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# Colchester City Council

## Future Workforce Plan

Enabling Transformation through our People



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## **Contents**

<b>1 Overview .....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>2 Drivers for change .....</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>3 Where are we now .....</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>4 Our current workforce profile .....</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>5 Where do we need to be .....</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>6 How we will achieve it .....</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
<b>7 Our workforce priorities and action plan ..</b>	<b>Page 14</b>

# 1 Introduction

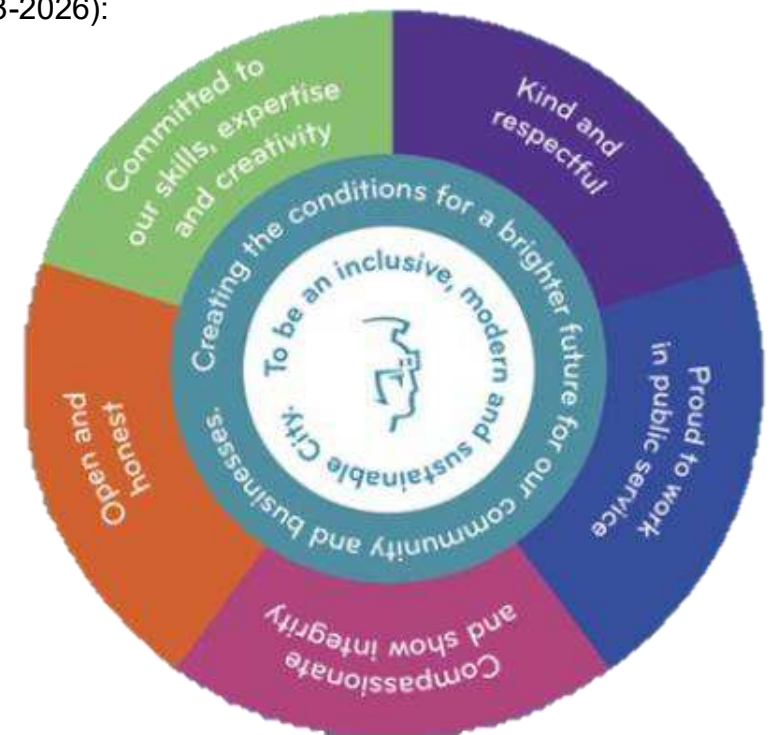
To be a modern council and to ensure we are fit for the future needs of our residents, our aim is to have a workforce that reflects the lived experience of the people it serves. We want to be an employer of choice for Colchester residents, with a high-performing, agile and diverse workforce, capable of delivering innovative services which enable our city to grow and ensure every community and place matters.

The Council's Strategic Plan 'A City Fit for the Future' sets out a clear vision for the outcomes the council wants to deliver for the city of Colchester over the next three years, alongside the actions we will take to get there. The Workforce Strategy describes the way we plan to develop our current and future workforce to ensure they have the right skills, environment and values to enable the council to deliver its Strategic Plan.

Our Strategic Plan sets out the six priorities for the council over the next three years (2023-2026):

- Respond to the climate emergency.
- Deliver modern services for a modern city.
- Improve health, wellbeing and happiness.
- Deliver homes for those in need.
- Grow our economy so everyone benefits.
- Celebrate our city, heritage and culture.

To reflect the six strategic priorities, the council has created a new vision, purpose and core values which define and shape our workplace culture. They reflect who we are and what matters to us as council employees.



## 2 Drivers for change

As we work to turn the vision and priorities into reality, we must also continue to live within our means.

We have a diverse and committed workforce focused on delivering services to our residents.

However, cuts to our core funding, on-going financial pressures coupled with ambitious plans for our city means that we will need to operate very differently to deliver on our vision and purpose and be a sustainable council that can live within its means.

Our response to this financial challenge must be radical; to close the budget gap and future proof our organisation, we will need to reduce our operating costs by 25% over the next 3 years.

To achieve this, we have developed a transformation programme encompassing a portfolio of work to reimagine what we do as a Council and how we deliver it. The 'Fit for the Future' portfolio will make sure that we are exactly that; fit for the future of our city, of our organisation and of our people.

