

## **Workforce Strategy for West Suffolk 2014 – 2016**

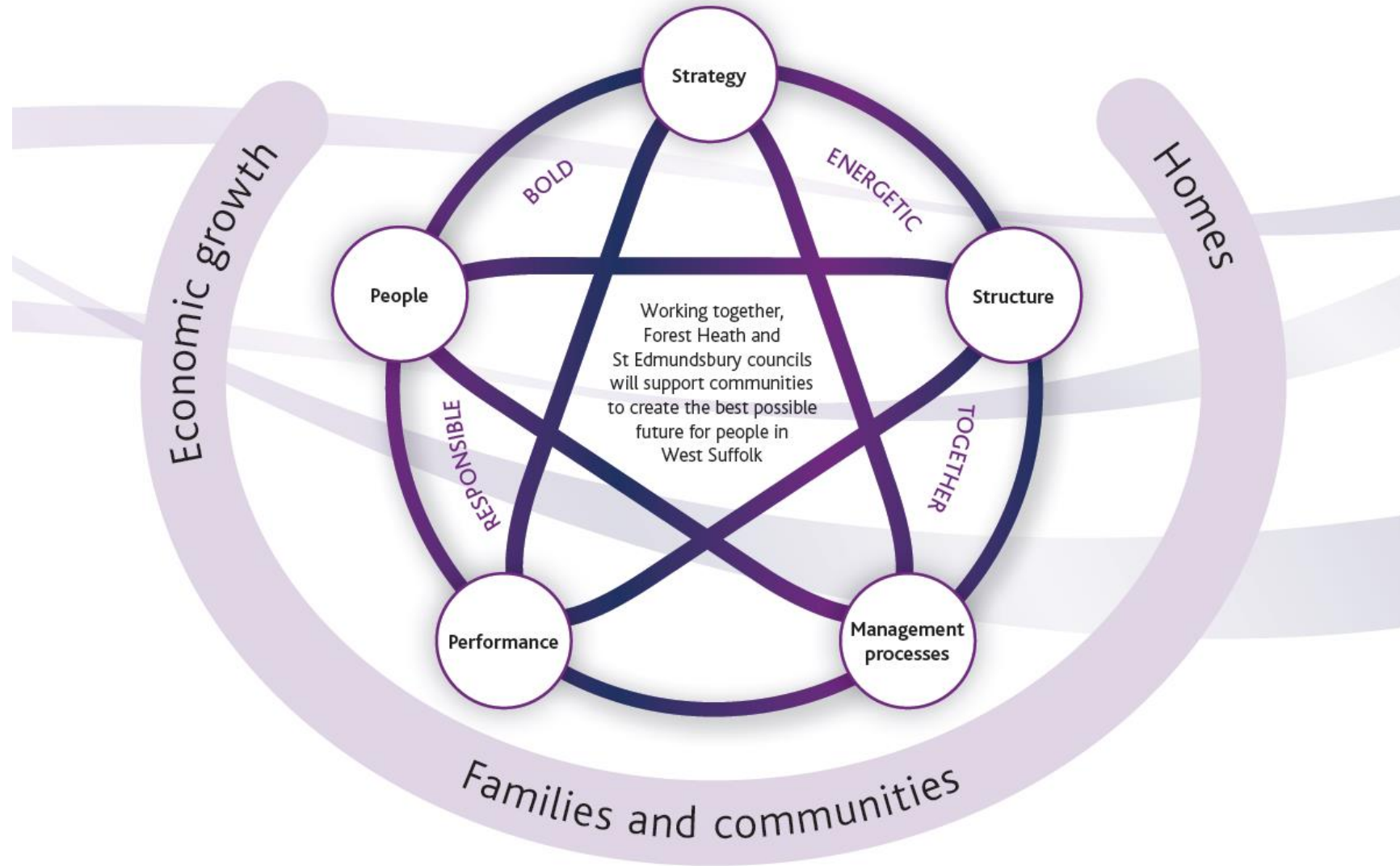
*'Bold, energetic, responsible people, working together'  
'Delivering today, focussed on tomorrow'*

### **Introduction from CEO/HHR (suggested content)**

*My responsibility as Head of Paid Service – responsibility to employ, lead, manage, support – achieve objectives - how we plan to do that  
Challenging times – have put in place the building blocks now need to transform  
Commitment as employer  
Recruit and support  
Confident  
Engage  
Shape proposals  
Values /my vision*

