

Our Cambridgeshire, Our Colleagues, Our Culture

Cambridgeshire County Council's People Strategy 2023 – 2028

Plain Text Version

Foreword from the Leader of the County Council

Our County Council is only as good as the people who choose to work as part of our valued workforce, and the Elected Members who set our political direction and strategies. The residents of Cambridgeshire decide on their elected representatives at the ballot box, but there are also huge responsibilities and expectations placed on the people who are employed by the County Council.

This context makes our People Strategy a critical enabling strategy for the delivery of our Vision for Cambridgeshire and 7 Ambitions, as set out in our Strategic Framework. As well as ensuring this connectivity and coherence, it sets out our strategic approach to the attraction, recruitment, retention, reward, development, engagement and inclusion of a diverse, valued and supported workforce.

We achieved a lot of progress because of our last People Strategy – supporting an increasingly diverse and dispersed workforce and putting a greater emphasis on learning, development, and wellbeing. However, there is much more to do, and this strategy sets out our next steps on our journey to be the very best employer that we can be.

I am immensely grateful to those dedicated people who work for the County Council, delivering for residents across the county, often in times of great need and distress. You make a real difference in people's lives; we need to make a similarly positive difference in your working lives.

Councillor Lucy Nethsingha
Leader of the County Council

Foreword from Stephen Moir, Chief Executive

As Chief Executive, I believe that our People Strategy is one of the most important strategies the Council produces, because it speaks to every single one of the thousands of colleagues we employ. I am delighted that in this refreshed strategy, we have taken a wholly new approach, aiming to tell the story of our organisation in 2028, rather than having a list of aims. In this way, I hope everyone can visualise what it will be like to work for Cambridgeshire County Council in 2028 and how we will get there, together.

Our People Strategy is about so much more than how we attract new and talented colleagues to join our team. At the heart of this strategy, it's about what type of organisation we want to be and what the experience of being an employee of the Council

feels like. Our residents rightly deserve the most talented, skilled, and committed people to deliver essential public services with and for them. In return, our colleagues deserve an inclusive, supportive, progressive and values led organisation to be their employer, which they are proud to be part of.

Now that we have agreed this new strategy with our elected members, we all will have a shared role in creating the culture, climate, and conditions for its success. I want us to embrace and nurture the brilliant people that are already part of our team, as well as ensuring we can be welcoming and supportive to new colleagues who join us, to help deliver our vision and ambitions for Cambridgeshire as a place.

The action plans we develop to bring this strategy to life will actively seek the insight, input and thoughts from colleagues across the Council, including the IDEAL Network and our recognised trade unions. After all, our culture and our organisation is the We, that is You, that is Us. We can only achieve our ambitions for the county and for our council if we work well together.

The Council in 2028 will undeniably be a different organisation compared to 2023, our opportunity now is to shape that together and make the Council the best employer it can be, with brilliant people working across our services and with our partners and communities alike. We are Cambridgeshire, we are One Team.

Stephen S. Moir
Chief Executive

Our workforce

- 31% of our workforce work part-time. In addition to a wide range of flexible working arrangements including 9-day fortnights.
- Our average colleague age is 45. 4.5% of you are over the age of 65, and 4.6% are under 25 years old.
- 55 colleagues are Mental Health First Aiders. We have an excellent wellbeing offer.
- 15.7%. Our turnover currently stands at around 55 leavers per month. This is an increase from 12.3% last year
- We have 160 apprentices working across 45 apprenticeship standards.
- Our colleagues work for us for an average of 7.9 years with 169 of us (3.7%) having more than 25 years' service
- We currently lose 31,688 working days per year to absence, with 'anxiety, mental health and depression' being the highest reasons for sickness absence.
- We are proud to be a Flexfrom1st employer enabling colleagues to request the right to flexible working from day one.
- 63% of our workforce have shared their ethnicity information with us. Of these, 90% have stated they are white, 3% Asian or Asian British, 3% Black, Black British, Caribbean or African, 2% mixed, multiple or other ethnic groups and 2% who would prefer not to say.

- Our total headcount is 4,625 Our total full-time equivalent is 3,448
- Team charters and our workspaces and buildings give us flexibility in the way that we undertake our roles and facilitate efficient ways of working
- 80% of our workforce are female

National workforce trends

We have 7 ambitions in our Strategic Framework, outlining what we plan to do to achieve our vision over the next five years. Our people are our greatest asset, and we are fortunate to employ some of the most dedicated officers in specialisms across the whole council. To achieve our ambitions, we need to continue to attract, recruit and retain experienced people across all parts of the organisation.

Never before have we seen such a major national shift in ways of working and within the wider employment relationship. The pandemic brought about changes not only to the way in which we work, but also to the expectations and needs we all have from our employer, our managers and our colleagues. Whilst we are still adapting to these changes and the impact they have had, there are many things we have already learnt, and need to continue to focus on, for the future.