Our workforce will be critical to the delivery of the Fit for Future transformation portfolio. To enable the level of change we will need an engaged workforce, investment in technology and skills, inclusive leadership and people policies and processes that will enable and sustainable, agile and resilient workforce that is fit for the future. At an organisational level, we will need a great understanding of our workforce in terms of their values, career aspirations and why they choose to work for the council so we can retain their skills.

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Senior Leadership Board				
Environment	Leisure & Economy	Housing	Assets	Corporate
Waste Services	Culture & Heritage	HRA Review	Asset Management	Shared Services
Rosa Tanfield	Frank Hargrave	Lindsay Barker	Mandy Jones	Richard Block
Greening & Street Care	Active and Wellbeing	Housing Provision		Future Workforce
Rosa Tanfield Mel Rundle	Rory Doyle	Philip Sullivan		Jess Douglas
	Economic Growth			Digital Customer
	Matt Sterling			Mel Kemp-Salt

[Fit for the Future transformation programme overview]

### 3 Where are we now

Our Strategic Plan, alongside our Vision, Purpose and Core Values forms the basis of organisational transformation.

We will establish a clear link between our strategic priorities and our talent needs. A leaner and agile organisation will require a core workforce with the ability to add interim capacity and expertise as and when required.

We will support our people through this change, ensuring we live and breathe our core values. Showing integrity and kindness, being open and honest, demonstrating commitment to our skills, expertise and creativity, and ultimately being proud to work in public service has never been more important.

Our workforce is our most valuable asset. Providing critical services to residents, it needs to be skilled, engaged, motivated and responsive to the changing environment. Our vision as an employer is to invest in our people to build a skilled, agile and sustainable workforce that can fully utilise its potential.

The Covid-19 pandemic and world events have impacted our economy, government response and therefore our city and communities. The ability to lead in a volatile, complex and uncertain environment has become the norm and our leaders will need to acknowledge that reality and develop the skills to respond positively, with clarity and clear direction. Many of our leaders are having to manage a disparate and hybrid workforce and how they manage may require a re-set as the council transforms and staff engagement becomes ever more important.

We have embraced system working alongside Anchor organisations on shared strategic priorities and sharing a senior post with the Integrated Care Board with potentially more shared role opportunities to come. We are also progressing with sharing our back-office services with Braintree and Epping Forest District Councils. There will be a great deal of change for our staff which will require clear communication and engagement on the vision and direction of travel and enabling staff to work across boundaries.

The Future Workforce plan sets out what we will do in the next 1-2 years to achieve our vision to build a sustainable workforce that can deliver on the council's ambitious agenda.

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## 4 Our current workforce profile

Since the economic crisis in 2010, the council has undertaken a series of fundamental service reviews which has transformed the way we work and delivered significant efficiencies and financial savings.

There is a policy framework in place that supports our workforce development and change processes:

- Change Management and Redundancy Policy
- Wellbeing Strategy
- Flexible and Agile Working Policies
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Equality Impact Assessment guidance
- Officer Pay Policy
- Organisational Development Action Plan – add link
- Staff recognition policy

