

Cabinet – 2 April 2025

People Strategy

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>We have committed to the development of a people strategy to outline how we attract, retain, and grow talent.</p> <p>This people strategy describes our journey of 'employer of choice: grow connect empower' and a revised action plan following the publication of the Local Government White Paper to focus our work over the next two years.</p>
Recommendation(s)	The Cabinet recommend to Council the adoption of the People Strategy by Council.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>To support the delivery of the Corporate Plan and achieve a key milestone in the Transformation Strategy aligned to the People and Capabilities theme.</p> <p>Support readiness for change for local government reorganisation.</p> <p>EMT approved for delivery and resourcing.</p> <p>HR Committee approved 13 March 2025.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jill Cleary – Leader Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director for Corporate Resource and Transformation
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Introduction

1. New Forest District Council's Corporate Plan and Transformation Strategy commit to the development of a people strategy to outline how we attract, retain, and grow talent.
2. This people strategy describes our approach to its development through discovery, design and delivery, allowing the strategy to evolve through engagement with staff.
3. The strategy aims to take NFDC on a journey towards Employer of Choice through the themes of grow, connect and empower, recognising there need to be strong roots (or foundations) in place, and our culture must be centred on our values of learning, empathy, ambition and fairness.
4. Following publication of the Local Government White Paper, we have taken time to reflect and the principles in the strategy remain relevant. The delivery plan has been refined to include the critical work programmes required over a shorter timeframe to modernise, and best position our staff for future opportunities whilst feeling supported and ready for change in local government reorganisation.
5. The strategy is presented as a metaphor based on the roots, branches and green leaves of a tree to provide an easily understandable visual and conceptual framework to support our journey. We believe a strong visual framework will allow more people to connect to the strategy in a meaningful way.
6. A simplified and more dynamic version of the people strategy has been designed, to ensure it is engaging for our staff as well as applicants as part of our offer to employees.

Corporate plan priorities

7. The people strategy supports delivery of the Corporate Plan and Future New Forest programme.

Consultation undertaken

8. Feedback from the 2024 staff survey and focus groups as well as HR Peer Review recommendations and informal feedback from individuals and groups have all been considered in the design of this strategy. The people strategy has been further developed with feedback from different groups of staff and has evolved through this engagement process. Groups included:

- a. leadership team
- b. EDI groups
- c. HR and comms teams
- d. change champions
- e. Employee Side Liaison Panel

Financial and resource implications

- 9. Delivering the People Strategy has implications for both human and financial resources. Three additional roles have been identified to ensure effective delivery of the plan: organisational development facilitator; learning coordinator; and employee engagement officer.
- 10. In addition, a modest ringfenced budget for events, training, and other financial costs will be in place to support delivery of the strategy.

Risk assessment

- 11. No formal risk assessment has been completed, however there is a significant risk to the organisation (in terms of retaining existing and recruiting new staff, and being ready for change) if we do not invest in our people.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

- 12. The people strategy will be in support of the climate change programme, intending to create a sense of responsibility and accountability for our people to make changes aligned to becoming more sustainable. This element is captured implicitly across all four themes of strong roots, grow, connect and empower.

Equalities implications

- 13. Equity is critical in the delivery of the people strategy and the values of empathy and fairness capture how this will be thread throughout. Equality impact assessments will be part of all deliverables to ensure that activities are fair and inclusive. Regular reviews will be conducted to ensure no unintended consequences/impact on staff become apparent.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

- 14. Collecting and maintaining quality data about our workforce will be important to enable effective measurement of our success, whilst ensuring data usage complies with UK Regs and NFDC guidance.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – People Strategy

Appendix 2 – Simplified, designed and accessible version of people strategy