

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-001-2023/24

Date of meeting: 30 May 2023



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Internal Resources (Councillor S Kane)

Subject: Launch of the new People Strategy 2023-2027

Responsible Officer: Joanne Budden (Service Manager – People, Culture, Wellbeing Internal Communications)

Democratic Services Officer: V Messenger (democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) To agree the refreshed People Strategy for 2023-2027.

Executive Summary:

The People Strategy 2023-2027 sets out how the organisation will support our people to deliver the vision for the district, set out in the new Corporate Plan. It provides a framework for how we plan to implement and deliver our ambitions.

The aim of the Strategy is to support the Council be a more modern, digital, efficient, and inclusive organisation. It is a live and agile document, able to adapt and respond to future challenges.

As a significant Strategy this is a Key Decision which has been published on the Council's website

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The new People Strategy for the Council has been updated to reflect the revised Corporate Plan and aligns with the corporate objectives which take effect in April 2023. The Cabinet is asked to agree the new People Strategy 2023 - 2027.

Other Options for Action:

All around us is fast changing as is local government, with new challenges and opportunities arising daily. For our leaders and employee to work in this environment, we require a People Strategy. Therefore, no other options were considered.

Report:

1. The landscape of local government is rapidly evolving, with new challenges and opportunities arising daily. To effectively navigate this environment, forward-thinking authorities must develop a fresh and modern People Strategy that aligns with their ambitious corporate objectives and the ever-changing external environment.

This People Strategy has been updated to reflect the revised Corporate Plan and aligns with the corporate objectives which take effect in April 2023.

Our 2023-27 People Strategy focuses on three main pillars:

- **Maximising organisational capacity and capability**

- **Effective and inspirational leadership, values, and culture**
- **Enhancing employee experience and engagement.**

2. **Maximising organisational capacity and capability**

Attracting and retaining talent: Our local authority aims to attract diverse, top-tier talent that shares our passion for revolutionising local government. By leveraging digital recruitment methods and establishing a strong employer brand, we can showcase our commitment to innovation, sustainability, and community development.

To retain our exceptional workforce, we will provide competitive employee benefits, flexible and hybrid working arrangements, and clear career progression pathways, ensuring employees feel valued and motivated to stay with us.

Supporting employees through comprehensive workforce plans: Supporting employees through our comprehensive workforce plan, we will offer internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship programs, facilitating ongoing skill development and knowledge sharing. We will foster a culture of continuous learning and development by providing access to training programs, workshops, and online resources that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. Employees will be encouraged to pursue further education, gain new certifications, and participate in professional development events to stay at the forefront of industry trends and best practices.

3. **Effective and inspirational leadership, values, and culture**

Developing skills, values, and behaviours: Our local authority will prioritise our teams' skill development, values, and behaviours by setting clear expectations and encouraging our managers and leaders to provide consistent feedback. We will nurture a culture of visionary leadership that inspires employees to think creatively, take calculated risks, and embrace change. To achieve this, we will continue to invest in our leadership development program, create opportunities for cross-functional collaboration, and celebrate success stories that exemplify our core values.

Creating a sustainable and innovative future: By fostering visionary leadership and culture, we will propel our local authority toward a sustainable future embracing new ideas and innovation. We will actively seek input from employees at all levels and foster open communication channels to ensure that everyone's voice is heard. By empowering employees to contribute their unique perspectives and ideas, we can drive continuous improvement and enhance our ability to address the challenges facing our communities.

4. **Enhancing employee experience and engagement**

Building an inclusive environment: We will focus on building an inclusive environment that fosters diversity and embraces the unique strengths and perspectives that each employee brings to the table. Our local authority will establish diversity and inclusion initiatives to promote awareness, understanding, and acceptance of diverse cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. We will also provide employees with the resources and support they need to succeed in their roles, regardless of their individual circumstances.

Cultivating a people-centric culture: Our local authority will cultivate a people-centric culture that emphasises well-being and keeps employees healthy, engaged, and motivated to make a difference in our communities. We will implement employee wellness programs, provide access to mental health resources, and encourage a healthy work-life balance. By prioritising well-being, we can boost employee morale, increase productivity, and reduce absenteeism, contributing to our overall success.