**We employ** – 879 staff

**FTE** is: 761.5 staff

Casual staff – 239 workers

Agency workers -£ 1.1 million  
2022/23

**Gender split**

Female – 45%

Male -54%

Re-assigned -1%

**Gender pay gap**

1.9% in favour of

**Ethnic minority staff**  
(declared) -  
6.74%women

**Disability (declared) -**  
5.12%

**Staff turnover** 14.3%

**Full time staff** - 647/74%

**Part time staff** - 232/26%

**Across our family:**

**CBH** – 241 headcount – 222.5 FTE

**CCH Ltd and Amphora** – 49 HC – 41 FTE

**Total employees CCC + CBH CCH Ltd  
and Amphora:**

**1169 Headcount**

**1025 - FTE**

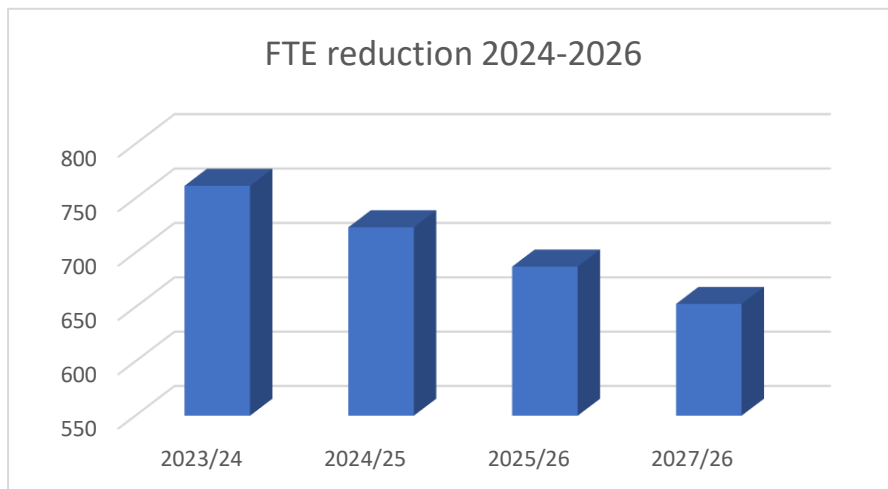
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## 5 Where do we need to be

This future workforce plan seeks to future proof the organisation, by ensuring the council has the resources, skills and capacity to deliver services in a changing economic and local government landscape. Understanding the current and predicting the future workforce landscape is vital to ensuring the council can attract and retain staff and provide different work experiences that reflect the needs of our diverse workforce. The following external challenges may impact on our workforce ambitions, but through effective workforce planning and understanding and engaging with staff, we aim to minimise the impact of these external factors:

- Demand for skilled staff is outpacing the labour market and the council must constantly review its employment offer to recruit and retain staff.
- Competitive pay and reward are an issue for some staff and therefore the council must look at the wider benefits it can offer, particularly professional development and career choice.
- The expectations of our workforce at different points of their working lives are different and the council needs to understand these differences and be flexible in its employment offer.

To deliver the budget, we will need to reduce our operating costs by 25%. We aim to achieve this through a combination of income generation opportunities, efficiencies generated through shared services, different models of delivery and some natural attrition. With an annual turnover rate of around 15%. With an annual turnover rate of around 15%, we assume an annual reduction of staff (full time equivalents) of 5%.





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## 6 How we will achieve it

To deliver the council's strategic priorities, alongside the Transformation Portfolio and address our financial challenges our future workforce we have developed eight 'Levers for Change'.

<b>Sustainable</b>	<p>Establishment is affordable within the council's budget, but work is achievable, fulfilling, and long hours are not the norm.</p> <p>Core workforce, with ability to bring in additional interim capacity and expertise to drive through council priorities. Staff are fulfilled, quality of work life is positive, and needs are being met.</p> <p>Strengthened culture and internal processes to develop and upskill staff internally rather than externally recruit or use temporary staff to cover posts.</p> <p>Emphasis on wellbeing at work so everyone can thrive at work; Healthy body, healthy mind, healthy workplace.</p>
<b>Agile</b>	<p>The need for an adaptable workforce, with an increase in demand for our services, technological advancements and different models of delivery will need a responsive workforce that is enabled to respond, adapt, learn new skills and gain knowledge.</p> <p>We will utilise our existing skills and share knowledge across the council, systems and partnership.</p> <p>In return the council will invest in its people to learn new skills, embrace new opportunities to do different work and be open to change.</p>
<b>Resilient</b>	<p>Together we will need to be clear on the direction of the council and resilient to meet the challenges.</p> <p>Our people will be supported to adapt and thrive in a constantly changing environment, by focusing on people's wellbeing, physical and mental health.</p> <p>We will build a resilient, high performing workforce by supporting staff holistically by adopting a biopsychosocial approach.</p>
<b>Inclusive</b>	<p>Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to EDI and are involved in activities to promote inclusion.</p> <p>Colleagues are respectful of each other and working proactively to create an inclusive environment free of discrimination and harassment where difference is celebrated.</p> <p>Increased diversity and good representation across the council against each protected characteristic</p> <p>More diversity within senior leadership team.</p> <p>Workforce reflective of our communities</p> <p>EDI embedded in every workforce activity</p>
<b>Ready to develop skills for the future</b>	<p>Investment in skills development linked to council priorities and transformation</p> <p>Opportunities for our workforce to learn, grow and develop new skills</p> <p>Generous to share learning and knowledge, to develop and empower others</p>