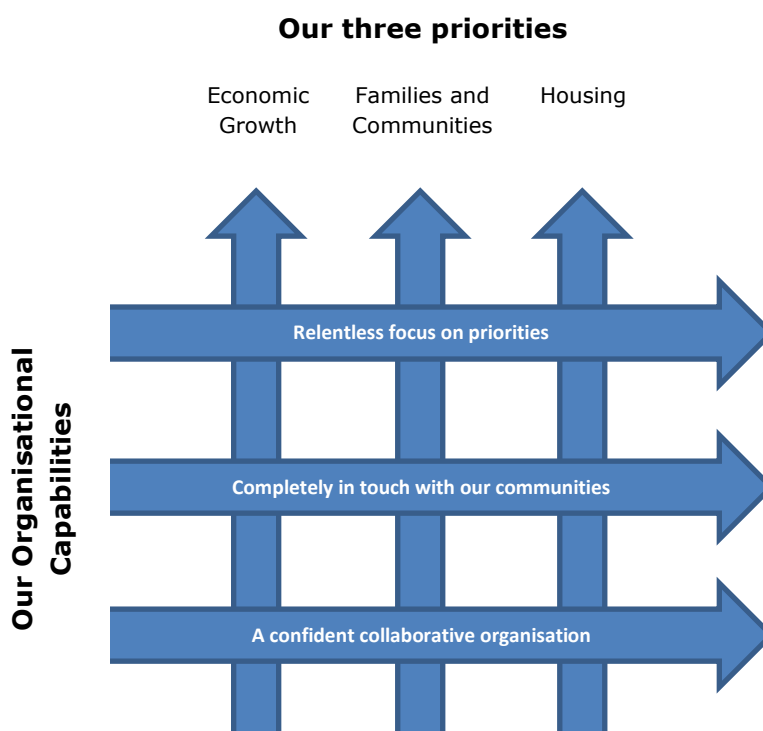
- *Responsible for the leadership, employment, management and support of staff*
- *Need professional and committed single team, who are supported to ensure they can deliver on our priorities and objectives. Strategy sets out how we will do that over the next 4 years. Living with change- what we do, how we do it, dealing with challenges ahead and reducing government funding.*
- *At the same time we are committed to being a fair and good Employer of Choice that values, recruits and supports people to be .....(values). We will engage staff in the work they do, and in shaping our future and proposals for change. We will provide appropriate and effective development opportunities for staff so that people have the skills they need to perform well in a changing landscape for local government service delivery. We will prioritize effective succession planning, vacancy management, development of skills and behaviours, and for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century public sector employee, whilst working with the Raising the Bar programme across Suffolk. We will continue to actively support young people in apprenticeships and skills development.*
- *Thank you for the way you have worked through the changes we have made so far. Commitment and professionalism has meant that we have continued to deliver great services to our communities.*
- *We will continue to recruit the best person for the job; making sure we have the right people, with the right skills and behaviours, able to perform their job well, and in the right way. We are now one team for West Suffolk, and in this document you will find out more about the priorities and commitments within our workforce strategy. I welcome comments from you, and this is a living document that will evolve over time; and if you have any ideas or suggestions do let me know.*

## West Suffolk organisational development approach



## Background

*We are facing very challenging times. We need to respond to significant changes in the way we are funded and be resourceful in how we meet the challenges of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. We need to change the balance of our income from 70% government funding/30% income generation to a new sustainable model. We need to be bold in our approach, more commercial and innovative in the way we work, adaptable, flexible and agile, whilst taking an effective approach to risk. We will need energy and commitment in response to our new priorities, to changing services and the work we need to do to deliver.*



We West Suffolk Councils have agreed a set of shared priorities in our strategic plan:

Increased opportunities for economic growth;  
Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active; and  
Homes for our communities.

Our priorities will shape and focus everything we do as two councils across West Suffolk, but we must be equally clear about how we as a workforce and as a partnership need to adapt and change to new styles of working, changing demands and reducing government funding.

This Workforce Strategy makes it clear what we need to do; sets out our vision for the workforce; and identifies what we need to focus on to achieve. It takes account of our particular workforce composition and skills; and identifies what we need to deliver our priorities and actions. More detailed actions will be developed through engagement with our services and incorporated in the Workforce Development Plan.

Change will be the one constant and it will affect us all. Plans and actions need to be made with a clear understanding of the impact on our community.

