strategy					
	Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion in recruitment					
	Use of honorariums and market supplements				Induction process	
		New applicant tracking system				
<b>Enabling our people to thrive and perform</b>	Case management review and relaunch					
	Corporate HR policy review (6 priority policies 23 – 24)				Corporate HR policy review (24 – 25 priority policies)	
	Improving attendance management (training, toolkit and data)					
	Occupational health employee assistance				Managing disciplinary well (training, toolkits)	
		People data dashboard				
		Volunteer management				
<b>Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future</b>	12.3.2 refresh					
	Management trainee programme				Early careers network	
	Reciprocal mentoring scheme				Work experience scheme	
<b>Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future</b>	360 feedback and development senior leaders				360 feedback and development managers	
	People management controls					
		Resize the organisation				
					Future leaders programme	