<b>Engaged</b>	Working together to achieve the council's vision and purpose underpinned by our core values; Showing integrity and kindness, being open and honest, demonstrating commitment to our skills, expertise and creativity, and being proud to work in public service. Working diligently together with residents to deliver results.
<b>Embracing system working and shared service opportunities</b>	Building on existing and forging new partnerships, work collaboratively to realise the opportunities that shared services can bring; resilience, improving capacity, building relationships, retaining staff, service efficiencies and improved customer journey.
<b>Digital and data enabled</b>	Investment in skills, to enable technological innovations and to support transformation, building digital services to enable customers and deliver services efficiently. Using data to support evidence-based workforce planning and to measure impact.

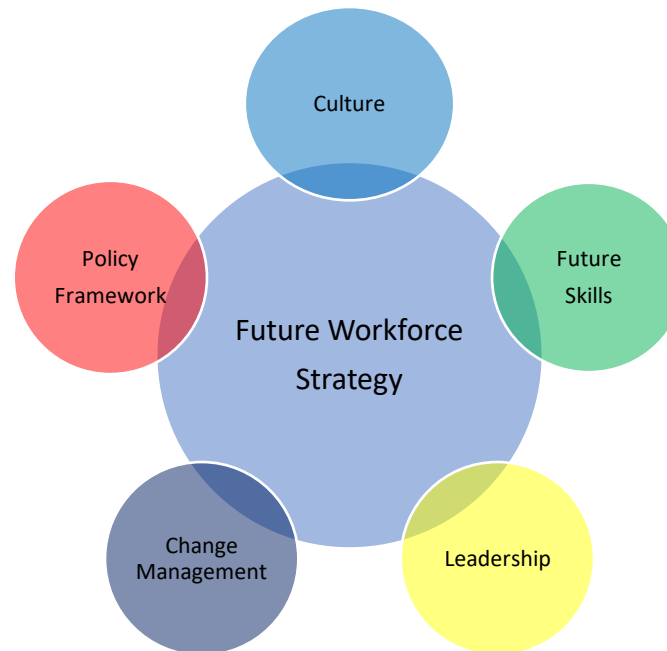
The council is going through unprecedented transformation; inspirational leadership is vital to shaping the direction, supporting staff to perform their best and ensuring everyone is able to achieve great results.

To build the workforce of the future our leaders will need to be people focused:

1. Continually model the council's core values
2. Be committed to leading a diverse workforce and promoting inclusion
3. Take time to listen without judgement, communicate purpose openly and regularly, offering feedback opportunities
4. Be able to lead transformation positively and collaboratively understanding and managing the impact of change on people
5. Have an open mindset, a desire to listen, understand alternative viewpoints and tolerance of ambiguity and build resilience.
6. Be curious and open to learning and development of new skills
7. Collaborative, empowering individuals and harnessing input from diverse groups
8. Enable staff to do their best work, be engaged, motivated and proud to work for the council
9. Focused and supporting the wellbeing of colleagues
10. Be ambitious for the council and lead by our leadership pledge:
  - Share a common purpose, vision, and endeavour;
  - To commit to the values of public life;
  - Be accountable for our behaviour and the impacts we have on those we lead;
  - Model exemplary behaviour and uphold the highest standards in our leadership roles;
  - Empower and enable colleagues and to collaborate to deliver the best outcomes for our communities;
  - Be open and supportive of change when it is in the best overall interest of the Council family and its residents
  - Lead with integrity, honesty, and kindness

## Our workforce strategy has many independencies:

- To be sustainable and deliver excellent services will require agility, skills, new technology and staff engagement.
- Embedding our vision, purpose and core values will require inspirational leaders, communication, modelling and recognising behaviours that reflect our core values.
- Our change management policies and processes need to enable change, be fair and transparent and trusted by staff.
- New technology will enable different ways of working and will need to be supported by investment in new skills.
- To become an inclusive council, we must have a clear EDI strategy in place for our people and communities.
- To be resilient we will need to work with system partners to deliver strategic priorities and adopt a shared service approach where opportunities arise.
- We will respond to the competitive external recruitment challenges, by drawing on public sector recruitment campaigns and collaborating with partners to address capacity and skills challenges.



