

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

27 November 2025

People Strategy

Report of: Karen Grave, Director of People and Customer Experience

Report Reference No: CPC/51/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To present the People Strategy 2025-29 for approval and adoption.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Cheshire East Council People Strategy 2025-29 sets out our vision for the workforce and how we will support the performance, wellbeing and development of everyone who works for us.
- 3 Our People Strategy has been co-produced with colleagues from across our organisation and with elected members and reflects their feedback and input. It looks to address what is most important to our people and starts to build the excellent organisation we need to be, now and into the future.
- 4 Our People Strategy and its associated deliverables are presented in one document making it easily accessible and understandable for staff and frames what staff can expect from us at each stage of their career with Cheshire East Council.
- 5 A clear and current people strategy is vital as it aligns the workforce, and our people management practices to the council's strategic vision, the delivery of our commitments to the residents and communities of Cheshire East and our Improvement and Transformation Delivery Plan 2025 - 2027.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve and adopt the People Strategy 2025-29 (Appendix 1) and note additional Appendices.

Background

- 6 The previous Cheshire East People Plan was produced in 2021 and ran to 2025. It is vital to have a current, clear and well-articulated People Strategy, co-produced with staff, about staff and for staff.
- 7 Our People Strategy looks to align the workforce, and our people management practices to the council's strategic vision and to the delivery of our commitments to the residents and communities of Cheshire East.
- 8 Ensuring that the People Strategy directly supports and enables the delivery of the Cheshire East Plan and our Improvement and Transformation Delivery Plan 2025 – 2027 will create a shared sense of purpose, enhance employee engagement, productivity and performance. And deliver a high performing culture.
- 9 The People Strategy is created around six outcomes for staff and underpinned by four values. It sets out what staff can expect from the council at each stage of their career with us, from joining, working, developing, progressing and leaving.
- 10 The key deliverables in year 1 include:
 - A commitment to staff engagement through in-person quarterly staff events, regular online sessions and ongoing opportunities to feedback and put forward ideas and suggestions.
 - A Staff Survey to seek the views, perceptions and voice of staff, so that effort for improvement and change can be directed to what's most important to our people through co-produced action plans.
 - A Cheshire East leadership development programme, ensuring our leadership cohort is equipped and supported to deliver the change and transformation required and creates the conditions for our people to thrive.
 - A Cheshire East manager development programme, looking to reset the expectations and role of people managers and providing the support and development for them to succeed.
 - A refreshed approach to individual performance reviews, giving managers and colleagues the tools and guidance to have good quality, regular performance and development conversations. Helping them to

improve performance, identify and progress talent and build personal resilience.

- The development of whole career pathways, with options to learn, develop and progress, helping to not only retain people in key roles, but 'grow our own' future leaders and specialists.

11 The strategy and its associated deliverables are underpinned by:

- **A focus on our shared Vision:** being clear that the people strategy and all people focused activity and interventions underpin the delivery of the Cheshire East Plan and the delivery of our Transformation and Improvement Plan.
- **A focus on Outcomes:** ensuring that the strategy and all deliverables are focused on getting the best possible outcomes and look to shift mindsets, behaviours and organisational culture.
- **A focus on shared Values:** ensuring that our new Cheshire East Values set the expectations on how we work and interact with each other to deliver on our vision and outcomes.
- **A focus on experience:** ensuring we use consistency of language which is accessible and understandable for staff and that all activity and interventions look to improve the experience of staff throughout their career journey with us.

Consultation and Engagement

12 A range of engagement and consultation has taken place in relation to the People Strategy and its associated deliverables. The views, comments and feedback of elected members, staff, and their advocates, has helped to shape the outcomes, values and deliverables.

These include:

- Activities at our regular Staff Events, follow up workshops, Manager Share and Support sessions, In the know sessions and more.
- Discussions at the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board.
- Meetings with various Staff Networks and our Champion groups.
- Trade Union colleagues.
- Corporate Leadership Team and Elected Members through the appropriate meetings and forums.

13 Our strategy is also based upon internal professional expertise and experience, research and benchmarking.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 14 The People Strategy 2025-29 has been co-produced with staff and elected members and is now ready for approval and adoption.
- 15 Our staff are keen to see the final strategy having been part of its development and how the strategy will support them in their roles.

Other Options Considered

- 16 Do nothing was not considered to be an option given the range of engagement, involvement and co-production which has taken place to develop this strategy to date.
- 17 Not to adopt and publish this strategy would risk damage to staff engagement, morale and motivation and potentially the council's reputation.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 18 The strategy aligns with current employment legislation, including the Employment Rights Bill (2025/26), which has passed through all readings in both the House of Commons and House of Lords and is expected to receive Royal Assent during late Autumn. Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with all statutory obligations.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 19 Adopting the strategy will have no impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it should be met through existing budgets. The strategy will not directly produce budget savings but will support and enable the delivery of the workforce transformation programmes, to which there are savings and productivity benefits attached. This will be done through improved leadership and management, leading to people and budgets being better managed, efficiency and productivity should increase, and sickness reduce. The strategy should enable the council to retain more staff, and attract more talent, helping reduce reliance on agency and interims.

Human Resources

- 20 The People Strategy provides the framework to ensure that all of our people activities are aligned to supporting and delivering the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 and our Transformation and Improvement Plan.
- 21 It will ensure legal compliance and best practice is embedded into each stage of the employee lifecycle,
- 22 Clear key performance measures will ensure that a culture of continuous improvement and enable focussed action plans to support and direct activity as needed thereby being efficient, effective and timely.

- 23 Clarity of expectations, values and the employee offer through a shared sense of purpose, enhanced employee engagement, productivity and performance will improve overall employee relations and satisfaction.
- 24 The recognised trade unions will be engaged and consulted on the People Strategy as part of this process.

Risk Management

- 25 The People Strategy looks to reduce risks associated with a disengaged workforce, including, low morale, motivation and productivity.
- 26 The strategy will support better attraction, recruitment and retention of permanent employees, reducing the use of agency and interim staff which increase costs for the council.
- 27 The publication and implementation of the people strategy is a recommendation from the Corporate Peer Challenge 2024 which to delay or to not implement at all, would risk reputational damage and increased external scrutiny for the council.

Policy

- 28 The People Strategy 2025-29 is a key enabler of the delivery of the Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 and the Transformation and Improvement Plan 2025-27. It underpins the delivery of the council's vision and commitments through the recruitment, development and retention of a skilled and motivated workforce. It will support the delivery of all council commitments:
- Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all
 - Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing
 - Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 29 All equality considerations will be taken into account as part of the implementation of the People Strategy.
- 30 The People Strategy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy complement and support each other and the delivery of our equality objectives.

Other Implications

- 31 The People Strategy supports the overall Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 and the Transformation and Improvement Plan and with therefore have a positive impact for Rural Communities, Children and Young People, Public Health or Climate Change.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	03/10/25	03/10/25
Kevin O'Keefe	Interim Monitoring Officer	09/10/25	19/10/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Julie Gregory	Legal Manager	06/10/25	08/10/25
Chris Benham	Director of Finance	06/10/25	07/10/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Karen Grave; Director of People and Customer Experience karen.grave@cheshireeast.gov.uk Gareth Sayers; Head of OD and Culture gareth.sayers@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1: The Cheshire East Council People Strategy 2025-29 (includes Appendix 2) Appendix 3 – Values in Practice
Background Papers:	None.