This strategy is written with the issues facing the population of West Suffolk in mind, and is based on the workforce data we hold on our current employees. We currently employ 622 people across 9 service areas, 496.8 FTE, with a broadly equal number of males and females, although 89% of the staff in Waste Management and Property are male. The workforce reduced in 2013 by 14%. 5.8% of the workforce have declared a disability. The number of apprentices employed is growing, and for the last two years we have taken on graduate interns for the summer period, who either live and have been educated in Suffolk, or who are attending university here. There is a requirement for new skills and a change in pace combined with a keen focus on delivery. The financial future remains challenging.

Levels of sickness absence are the lowest recorded at either council at 5.67 days per employee, a significant decrease over the last 3 years, raising the efficiency of the workforce. These levels are below the national average for local government and the working population generally. The continued wellbeing of the workforce is paramount to ensure the best delivery of our services.

West Suffolk has a higher than the national average number of people aged over 60, and a lower than the national average number of people under 24. We also have an aging profile in regard to our employees but have set targets to increase entry routes for young people as apprentices in particular.

Raising educational attainment in Suffolk has been identified as a priority by Suffolk County Council (71% of 16-64 year olds in FH hold an NVQ L1 or above compared to 84.4% nationally and we are supporting the Raising the Bar /Exemplar Employer initiative.

Unemployment in our area is lower than the national average (4.7% against 7.2% nationally) and as the economy becomes more buoyant we will need to make sure we can attract and retain the people with the skills and behaviours we need, by being an exemplar employer.

15% of the population of our area are restricted in their day-to-day activities through disability or long-term illness, so our commitment to the 'double tick' standard supports work opportunities for those seeking employment.

5.6% are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEETS).

Many of our staff are our residents. In aspiring to support them to be healthy, resilient and active in their communities we are contributing to our corporate priority and focus on our local communities and families.

## **The Vision and the Workforce Strategy**

“Working together, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils will support communities to create the best possible future for people in West Suffolk”

To help deliver this vision for West Suffolk, we need a workforce that understands our priorities, is innovative, commercial and creative, bold in approach, energetic in the delivery of outcomes, resilient, diverse and inclusive, flexible, adaptable, working without boundaries and with ownership and responsibility.

We need to be able to respond effectively to changes in the work we do and how we do it. We want everybody to feel involved in how we operate and how we deliver our services and to work together to deliver what our customers and residents need.

We need to lead and collaborate on complex, cross-cutting issues to deliver our shared priorities – Families and Communities Strategy, our 6 point plan for Economic Growth and to provide housing for our communities - whilst balancing our budgets. To deliver our vision, we must face the challenges of supporting our community and provide strategic leadership whilst satisfying customer and community expectations.

At a time of transformation in local government we will continue to keep under review our organisational design and look to develop further a more “matrix” or collaborative structure which reduces bureaucracy and allows staff to operate more flexibly. We will be open to new partnerships and delivery models, particularly with our Suffolk neighbours. We aspire to work more closely with partners to plan and deliver services across traditional boundaries. This in turn means that we will be clearer about responsibility and accountability with a disciplined focus on outcomes. We will be clearer about expectations; we all need to work with energy, together to deliver our plans and priorities. We want everybody to feel involved in how we operate and how we deliver our services and to work together effectively to support our customers and communities’ need.

Performance management is fundamental and will reward the behaviours as well as the achievements of our workforce. We have developed, and will implement and maintain, a fair performance review scheme which ensures that all staff understand their role and responsibility within the organisation and how they are accountable for their actions and behaviour. We will ensure they are supportively led and managed to be able to perform well.

We will engage more with our staff and involve them in building our future as well as in the delivery of our services today. People need to be appreciated and we will encourage ideas and innovation from everybody. Engaged and productive staff enables the delivery of excellent services whilst disengaged staff incur a loss of productivity, higher absence and lower performance. Our staff will know that they are part of the solution, not the problem as we deal with

transformation and constant change. Innovation often flourishes at such times and we will ensure that we provide the opportunities for this to happen.

## **Our Values**

The West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-16 sets out our priorities for the next two years. Our values demonstrate the behaviours that individuals will need to deliver our plan.

Our values help to define the kind of organisation the Councils want to be, how we want to work and how we want others to see us. We expect all staff to uphold & promote our values:

Responsible  
Energetic  
Bold  
Together

We want the people working for the Council to be innovative, flexible, professional and committed to providing good public services and real benefits to the people of West Suffolk.