### How will we know achieved our workforce priorities

- The council is sustainable and lives within its means – staffing budget is balanced
- Strategic plan action plan is delivered, KPIs are achieved
- Reduction in the use and cost of agency and interim temporary workers for core roles
- Staff tell us that their wellbeing is prioritised by the council
- Sickness absence due to mental health and physical work factors is reduced – annual sickness absence target is achieved
- Investment in skills provides a return on investment, i.e. improved performance, career progression, staff retention
- The rate of staff re-deployed through the change process is higher than the turnover rate.
- Examples of internal movement and progression increase
- Staff satisfaction and engagement improves over the next 3 years
- Workforce reflects Colchester City's population as per the census.
- Senior Leadership Team is diverse and more inclusive
- Council achieves excellence standard against the LGA equalities framework
- Apprenticeship levy is spent in full, either through new apprenticeship recruitment or professional development of existing staff
- Clear examples of partnership working delivers strategic priorities and builds capacity and resilience.
- Staff increasingly working across systems and collaborating successfully across services and partners.

## 7 Our workforce priorities and action plan

Sustainable - Key elements	We will	How will we know if we succeed	Target date
<p><b>Sustainable</b>                      Leaner council – 25% reduction in operating costs will impact size of workforce                      Coherent strategic approach to workforce planning, to define, attract and grow our workforce and future leaders                      Identification of pinch points and priorities over the next few years to address shortages /surpluses informed by knowledge of our skill levels across our workforce.                      Significant change and new models of delivery                      Leaders who can communicate and engage staff                      HR Change Management Policy and process                      Opportunities for staff to shape the programme, provide feedback and ideas                      Effective internal communications                      Acknowledging that the size of our workforce needs to reduce, manage this partially through natural turnover, internal recruitment first, re-skilling to minimise redundancies.                      Use data to support evidence-based workforce planning and to measure impact.</p>	<p><b>Review Change Management Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus of the policy to change to re-deployment first not necessarily exit to retain skills and minimise costs</li> <li>• Review job matching threshold of 80% to allow more flexibility to amend roles</li> <li>• Career support: personal skills development plans, re-deployment opportunities discussions using existing coaches trained to be internal career coaches.</li> <li>• Everyone in the redeployment pool assigned a career coach</li> </ul>	<p>Most vacant posts are filled through internal re-deployment.</p> <p>Highly effective career coaches in place and staff retention remains stable.</p>	<p>February 2024</p>
	<p><b>Change Management skills programme to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding our Transformation and Future Workforce Programme</li> <li>• Developing options for change</li> <li>• Facilitation and coaching skills</li> <li>• Change management Process – how to implement</li> <li>• The importance of involving, communicating and consulting teams through change</li> <li>• Managing redundancy conversations positively</li> <li>• Career and talent management</li> </ul>	<p>Managers effectively managing change process through their teams.</p> <p>Staff tell us through surveys that they understand, feel engaged and supported through the change process.</p> <p>Employee relations issues are managed well.</p>	<p>March/April 2024</p>
	<p><b>Operational / Service Workforce and Organisational Development Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create workforce and OD plans bespoke to each service aligned to service plan, long term and short-term workforce needs, embedding core values, change, transformation portfolio, skills development</li> <li>• Train Heads of Service in workforce planning to understand how to plan staff resources and use workforce planning tools to reflect future service needs. Work force plans to include skills development, succession planning, use of apprenticeships, attraction and retention, recruitment, management development</li> </ul>	<p>Workforce/OD Plans in place for each service and teams have the capacity and skills to deliver the strategic and service priorities.</p>	<p>HoS Training Feb 2024</p> <p>Plans – April 2024</p>

