

# OUR PEOPLE 2021: WORKFORCE STRATEGY

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# INTRODUCTION

Surrey County Council's Organisation Strategy sets out how the Council will work with residents and partners and direct its resources to where they will have the most impact to deliver the Community Vision for Surrey. The corresponding Preliminary Financial Strategy and Transformation Programme will not only secure the Council's financial sustainability but will also transform the function, form and focus of the organisation.

As part of this strategic agenda, 'Our People 2021' is our plan for the current and future workforce of the Council. Our staff are our ambassadors and are crucial to successful delivery of the Organisation Strategy and consequently, achievement of the ambitions for Surrey as set out in the Community Vision.

Page 160 'Our People 2021' sets out how we will develop the capacity and capability of our workforce to achieve our priority strategic outcomes for Surrey residents, ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council, create a high performance culture and drive wholesale transformational change.

# CONTEXT & VISION

Feedback from staff is that their work is an important part of their lives, they believe they can make a valuable contribution to the success of the organisation and they love their job. But they are frustrated about the way the Council operates. Staff have said that they really want things to change and they see that, with the right leadership and support, along with a shared vision, there is hope for a different kind of organisational culture.

To become a successful and high performing Council with an enthused and engaged workforce we need to be a sustainable, outward looking, optimistic organisation that manages change really well, is achievement orientated, works collaboratively at all levels (internally and externally) and designs interventions that go to the heart of the matter.

Our challenges include the demographic make-up of our workforce:

- 4.9% of staff are under the age of 25 against a UK average of 14%
- 33% of staff have more than ten years service
- 40% of staff are likely to retire in the next ten years
- 1.7% of the workforce is undertaking apprenticeships, against a government target of 2.3%
- voluntary turnover is comparable with the UK average at 12.4%, but 25% of turnover takes place within the first year of employment
- 22% of our social work workforce is agency

Through the Transformation Programme we have identified important cultural implications. We need to:

- develop change leaders as opposed to organisational leaders.
- deduce hierarchies, break down silos and take a value add view of the way we design our work
- improve partnership working, overcoming real or perceived barriers to collaboration
- embrace our changing role in enabling and facilitating, as opposed to providing services
- effect radical cultural change, driving a culture of innovation, accountability, agility and risk awareness

Staff feedback from the Community Vision for Surrey roadshows echoes these aspirations, with people saying that we need to:

- improve how we work together, remove silos and strengthen external partnerships;
- remove bureaucracy, simplify processes and speed up decision making;
- be more open and transparent, set clear direction and improve communications within and between teams;
- simplify and make more equitable our pay and reward offer;
- improve development opportunities so that we retain good staff;
- manage change better; and
- improve our working culture and staff morale.

# STRATEGIC DIRECTION

'Our People 2021' uses the quantitative and qualitative data and insight summarised above to focus on the areas that our staff have told us are important to them and will have the greatest impact on the performance of the organisation. Strategic themes are:

## Organisational Design

The future design of the Council will have fewer layers and greater spans of control (applying a default six by six model in most cases), which will not only realise direct savings but will also help to create a more agile and effective organisation, enabling improved communications and engagement and facilitating faster decision making.

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## Individual and Collective Leadership

With fewer management layers, the work and impact of leaders at all levels of the organisation will be critical and will focus on working collaboratively to deliver sustainable high performance and change. Clarity about the leadership the Council needs now and into the future will drive how we develop existing leader as well as attract and retain new ones with the qualities needed to deliver outcomes that make a real difference within the financial envelope available.

## **People Development**

Our focus will be on becoming an organisation with a strong reputation in local government for being “the place to work”. This will go far beyond additional training and development; we will design and develop the organisation and within it the roles, leadership, management and work itself that stimulates and enthuses talent.

## **Employee Engagement**

How we involve and engage with staff will be fundamentally different and reflect the organisation we need to be for the future. We will move to an approach where all forms of communication foster honest and open conversations that enable information to flow and staff to be truly involved and connected with delivering the Community Vision for Surrey, strategies and outcomes for our communities.

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## **Pay and Reward**

We will put in place pay and reward arrangements that are effective, affordable, simple, transparent and recognise and reward the impact, outcomes and behaviours needed to deliver organisational outcomes and cultural change.

## **Performance and Achievement**

Alongside reviewing the Council’s pay and reward strategy, we will design modern, progressive approaches that support honest performance discussions. We will invest time, focus and commitment to improving individual and organisational performance and delivering outcomes.

## **Work and Job Design**

Work, roles and objectives will be designed to focus on delivering outcomes as opposed to outputs and processes. This will encompass agile and digital working; the majority of our staff will be able to work anytime, anywhere, supported by the right technology and an outcome focused management style. Encouraging and enabling staff to innovate, make decisions and focus on what really matters will also be critical.

## **Human Resource Planning**

Forward planning for the Council's workforce of the future will be critical to the organisation's longer term success and so we will use data and insight to forecast the organisational capacity and capability needed for the future and develop strong succession planning strategies in response to this.

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## **People Management Practices**

Our focus on what's important for managing our people will be reflected within our people management policies and practices. We will design, plan and execute these to ensure they are effective, simple and reflect a whole organisation approach but also enable people and managers to perform effectively at a local level.

## **Individual and Organisational Resilience**

Individuals, teams and organisations with high levels of resilience are more confident, high performing and can deal more effectively with radical change. At 6.4 days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE), the Council's sickness absence levels are comparatively low (for the public sector) but as the organisation experiences huge transformation we will develop clear strategies for raising and stabilising our future resilience, with a focus on staff wellbeing through change.

# IMPACT

The ultimate aim of 'Our People 2021' is for the Council to have a reputation for being one of the best councils in the UK and a truly great place to work.

We will be resident and outcome focused, with faster and more effective decision making and work and job design that drives motivation and high performance. There will be an increased collective sense of purpose and high levels of collaboration. Our staff will have the confidence and skills to work more flexibly, building on existing and forging new partnerships to focus on delivering outcomes. We will work in a joined up and innovative way and take a fresh, place-based approach to leadership.

Page 166 We will co-design services, building new relationships between residents, communities and partner organisations and fostering a shared sense of responsibility. We will design services with the full involvement of all stakeholders, taking an evidence based approach and working together to improve outcomes for the people of Surrey.

# DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

‘Our People 2021’ is the foundation for a number of workforce related plans, programmes and strategies, the key elements of which will be held in the ‘Our People Strategic Work Programme’, against which progress will be measured on an ongoing basis. This Work Programme is not intended to be a static document; it should and will have the ability to adapt in response to changing organisational need and emerging workforce related priorities.

# MEASURING SUCCESS

Page 167 The statistics within this Strategy have been taken from workforce data currently collected, supported by qualitative data in the form of feedback from staff. We will continue to measure successful delivery of the ‘Our People 2021 Workforce Strategy’ using existing data and will continue to measure the “health” of the organisation through other relevant data, e.g. workforce demographics. This will need to be expanded to include new outcome based measures identified as we develop the Our People Strategic Work Programme, for example, the impact of people development activity as opposed to the number of people attending training courses.

Ultimately, the success of the Our People 2021 Strategy will be measured by Surrey’s success, aligned to the Community Vision for Surrey and the priorities within that. For example, our measures against the target of improving Children’s Services will include increasing retention of social workers and reducing the number of agency social workers.

‘Our People 2021’ measures will be managed by HR&OD but will be owned and delivered collaboratively with the Corporate Leadership Team. This will ensure that we only focus on the things that matter and also concentrate on the things that need to improve.

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