5. How you can help as our Modern-Day Councillors and Leaders

As local government Councillors and Leaders, you can engage, support, and adopt the new People Strategy by:

- Embracing and promoting the strategy. Foster a sense of ownership and collaboration among your councillor colleagues by embracing and promoting the Strategy's themes and values within your role.
- Be an advocate for employee skill development, well-being, inclusion, and lead by example, demonstrating your commitment to the Strategy in your everyday actions and decisions.
- Actively encouraging your peers to support and participate in initiatives that nurture a stronger and more creative local authority.
- Participate in workshops, seminars, and team-building events that foster a positive and supportive work environment, enabling employees and councillors to build strong relationships.
- Promote and support cross-functional collaboration and breaking down departmental silos. Encourage employees to work together, share ideas, and learn from one another.
- Celebrate success and recognise employee contribution. Acknowledge and celebrate the accomplishments of individuals and teams.
- Foster a culture of accountability and ownership. Help support us to instil a culture of accountability and ownership among employees by setting clear expectations and providing feedback.

6. Conclusion

By integrating these themes and actions into everyone's responsibilities, we will all contribute to a stronger, more innovative, and sustainable Council for all.

Together, we can achieve our strategic priorities and create an environment where everyone thrives and contributes to our collective success.

Through the implementation of our 2023-27 People Strategy, we will lay the foundation for a progressive local government model that empowers employees, embraces change, and delivers exceptional services to our communities.

We will be known as an 'Employer of Choice.'

Scrutiny Comments

The Committee welcomed the report as a good start and wished to see it progressed and how it would be reviewed. Also, they would like to see how it interacted and engaged with the elected members and enabled members and officers to work better together.

Resource Implications:

No increase in budget required to adopt the Strategy. Individual projects within the Strategy will be scoped and if funding is required will be subject to agreement through the Council's budget process.

Legal and Governance Implications:

N/A

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

N/A

Consultation Undertaken:

Consultation with Executive, Senior Leadership and Leadership teams and the Portfolio Holder was completed in March 2023. Strategy was reported to Stronger Council on 18 April 2023 and their comments are contained within the body of the report.

Background Papers:

An obligatory section, listing any papers not previously published that have had a material effect upon the contents of the report.

Risk Management:

Risks will be identified through the project management processes and subject to the Council's risk methodology.

Equality Impact Assessment:

Equality impacts will be identified at the inception of projects and managed accordingly.

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: People Team

If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: NA

Title of policy or decision: Adoption of the People Strategy 2023-2027

Officer completing the EqlA: Tel: NA Email: jbudden@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Date of completing the assessment: 17th April 2023

Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? Yes
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? Adoption of the People Strategy 2023-2027
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• service users• employees• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate? Yes
2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? No, unless there are wider organisational capacity requirements required from the People Team within organisational programmes or projects.
2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes? Yes, Linked to the overall corporate strategy as one of it's main enabling strategies.

Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	What does the information tell you about those groups identified?
3.2	Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision? Executive Team, Senior Leadership Team, Wider leadership Team, Portfolio Holder, Stronger Council.
3.3	If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary: Cabinet and Employees are part of the ongoing engagement plan from June onwards.

Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	Neutral	Low
Disability	Positive (Disability Confident level 2 status)	Low
Gender	Neutral	Low
Gender reassignment	Positive (Policy Development)	Low
Marriage/civil partnership	Positive (Policy Development)	Low
Pregnancy/maternity	Positive (Policy Development)	Low
Race	Neutral	Low
Religion/belief	Neutral	Low
Sexual orientation	Positive (Policy Development)	Low

Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqIA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If ' YES ', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

Section 7: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: <i>Paula Maginnis</i>	Date: 17/04/2023
Signature of person completing the EqIA: <i>Susan Bowers Hamilton Jo Budden</i>	Date: 17/04/2023

Advice

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.