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Skills for Future - Key elements	We will	How will we know if we succeed	Target date
<p>Understanding our workforce skills through council wide <u>Skills Audit</u> Identifying the skills needed through the future? Skill gap analysis- based on skills audit, self-assessment and appraisal outcomes Costed Future Skills Plan in place Increased investment in skills development – capacity, focus and budget</p>	<p>Work with partners to establish a skills taskforce to identify the skills needed by the council for the future. Use the outputs of service plans and workforce plans, horizon scanning and research on the future of work.</p>	<p>Skills development programme investment – increase in internal appointments to vacant posts</p>	<p>April 2024</p>
	<p>Conduct a whole council skills audit exercise and gap analysis and develop a learning and development strategy and plan.</p>	<p>L&amp;D plan in place aligned to strategic priorities and future workforce needs.</p>	<p>June/July 2024</p>
	<p>Develop career pathways and development plans for each service to support progression and retention and support our future workforce and leaders.</p>	<p>Staff retention and internal movement increases</p>	<p>Sept 2024</p>
	<p>Transforming our Digital Offer Understand the skills needed to support digital innovation and build efficiencies. Investment in skills, to enable technological and digital innovation to support transformation, building digital services to enable customers and deliver services efficiently. Leaders to be digitally upskilled to inspire others.</p>	<p>All staff are digitally enabled and can effectively use the work systems they need.</p>	<p>TBC</p>
	<p>Promote and build on our apprenticeship programme and aim to take an apprenticeship first approach for internal professional development and recruitment of entry level roles.</p>	<p>Apprenticeship levy is fully spent. Where appropriate apprenticeships offered for professional development.</p>	<p>Relaunch Apprenticeship Week March 2024</p>
	<p>Train workforce on data use to support better evidence-based decision making and performance monitoring.</p>	<p>Use of data increases, decision making enhanced.</p>	<p>Sept 2024</p>

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Leadership - Key elements	We will	How will we know if we succeed	Target date
<p>Leadership framework Coaching/mentoring of future leaders Leadership development programme to support transformation.</p>	<p>Deliver a programme of development for senior leadership team to effectively lead transformation. Team Coaching, performance coaching, Colchester Leadership programme.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team effectively leading the organisation and transformation</p>	<p>Started and on-going</p>
	<p>Launch a CCC leaders' skills and competency framework</p>	<p>All managers have a personal development plan linked to framework. Leaders are highly competent.</p>	<p>April 2024</p>
	<p>Deliver a focused leadership programme based on the new leadership skills and competency framework and support leaders to lead in a complex environment; manage hybrid and remote teams and across organisations i.e. shared services.</p>	<p>Leaders competent to lead teams through transformation.</p>	<p>From June 2024</p>
	<p>Re launch Future Leaders talent management programme Offer ILM level 5 &amp; 7 qualifications through the apprenticeship levy Coaching and mentoring support, Secondment opportunities Shadowing, Political awareness and governance course</p>	<p>Pipeline of future leaders in place ready to move into leadership roles.</p>	<p>From Sept 2024</p>
	<p>Launch coaching and mentoring strategy to embed inclusive leadership and coaching culture.</p>	<p>Coaching and inclusive leadership embedded.</p>	<p>Dec 2024</p>
	<p>Create and launch new leaders Induction Programme.</p>	<p>New leaders are ready to fulfil roles.</p>	<p>June 2024</p>
	<p>Integrate core values and leadership pledge in all leadership roles</p>	<p>All leaders model the core values.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
	<p>Support agile leadership by enabling job shadowing and swaps.</p>	<p>Agile leaders able to fill critical roles.</p>	<p>On-going</p>

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Agile and Resilient - Key elements	We will	How will we know if we succeed	Target date
<p>Effective wellbeing strategy and plans with clear outcomes</p> <p>New occupational health service provider focused on biopsychosocial approach.</p> <p>Empowered staff who understand and share the council's vision, purpose and core values.</p>	Train managers in wellbeing awareness, their responsibilities, where to signpost and how to support staff in crisis.	Mental health sickness absence is reduced.	June 2024
	Wellbeing champions to review and re-focus wellbeing strategy and plans to enhance staff resilience through transformation.	New wellbeing strategy and plans aligned to Fit for Future programme.	Sept 2024
	Work with health partners to identify and provide health interventions to improve wellbeing and attendance.	Sickness absence target achieved.	Jan 2025
	Develop a network of mentors and implement a formal buddying system to support new staff through their probation period.	New staff can deliver their roles quickly. Staff retained after probation period.	Sept 2024
	Introduce more flexible Job Accountability Statements and roles and start to embed the principle in our recruitment that we work in a fluid and agile environment and roles may change as the organisation transforms.	Staff movement encouraged across CCC. Staff understand the need for flexibility.	Sept 2024
	Launch a new occupational health provider with an innovative biopsychosocial approach. Focus will shift from addressing the physical and mental health issue by taking a more holistic approach, with specialist support offered.	New OH provider supports staff to return to work after absence.	May 2024