Overcoming the challenges this presents is necessary as we seek to deliver high quality services, improve our outcomes and manage our impact on both the budget and the environment.

But what does this mean for you – our workforce of today and the future? Firstly, let's look at some national trends that are shaping the expectations we have as employees...

1. Employees want their employers, colleagues and managers to be kind and compassionate
2. People enjoy gaining broader experiences at work – helping other services and gaining knowledge of other areas
3. Individuals want to feel safe and secure in their workplace
4. People want support with wider economic challenges, such as the cost of living crisis
5. Employees want managers to be considerate of personal wellbeing, and more principles led and empathetic
6. People want more flexibility over where and when they work
7. Individuals want to demonstrate the additional value they create for their communities through their roles
8. People want to feel they belong, feeling connected to the workplace and their colleagues especially when working remotely

You said

Feedback and engagement is extremely important when shaping our people strategy and action plan. We need input from you all to help shape our actions, and measure our progress against these actions throughout the term of our people strategy.

Colleague feedback that has already helped to develop the strategy includes:

- We need to ensure we keep concern for others in the front of our minds and demonstrate this day to day through our work and management
- We need to focus on raising the profile of management and leadership roles and ensure we have clear career pathways with both qualified and unqualified routes
- We need to continue to consider how to increase flexibility and agility within our fixed roles
- We need to consider how to continue to build on our wider knowledge and experience and use our skills in a variety of ways and in different teams to make a difference
- We need to remain connected with our colleagues through engagement, networks and forums
- We need to understand how we create social value, and to ensure this is reflected in our recruitment and attraction as an employer
- We need to support and upskill our managers to be confident, empathetic and responsible leaders
- We need to make all information easily accessible to all of our colleagues and provide clear signposting on information location
- We need to explore further ways to ensure we all feel valued and have opportunities to progress and grow within the Council
- We need to provide clearer information on our pay and reward processes so we all understand our pay, and ways to reward and recognise each other

Our People Strategy

Our corporate strategy and strategic framework sets out how we intend to achieve our vision and ambitions for Cambridgeshire. However, it is you - our colleagues who play the most significant role to make our vision and ambitions a reality – and this is why our emphasis on inclusivity – “including you” is at the centre of our four people strategy themes.

Each of our four people strategy themes describe how it will look and feel working for Cambridgeshire County Council in 2028. These themes take our corporate ambitions, as well as the ideas you have given us to develop a series of people outcomes and commitments that will help us to achieve these ambitions.

The following pages outline our people outcomes and commitments within each people strategy theme. The **outcome** helps us all to visualise how it will feel being part of our team in 2028. The **people commitments** are our areas of focus, written as descriptions of the completed work in 2028.

These outcomes and people commitments outline how we can all work together to help achieve our Councils 7 ambitions of:

Ambition 1: Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes

Ambition 2: Travel across the county is safer and more sustainably environmentally

Ambition 3: Health inequalities are reduced

Ambition 4: People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs

Ambition 5: People are helped out of poverty and income inequality

Ambition 6: Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised

Ambition 7: Children and Young People have opportunities to thrive

Attracting You

The outcome: Your experience starts from the moment you are first interested in joining us, and from that point onwards, your employment journey is welcoming and engaging. Our inclusive, supportive and safe working environment attracts and retains diverse people who want to come to work as part of our team.

Our people commitments:

- We use inclusive and creative recruitment to attract people who are committed to our vision and values.
- Our pay and rewards are competitive and our benefits package is attractive, offering a range of retail, lifestyle and wellbeing related offers and discounts.
- Our commitment to wellbeing and the ways in which we actively support this are attractive to candidates in a competitive employment market, allowing us to differentiate ourselves through our focus on 'caring' and being a compassionate employer.
- Our flexible approach to recruitment and our desire to help develop potential means we have increased our apprenticeship opportunities, as well as recruited people who are not only 'day one ready' but have also started in a role with development needs. We have proven our ability to support those on their development journey.
- We have clear and easy progression pathways, secondment opportunities and apprenticeships routes that are attractive both internally and externally.

How we attract you to work with us to achieve our corporate ambitions:

- We attract people who can think beyond the short term and plan for the future low carbon place Cambridgeshire will be and the lifestyles that go along with it.
- Whilst we recruit the best people for our roles, we widely advertise our own job vacancies in the local community, acknowledging that we are a large employer and able to provide diverse employment opportunities within our communities.