In terms of Workforce Development, we will set out our plans to ensure that our Councils' values are maintained through the underpinning behaviours in our PR scheme, and in our approach to recruitment, selection, learning and development.

## **Our Workforce Strategy**

To achieve our vision we will focus on:

### **1. Skills and Behaviours Development**

- To have visionary and ambitious managers and leaders who can develop, motivate and lead our workforce to deliver our services effectively in challenging times.
- To further develop our teams so that in providing our services they can demonstrate flexibility, innovation, decision-making and at all times excellent customer service.
- To create a culture of innovation and challenge, underpinned by an appropriate approach to risk and entrepreneurial activity.
- To foster commercial behaviours that support of our values and priorities

### **2. Recruitment and Retention**

- To recruit and retain a workforce with the skills and values we need, promote jobs and careers as an employer of choice, and identify, develop and motivate talent.
- To develop and maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce, actively challenging and addressing accessibility barriers and issues.

### **3. Pay, Reward and Recognition**

- To provide good and flexible reward packages within the current financial constraints and ensure fairness across all groups of employees.
- We will recognise great work and ideas; whilst dealing with poorly performing employees fairly, supportively and robustly.

### **4. Wellbeing and Engagement**

- To be an organisation where risks are managed sensibly and proportionately to ensure the levels of accidents and incidents of ill-health are as low as possible.
- We will actively promote and manage wellbeing including effective and active employee engagement.
- Build resilience and energy among our staff and partners to enable change and deliver our priorities.

## **5. Performance and Change**

- To be a partnership that is able to transform quickly and effectively, is agile and flexible in approach, working across boundaries and collaboratively with colleagues and partner organisations across Suffolk and the East of England.
- To be a highly productive organisation, focussed on achievement that values and engages with employees and has a culture that is collaborative, innovative, inclusive and creative.



## **Skills and Behaviours Development**

### What do we want to achieve?

We will have inspiring and ambitious managers and leaders who can develop, motivate and lead us in challenging times. We will be effective at identifying and nurturing our leaders of tomorrow so that we can maintain a continuous high performing leadership team.

To further develop our teams to have the skills to deliver those services in a manner which demonstrates flexibility, innovation, decision making and at all times a customer focussed approach.

Staff who contribute to the development and delivery of the priorities across West Suffolk with other Suffolk organisations, including the County Council, the Health and Well-being Boards and the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Chamber of Commerce and the Local Enterprise Partnerships.

We are committed to improving basic levels of attainment in essential skills (literacy, numeracy & IT) in the council or in preparation for employment elsewhere, and to supporting initiatives across Suffolk to raise educational attainment.

### Why is this a priority?

Our ability to lead and manage through the challenges of transformation will be critical to meeting our priorities. We will strengthen our focus on the skills required to do this at the very top levels and with all our managers responsible for leading staff.

In this challenging environment it is more important than ever that learning and development is absolutely focussed on what is critical to effective performance and delivery of priorities. We will deliver this in the most responsive and cost effective ways.

### What actions will help us to respond to these needs?

- Produce a workforce development plan that focusses activity on the skills and behaviours required to support delivery of our priorities in a way that is congruent with our values.
- Provide activities to develop the skills and behaviours of leaders and managers, and measure the learning through effective 360 performance management.
- Develop talent management approaches to develop those with potential; working collaboratively with Suffolk partners to retain and develop the skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century public sector employee.
- Develop initiatives to educate employees on the skills needed to build effective partnerships.

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- Develop toolkits and e-learning packages; and use positive and inclusive examples to ensure appropriate and effective access to skills and opportunities.

Our existing framework of leadership and management competencies have been in place for some time and were developed for two separate Councils, and their plans and priorities. We now need to revisit these standards and check whether they remain fit for purpose and support the new shared vision and strategy.

The challenges of working in the council of the future may need different skills and behaviours and a review in 2014 will be vital to identify what will make our leaders and managers effective in this new environment.

### Key Outcomes

- Leadership skills are clearly demonstrated and performance improved.
- Learning and skills activity across the councils are delivered in a way to maximise provision in the most cost effective way.
- Potential future leaders have been identified, and people are engaged on a talent management programme.
- Outcomes of learning and development activity can be clearly linked to the delivery of our priorities and key workforce objectives.
- Performance of staff is increased through development of essential and key skills.
- Increased fulfilment of staffs' development aspirations

## **Recruitment and retention**

### What do we want to achieve?

We will have the right people in the right place at the right time with the essential skills and values needed to meet our goals and their aspirations. We will seek to be reflective of the community we serve, at all levels of our organisation. We will balance the recruitment of talent to refresh our workforce with opportunities for existing staff to progress and develop.