Inclusive - Key elements	We will	How will we know if we succeed	Target date
<p>EDI objectives embedded into workforce planning and</p> <p>Targets and plans to address under representation</p> <p>EDI group and champions collaborating and steering EDI plan and activity</p> <p>Work towards Excellence against the LGA Equalities framework</p> <p>Enabling an open and happy workforce</p>	<p>Roll out an EDI learning and development plan. EDI workshop for SLT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating bespoke accessible content and EDI learning opportunities for front line and operational staff</li> <li>• Annual Programme of EDI lunch and learn sessions -open to all</li> <li>• Development and roll out of EDI workshops for staff to supplement e-learning</li> <li>• Refreshed EDI induction model</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	Managers and staff to understand their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.	From Feb 2024
	Introduce a Reverse Mentoring programme	Staff empowered.	January 2025



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		Diversity promoted and stereotypes broken down. Staff develop business skills	
	Development of an EDI Strategy that demonstrates our inclusion ambition and commitment to diversity and inclusion aligned to the LGA Equalities framework.	Achieve the excellence standard within 3 years.	June 2025
	Raise awareness of different EDI issues through a calendar of events and activities	CCC is an inclusive organisation.	On-going
	Conduct accessibility audits in corporate buildings to support our aim to be an inclusive workplace.	Buildings are accessible to all.	In line with Asset Strategy plan
	Measure and monitor the impact of our EDI work through objectives and KPIs	KPIs in place and delivered.	Sept 2024
	Providing tailored and targeted EDI initiatives based on the needs of each service.	EDI employee relations issues reduce.	On-going
	Introduce a young person network to support younger staff in the workforce and provide a social hub, to help them to connect in the hybrid environment.	Younger workforce thrive and stay.	May 2024

Engaged - Key elements	We will	How will we know if we succeed	Target date
New Fit for Future communication and engagement plan Measurement and monitoring engagement through staff surveys. Use of diverse forums to gather workforce insight and feedback. Autonomous staff enabled to innovate and implement new ideas	Communicate, Engage, Consult Refresh our internal and staff engagement plan, aligned to the transformation programme. Be open and honest with staff, using existing communications tools and forums to increase trust and confidence in the change process.	Staff feel informed, understand the rationale for change and have opportunities to shape the future.	In line with FFF internal comms plan
	Review and enhancement of COLIN (intranet) to develop a more interactive and inclusive communications portal.		
	Deliver an annual all-staff conference to support staff engagement and inclusion.		
	Enable front line staff, to receive communications through investment in ICT equipment and training in remote locations to improve engagement and sense of belonging.	Front line staff are fully informed and engaged.	March 2025

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	Launch a digital ideas portal so staff to support innovation and implementation of new ideas to improve services.	New innovations and service improvements encouraged.	Sept 2024
	Celebrating success - Review staff recognition scheme to make it more agile and inclusive, e.g. employee of week, team of the month etc.	Staff are recognised for their contribution towards the transformation programme.	Sept 2024
	Measure and monitor staff engagement through staff survey, pulse surveys and develop follow up action plans to address issues and enhance engagement.	Staff survey analysed and action in place to address issues.	All staff survey June 2024

<b>System working/shared services Key Elements</b>	<b>We will</b>	<b>How will we know if we succeed</b>	<b>Target date</b>
Shared services across council family and North Essex LAs Shared roles with system partners Collaboration with alliance, anchor partners, public sector, to provide capacity, resilience and shared learning and delivery.	Work with Epping Forest and Braintree District Council to deliver the vision for back office shared services across the 3 local authorities.	Shared back office shared service in place and drivers delivered.	September 2025
	Develop a framework to support the delivery of future shared services: Share our knowledge with other partners and North Essex Councils.	Business case delivers shared service - staff are engaged and work in shared service positively.	Sept 2024
	Ensure staff earmarked to be in the shared service are given opportunities to engage and shape the shared service to ensure buy in.		On-going

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**To deliver this plan we will need:**

Extra capacity to deliver/co-ordinate the workforce strategy

Skills development plan plus budget to deliver

Leadership development programme focused on transformation

Buy-in and engagement of members, SLT, all staff, partners