

## REPORT TITLE: GCC Workforce Strategy 2024-2027

<b>Cabinet Date</b>	31 January 2024
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Lynden Stowe Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Change
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To seek approval for a refreshed Workforce Strategy which will support the delivery of the Council Strategy 'Building Back Better in Gloucestershire' 2022 to 2026.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That Cabinet: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. approves the Workforce Strategy set out in appendix one.</li> <li>2. delegates authority to the Director of People and Digital Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Change to develop an implementation plan aligned to business planning for the Human Resources service</li> </ol>
<b>Reasons for Recommendations</b>	<p>The Council Strategy for 2022 – 2026 'Building Back Better in Gloucestershire', details the County Council's vision and strategic objectives. This workforce strategy has been designed to support the delivery of Gloucestershire's County Council's Strategy. Collectively these documents describe the ambition we have for the county and set out how we will approach this challenge over the next four years to ensure a workforce best equipped to effectively deliver on our strategic priorities and services.</p> <p>Our workforce is critical to delivering all aspects of the Council's strategy, however there are also two specific workforce priorities set out in the 'Delivering our Ambitions' section of 'Building Back Better', this workforce strategy will ensure focus on these areas: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Recruitment and retention of hard to fill roles'.</p>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	This strategy will shape the priorities of the Council's HR service. The work plan will be delivered within the resources available, however if there is a requirement for additional resource then this will be subject to those resources being secured through the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

<b>Background Documents</b>	Building Back Better in Gloucestershire 2022-2026
<b>Statutory Authority</b>	
<b>Divisional Councillor(s)</b>	N/A
<b>Officer</b>	Name: Eleanor Hutchison, Head of Human Resources Wendy Cooper, Head of Organisation Development Email: <a href="mailto:eleanor.hutchison@gloucestershire.gov.uk">eleanor.hutchison@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:wendy.cooper@gloucestershire.gov.uk">wendy.cooper@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Timeline</b>	Jan to March 2024: Detailed workplan developed and agreed aligned with service planning

## Background

1. The purpose of a workforce strategy is to align the council's workforce planning with our overall goals and objectives. It involves planning and managing various aspects of workforce development, such as recruitment, training, retention, and performance management, to ensure that the right people with the right skills are in place.
2. A well-defined workforce strategy helps optimise productivity, adapt to changing conditions, and support long-term improvement.
3. This workforce strategy aims to build on the positive work undertaken over the past five years to embed our values, improve employee engagement and develop a council that attracts high performing staff who are committed to public service.
4. The period of the pandemic had a profound impact on workforce issues for the council and all employers in Gloucestershire and across the country, leading to increased focus on the following:
  - The impact of a reducing labour market highlighting the need for reskilling, increased focus on attracting the best recruits and creating an environment where people want to stay with us.
  - Employee health and safety and particularly mental health associated with uncertainty and isolation during the pandemic and increased pressures in the workplace in more recent months.
  - Agile and remote working as central to business delivery models and increasingly an expectation of skilled, high performing workers.
  - Digital transformation increasing demand for technology related skills and remote collaboration tools.
  - Improved workforce planning to deal with uncertainties and the changing recruitment market.

- Diversity and inclusion as the pandemic shed light on disparities in the workforce.
5. Many of these workforce challenges are persisting well beyond the pandemic with remote working, digitisation, the renewed emphasis on employee well-being and diversity and inclusion being integrated parts of the 'new normal'.
  6. These factors underpin our Workforce Strategy which is structured around three areas:
    - Capacity – making sure GCC is recognised as a modern, attractive employer who can recruit and retain highly capable employees.
    - Culture – engaging our people and developing a positive diverse and inclusive culture.
    - Capability – developing our people to enjoy rewarding and varied careers.
  7. In addition, HR Business Partners are working with directorates to develop specific workforce strategies and associated work plans which align to the approach set out in this council wide strategy.

## **Options**

8. To adopt the strategy as is or to provide feedback in terms of revised priorities or other changes.

## **Risks**

9. There are four Council strategic risks which are specifically workforce related. The Workforce Strategy aims to respond to these risks in a structured and prioritised way to ensure they are mitigated:
  - Difficulties in recruiting and retaining experienced workers.
  - Insufficient workforce capacity in Children's Services
  - Capacity and capability to deliver Fire Service improvement.
  - Staff fatigue and burnout.

## **Financial implications**

10. The strategy will inform the service plan and work programme for the HR department and will be delivered within existing resources. As proposals are developed, if additional resource is required, then this will be subject to a further decision by the Cabinet Member, Cabinet or Council as appropriate.

### **Climate change implications**

11. The main climate change benefits of the strategy are aligned to agile working and digital transformation. These are largely associated with reductions in commuting and business travel, and reductions in printing and use of paper.

### **Ecological implications**

12. Has an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) been produced, or will one be undertaken at a later stage? No

### **Equality implications**

13. Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed? Yes

Cabinet Members should read and consider the Equalities Impact Assessment to satisfy themselves as decision makers that due regard has been given.

It is recognised that individual projects or policies developed under this strategy may need their own EqIA. If this is the case, then this will be undertaken as this work is delivered.

### **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) implications**

14. There are no DPIA implications in the adoption of the strategy, however these will be considered as each project develops.

### **Social value implications**

15. There are no social value implications in the adoption of the strategy, however these will be considered as each project develops. For example, the council has adopted a policy of prioritising care leavers in our work around apprenticeships and early careers.

### **Consultation feedback**

16. There are directorate representatives on the Workforce Strategy Board, and the Corporate Change Delivery Group were the main consultation forum for the strategy. HR Business Partners have also taken feedback from their directorate colleagues and suggestions have been included in the document. In addition, GCC Networks and Unions have also been consulted.

### **Officer recommendations**

17. To adopt the strategy as appended to this report.

## **Performance management/follow-up**

18. The performance indicators to measure the success of the strategy are set out in section eight of the strategy. Progress and monitoring oversight of the strategy will be provided by the ED&I Board and the Corporate Change Delivery Group as well as Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.