### Why is this a priority?

We will continue to change in response to future demands, pressures and opportunities including financial challenges, service redesign and changing needs of customers. So, it is vital that we provide resources in the most cost effective ways and enable our most talented people to deliver our priorities. We will look at retention in the broadest way to enable us to retain as many of our talented people delivering services to our customers as we can. We will consider a wide range of options for service delivery models, to provide the most efficient and effective customer experience in a cost effective way, whilst maximising the contribution of those working in those services.

We will undertake effective workforce planning so that we can predict future workforce needs and prepare for changes in the size, skills and composition of the workforce.

### What actions will help us to respond to these needs?

- We will keep under review our organisation design principles and ensure we identify future staffing requirements and how best to resource them.
- Create opportunities for younger people to join the workforce through pre-apprenticeship work placements, apprenticeship and other programmes such as internships.
- Create job structures and pathways such as talent pools and secondments that enable our staff to progress and encourage and enable under represented groups to apply for opportunities.
- We will promote and embed effective flexible working practices across the Councils to support different operational requirements and styles of work, and help attract the widest possible range of people.

### Key Outcomes

- The shape and size of the organisation is flexible to respond to priorities and change.
- An effective vacancy management strategy is in place.
- The number of young people gaining basic skills, completing apprenticeships and securing onward employment continues to increase.

- Employees are more satisfied with opportunities to progress.
- Talented people are delivering our services through direct employment or other service delivery models.
- We will make the five commitments regarding recruitment, training, retention, consultation and disability awareness to enable both Councils to display the disability symbol and be positive about disabled people.
- We will support County-wide initiatives (for example, Suffolk County Council's 'Raising the Bar' programme) that focus on creating opportunities for the education and employability of young people in Suffolk.

INSERT double tick logo

## **Pay, Reward and Recognition**

### What do we want to achieve?

We want to be able to recruit and retain a diverse range of effective people, and pay, reward and recognition is a fundamental part of this. We will work hard to provide the best reward package for employees we can within the difficult financial constraints we face and ensure fairness across all groups of employees within the council. We will recognise great work and ideas, and will provide opportunities to our employees to help improve morale.

### Why is this a priority?

Balancing the pay bill with fair and motivating reward is particularly challenging in the current financial climate, but we still want to be competitive enough to retain the best people and at the same time maximise support for those who experience financial challenges.

We have harmonised, modernised and simplified our pay arrangements in our Single Pay and Reward Strategy. We will continue to work with Unison to develop approaches to pay and reward that ensure consistency in treatment and where practicable, harmonise terms and conditions between groups. As part of these packages of changes we will seek to minimise the financial impacts on our workforce and will seek to agree ongoing support packages and initiatives which give employees other benefits which may be financial or non-financial.

We are committed to rewarding the best performing employees through the development of a new performance review scheme which we will develop in 2014.

We are committed to finding ways to reward innovation and commercial behaviours appropriate in our sector.

We will ensure benefits such as flexible working practices are fair and maximise accessibility for all of our diverse communities.

### What Actions will help us respond to these needs?

- We will review the National Living Wage annually with the aspiration to pay a living wage if we can in the current financial environment.
- We will carry out an Equal Pay Review of our single pay and reward strategy in 2014-15, and take appropriate action should it be required to ensure fair pay.
- We will develop and implement a new performance review scheme with focus groups and Unison that rewards the highest performing employees who espouse the behaviours and values we have identified.
- We are committed to working in partnership with Unison in the development of new approaches to the workforce.

- We will widen our approach to rewards and benefits using salary sacrifice schemes and employee benefit schemes where appropriate and cost effective.
- We will offer schemes of support that secure future opportunity and employment for example through an effective employability skills offer.
- We will through the Personal Review Scheme be able to reward outstanding work or contribution to identified corporate priorities.

#### Key Outcomes

- The introduction of an effective appraisal scheme that rewards the outcomes, and behaviours we want to deliver our priorities effectively.
- The introduction of a wider employee benefits package; and a wider understanding amongst our employees of the value of their employment package.
- We know and recognise our outstanding teams and people and they feel valued.
- The cost of the employment package is sustainable for the future but is fair within the current employment climate and fair to different groups of staff.
- We are confident in the fairness and integrity of our pay and reward package.

