

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

15TH FEBRUARY 2022

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR HR & CORPORATE SERVICES:
COUNCILLOR MIKE HALLAM**

Report Title **People Strategy 2022 - 2025**

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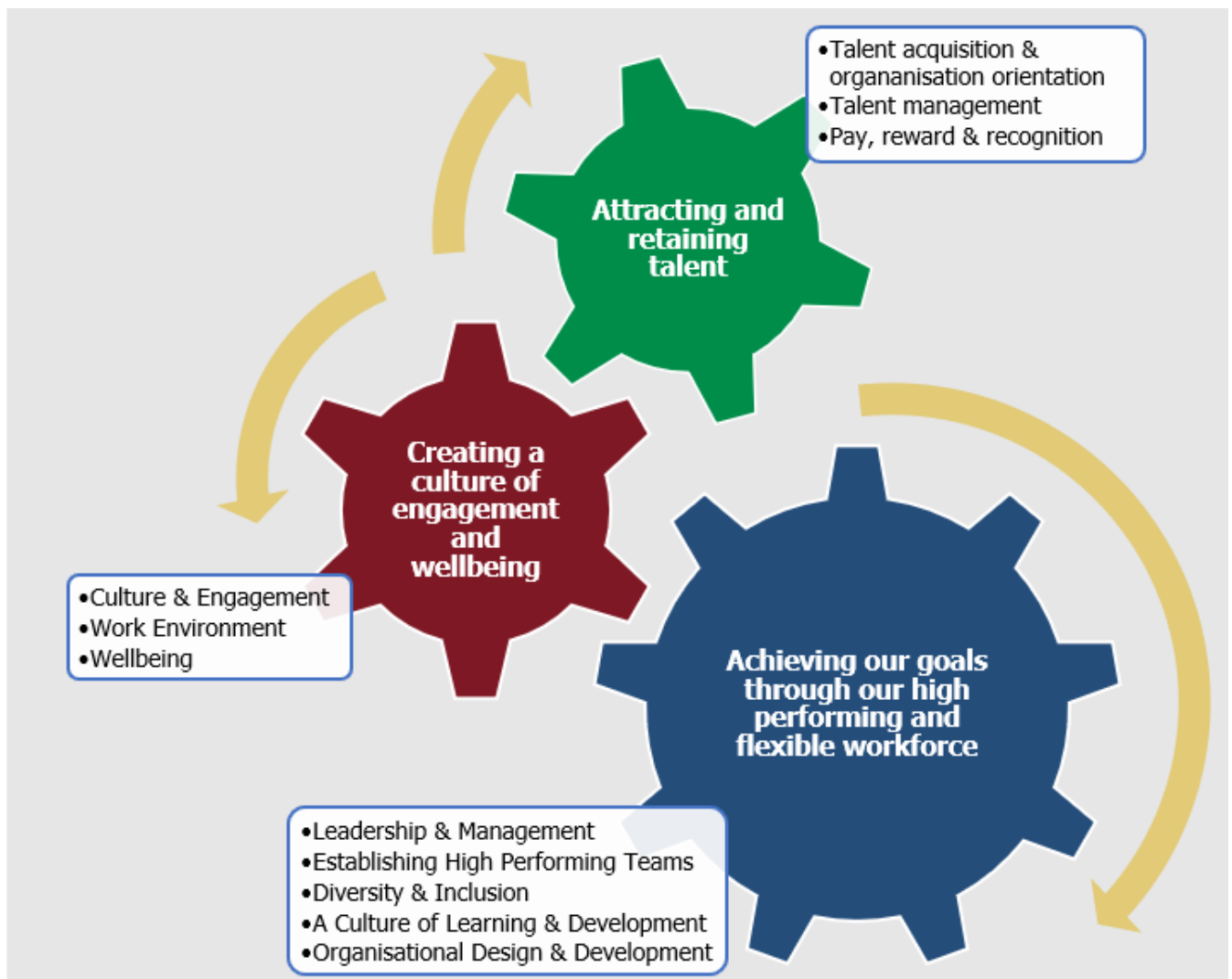
Appendix A – People Strategy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Cabinet was provided with an update on the People Strategy development activity on 7th December 2021. This report sets out the final People Strategy for West Northamptonshire Council, for the period 2022-2025.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Our People Strategy has been developed to help everyone to reach their fullest potential, empowering them to help make West Northamptonshire a great place to live, work, visit and thrive. The delivery of our vision and priorities can only be achieved if we are able to retain and recruit the right people, with the right skills and the right attitude, those who will innovate and collaborate to deliver transformation of our services and maximise our organisational potential.
- 2.1 It explains what we will do to make sure that we have the skills to deliver the outcomes for West Northants set out in the Councils corporate plan. To attract and retain those skills, we aim to ensure the Council is a place where:
- people aspire to work,
 - there is an opportunity to learn and grow,
 - workforce achievements are acknowledged and recognised.
 - the work environment is safe, healthy, diverse and engaging.