- We have close links with our school's workforce and our pay and terms are aligned to assist with recruitment and retention within a known challenging employment market. Through our Teachers Pay Policy and collaborative approach, we support our schools and wider educational partners to take a long-term view of development, recruitment and retention.
- We ensure we have the capacity and to attract and retain the best people to drive forward both the statutory needs of our communities, preventative, safeguarding and development work in both social care and educational roles

Appreciating You

The outcome: Our culture of compassion and appreciation means that we really do all feel that we belong. We feel valued for the work that we do, the contribution that we make and the differences that we bring. People talk positively about working for Cambridgeshire and we are known to be a kind and compassionate employer.

Our people commitments:

- Our commitment to people feeling cared for by their employer and able to care for themselves will allow people to feel appreciated as individuals and for what they need to be well.
- Our values and culture support an environment of appreciation, where colleagues regularly praise each other, feedback is well received and given and we all feel valued for the work that we do.
- Our ways of working enable us all to balance work with life.
- We regularly celebrate our own successes and the successes of others.
- Our inclusive policies, reward and recognition mechanisms support and enable our culture of appreciation and actively celebrate the diversity of our colleagues.
- The benefits available to us are wide ranging and provide attractive and useful benefits that are widely utilised.

How we appreciate you for achieving our corporate ambitions:

- We understand the link between health inequalities and wider societal issues, and because of this, we work across services to ensure that health inequalities are considered in housing, employment initiatives and policies. We appreciate you for the efforts you take to understand these inequalities and the work you undertake to reduce these.
- We have, together, brought about real change through the Children's Change Programme. This has led to a greater focus on longer term, sustainable for our children, and also resulted in positive outcomes on capacity, morale and agility of our own workforce.
- We encourage you to volunteer within our local communities, providing you with opportunity to do so.
- Our pay and reward approaches consider and reward you for not just what you do, but for the positive impact your work has on our communities.

Developing You

The outcome: We work with you to enable you to manage your own development and careers, and our commitment to learning extends beyond skills and knowledge for your current role.

Our people commitments:

- Our learning and development offer supports you with your personal development and you are encouraged to grow your potential and manage your career.
- Managers proactively think about succession planning ensuring plans are in place for future workforce requirements.
- Clear career pathways illustrate development routes to progress your skills and prepare for future roles.
- Our commitment to growing our own provides opportunities for colleagues to be supported to gain the skills and knowledge needed for our roles.
- We have taken the approach to focus less on role specific requirements and more on transferable skills – this makes it easier than ever to move and progress to roles across the Council.
- The ‘Our Conversations’ tool helps you to create a development plan to work towards your personal and professional development and signposts training, information and support that is available.

How we develop you to help us achieve our corporate ambitions:

- Through education and engagement, we all understand what Net Zero and Climate resilient design means. We have identified and implemented process changes to help to embed these concepts and started to change behaviours individually and collectively across the organisation.
- Our clear career pathways illustrate development routes to progress your skills and prepare for future roles.
- We are skilled at making decisions appropriate to our roles to enable us to deliver care at a more local and personalised level. Not only are we care providers in our communities, but we are also skilled at empowering people and communities to support each other to stay healthy, connected, safe and independent.
- Our approach to career development means that we take a long-term view of resourcing, attracting and retaining our workforce. Our ‘grow our own approach’ and clear and transparent career pathways means we are confident in filling future vacancies and promotional opportunities.

Supporting you

The outcome: Our commitment to considering wellbeing in all aspects of employment ensures that you feel supported at every stage of your life and time with Cambridgeshire. You have adequate resources and safe spaces to support you to do your job well, and you feel that you belong in your team and in the wider organisation.

Our people commitments:

- Our buildings provide you with safe working spaces and are equipped and developed to complement the ways we work.
- Support networks and colleague forums operate formally and informally, providing you with safe spaces to share knowledge and experience, and learn from others.
- We regularly ask you what you need from us as an employer to enable you to do your best in your role. We listen and act appropriately on all given feedback to create an enjoyable, sustainable and supportive work environment with progression and learning opportunities.
- We all know where to go to feedback issues, and where to seek support for any concerns that we have – both work related and personal.
- We are skilled in promoting early intervention and prevention measures to support our colleagues to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

How we support you to help us to achieve our corporate ambitions:

- We support you to consider the most sustainable and climate friendly ways of working to reduce travel, and we have flexibility in where, when and how we undertake our roles to enable us to meet our community needs whilst at the same time positively reducing the environmental impact of our work.
- We take a compassionate and proactive approach to our own health and wellbeing. We role model lifestyle choices and support each other to ensure that we not only help our communities to retain and regain health and independence, but we are doing this ourselves too.
- We understand that many of our colleagues are also members of our communities. We have actively worked hard to eradicate in-work poverty in both our organisation and our communities. We have widely signposted mechanisms to support our own workforce with financial and wider challenges and these mechanisms are well used and provide useful and proven support.
- Our organisational structures are clear and agile. We all understand the responsibility and the level of decision-making accountability within our roles, to support you to make the best decisions for our communities.