## **Wellbeing and Engagement**

### What do we want to achieve?

We will manage risks sensibly and proportionately to ensure the levels of accidents and incidents of occupational ill-health are as low as possible. Staff wellbeing will be an integral part of our employee support mechanism and will be actively managed and promoted. We will have a strong and positive employee relations and engagement culture to ensure our employees feel well informed, involved and have a way of feeding back their views in a variety of ways.

### Why is this a priority?

We need to do all we can to ensure that we are fit, ready and able to attend work. Further, we recognise the wide ranging benefits of individual wellbeing, and seek to role model a positive approach to health, exercise and wellbeing. We move beyond traditional boundaries of health and safety and encompass both the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. We will continue to work towards the ultimate goal of achieving a level of wellbeing that is consistent with the best organisations.

### What actions will help us to respond to these needs?

- Provide policies and practices that reflect the changing requirements for new ways and styles of working and service delivery.
- Provide initiatives and policies that support the building of resilience and wellbeing, and the ability to work effectively with and through change.
- Ensure safe systems of work are in place.
- Ensure managers have the knowledge and skills to carry out effective and dynamic risk assessments, within an effective Health and Safety culture.
- Focus our wellbeing initiatives, occupational health provision and health surveillance on improving attendance, resilience, well-being and proactive support.
- Develop a programme of wellbeing activities and initiatives accessible to all of the workforce, that responds to needs identified through surveys and incidents.
- Develop ways of increasing engagement and morale to make the best use of the talents, ideas and involvement of staff.
- Involvement of staff in giving feedback on their work experiences and on the management, and leadership that they experience in the workplace.

Key Outcomes

- Employees know how to carry out their work safely and managers promote an effective health & safety culture.
- Incidents of workplace injury are minimised.
- The number of days lost through injury or sickness reduces and absence is well managed.
- Employees are satisfied with their work/life balance over time.
- Flexible working practices are appropriate to service delivery whilst enabling good work-life balance for staff.
- A suite of 'good employer' support exists for all staff, including a culture of coaching and trust. Managers are able to move away from 'command and control' and their staff have been developed to be able, empowered and trusted to deliver, and supported where and when they need to be.
- Bullying and harassment is not tolerated or accepted in any part of the organisation.
- We have a strong and positive employee involvement and engagement culture.
- Employees are free to make suggestions and offer ideas and solutions in a supportive environment, enabling creativity, innovation and enthusiasm to flourish.



## **Performance and Change**

### What do we want to achieve?

We want to be able to transform quickly and effectively, be highly productive and focussed on achievement. We will be clear about the council's priorities and understand how we can support, and contribute towards them. We will value each other and have a culture that is collaborative, innovative and creative. We will be bold in approach, energetic in delivery, responsible to our communities and ourselves, and work in a collaborative and connected way with colleague and partners, particularly those in Suffolk and the East of England

### Why is this a priority?

We are facing rapid change; the transformation of services is being driven by changing customer demands and the need to reduce the cost of provision. We will have to be flexible and able to adapt our services quickly to meet these challenges. Service delivery models may evolve that are different to those we have now.

### What actions will help us to respond to these needs?

- Build on the learning from the change programme undertaken in 2013, to develop effective change management processes and ensure managers understand how to manage the different types of change and how to support employees through change.
- Work with partners and other organisations to identify common workforce issues and develop shared approaches to addressing these, for example as we are doing through the Raising the Bar and Rising High initiatives.
- Ensure we develop a consistent performance management framework through staff appraisal/PR that links their priorities and the support they need to the outcomes that will achieve those priorities.
- Ensure that diversity best practice is incorporated into all service, customer, employment, and employee activity. Identify any areas for improvement. Any barriers to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce are identified and clear actions to counter these are implemented.

### Key Outcomes

- Staff understand the Councils' and their own priorities and know what they need to do to achieve these.
- The council has an effective approach to change management and all managers are trained, and able to deal and respond to constant change, innovation and uncertainty.
- Increased collaboration and partnership solutions on workforce issues.
- The workforce profile satisfactorily reflects that of the community.

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- Staff are more satisfied with the opportunities for them to contribute to how the council works.
- Increased customer satisfaction with effectively delivered services.