- 2.2 The strategy shows some of the ways we will be supporting this, by working with our employees to build the capability, skills, behaviours and culture we need to make this vision a reality, in addition to establishing West Northamptonshire Council as an employer of choice.
- 2.3 It is an ambitious strategy with a portfolio of over 50 projects underneath it, spanning the next 3 years.
- 2.4. The success of it will be measured through our monthly and quarterly annual reporting as well future employee surveys.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the People Strategy 2022-2025 and supports its implementation across the Council.

4.0 Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Strategy allows us to align HR activity with the wider Council vision and priorities.
- 4.2 Putting this in place enables the Head of Paid Service to have a robust strategy to retain, manage, develop and recruit staff. Our people are our key asset and we need to ensure we support all our employees in their development in West Northants Council to help maximise their productivity, create a high performing culture and drive service improvement.

5.0 Report Background

- 5.1 As a newly established employer, we recognise that we have a lot to achieve and that we have to move away from the legacy of the predecessor organisations, through thinking and delivering as one council.
- 5.2 Also, nationally, following the Covid pandemic, there has been a significant shift in how people view work, how they want to engage with work and on satisfaction levels. The current period has been termed 'the great resignation' nationally due the number of workers actively planning to change roles over the next few months prompted by the high number of vacancies in the job market and a feeling of 'burnout'. This means West Northamptonshire Council must be clear about its employment offer so that it can retain existing and attract new staff.
- 5.3 Setting out our employment offer, the "West Way of Working", will ensure: fairness and transparency, appropriate reward and recognition, clear management expectations, fostering psychological safety in the workplace and a learning culture. This will create an environment where employees feel valued, comfortable to share their thoughts and ideas and will play a key role in transforming services for our residents and making things better for all.

- 5.4 To develop the People Strategy a conscious decision was made to actively seek views, opinions and suggestions internally through the following channels - all-staff Chief Executive briefings, bespoke focus groups, Trade Union forums, staff networks, transformation coffee mornings and internal 'pulse' surveys.
- 5.5 In addition, WNC undertook a baseline survey of employee views through Best Companies. The Employee Survey enabled employees to tell the council what it was doing right, but more crucially they also were able to clearly state where the new council needed to do better and how they wanted to be supported.
- 5.6 Many of the cross organisational themes arising from the employee survey, such as fair pay are picked up as programmes or work under the People Strategy.

6.0 Issues and Choices

- 6.1 As a new organisation, West Northamptonshire Council has a unique opportunity to set out its intention on the type of authority it wishes to be. Bringing together (at least) four different cultures, would be difficult in the absence of a shared vision. The strategy will allow us to focus our activities to those areas which will have the greatest impact.
- 6.2 We could continue to operate in a reactive manner in relation to our workforce, but this would not build on best practice or employee feedback and would not contribute to the creation of high performing teams.

7.0 Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

The People Strategy will be delivered under the "How we work" element of the council's transformation programme, which will carry its own financial requirements and benefits. Should any additional funding be identified as part of the implementation of the strategy, this would be subject of approval at a future Cabinet meeting once quantified.

7.2 Legal

A robust People Strategy supports the Council in delivery its wider legal obligations to staff

7.3 Risk

There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report. The work on delivering the People Strategy are positive interventions in relation to our corporate risk around our workforce.

7.4 Consultation

Significant engagement and consultation has been undertaken with employees and wider staff groups as well as the employee survey being sent to all employees for their views.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

The finalised people strategy alongside the detailed work plan will go to overview and scrutiny to allow for challenge and comment on the 50 key actions.

7.6 Climate Impact

This is a key consideration in relation to agile working, reducing the travel of our workforce where we are able to. Good jobs, improved training and development, good wages, good health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities also support the council's corporate plan and long-term sustainability.

7.7 Community Impact

The strategy will have a positive impact on the community in respect of becoming a chosen employer within West Northamptonshire and attracting local workers. With a high percentage of our employees living locally, it also supports the wider sustainability of our towns and villages.

7.8 Communications

Considerable communications with employees has been a key element of the approach, to work with all employees and ensure two-way conversations. This will continue as the portfolio of projects progresses.

8.0 Background Papers

Appendix A – People Strategy