

## EXECUTIVE 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>North Northamptonshire People Plan</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	Rob Bridge, Chief Executive Adele Wylie, Director of Governance and HR
<b>Executive Member</b>	Councillor Jason Smithers, Leader of the Council

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974</b>	

### List of Appendices

#### Appendix A – North Northamptonshire People Plan

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the proposed People Plan for North Northamptonshire Council.
- 1.2 The People Plan underpins other corporate plans and strategies by ensuring the Council maximises the recruitment, retention and performance of its workforce in furtherance of its corporate priorities and desired outcomes.

##### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 Following the creation of the Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, the first Corporate Plan was approved in November 2021. A key priority identified was that the Council become an employer of choice. Whilst this is an overarching objective, it is important that the Council sets out what this means and how it proposes to achieve this desired outcome by having a clearly defined and well-articulated People Plan. The plan focuses on key workforce priorities and identifies how these will be addressed through detailed action plans.

2.2 The Council is newly established and is therefore going through significant change and transformation. It is also responding to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic and recognises that the current circumstances are unique and somewhat uncertain. Accordingly, the People Plan focuses on the next 12 to 18 months to ensure that the Council organises its workforce in an effective way for the short to medium term by having the right structures, people and skills in place to deliver high quality services to its residents and communities. The People Plan has been designed with built in flexibility to allow the Council to focus on the immediate needs identified as a consequence of the pandemic, as well as the unique challenges which are present for all newly formed organisations. The uncertainty posed by both of these issues necessitates the Council closely monitoring its activities and being able to adapt its approach as the challenges evolve over time. Its short-term learning will in turn inform the development of its medium to long term strategy.

2.3 **Appendix A** sets out the key themes of the People Plan, which primarily set out how the Council proposes to attract, develop, engage and retain talent, and reward its employees. By delivering this plan, the Council will be well-placed to achieve the corporate objectives identified in the Corporate Plan.

**The Council's vision is to make North Northamptonshire "a place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life".**

2.4 To help achieve this vision, there must be a strong focus on the workforce. It is one of the greatest assets and a motivated and engaged workforce will be essential to drive through the service evolution required to deliver the corporate priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan.

### **3. Recommendations**

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3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- a) Approve the People Plan attached at Appendix A.
- b) Note that the People Plan will be underpinned by detailed action plans to ensure that the impact and efficacy of the Plan can be measured and adapted as required.

3.2 Reason for Recommendation

- a) The People Plan is essential for providing clarity to the organisation and setting out key workforce priorities for the next 12-18 months. It ensures that the Council organises its workforce in an effective way for the short to medium term by having the right structures, people, and skills in place to deliver high quality services to its residents and communities.

### **4. Report Background**

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4.1 As a new organisation formed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, the Council has considered a wide range of important strategic issues and made fundamental choices as to

its future operation. These will be integral in setting the culture and priorities for the Council and providing clarity to the organisation, as well as the residents and businesses of North Northamptonshire.

- 4.2 In November 2021, the Council approved its first Corporate Plan. This represents a huge milestone for the Council as it identifies the key priorities for the Council and its ambition for the future. One of the key priorities is to ensure that North Northamptonshire Council becomes an employer of choice. Whilst the Corporate Plan sets out high level priorities, these will not be achieved without being underpinned by policies and plans that set out how the desired outcomes will be delivered and the measures which will demonstrate progress towards delivery of the priorities.
- 4.3 North Northamptonshire Council was created by the merging of five local government organisations with different cultures and practices. It is therefore of vital importance that the Council focuses on quickly bringing together the five different workforces to create one cohesive and consistent organisation. It intends to focus on stabilising service provision with a view to creating a sound foundation to deliver transformed local government services which are of value to, and valued by, the communities in the new district.
- 4.4 The Executive adopted a Transformation Plan in December 2021, which clearly articulated the Council's objective of becoming a successful, innovative and ambitious Council.
- 4.5 The Future Ways of Working Strategy proposed for adoption by the Executive highlights the Council's desire to enable staff to deliver collaborative, solution focussed services, The Strategy outlines the tools and flexibility required to deliver the desired outcomes particularised in the Corporate Plan and includes the development of plans which promote modern ways of working. One of the key themes identified within the Strategy is "Our People".
- 4.6 The proposed People Plan underpins the above identified Strategies/Plans and ensures that the Council's approach to maximising the performance of its workforce is aligned to its corporate outcomes. They are inherently linked and are essential at a time where there is a significant amount of change and transformation.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 Bringing together five different organisations and its workforce provides opportunities and challenges. The sharing of knowledge and chance to collaborate with a wider network of colleagues is helping to shape exciting and ambitious ideas for the future delivery of services. Whilst there has been lots of work put into developing a unified culture, the Council accepts that this will take time to embed, and it continues to be a challenge. This will be a key outcome of the People Plan.

### **Staffing stability**

- 5.2 A natural consequence of Local Government Reorganisation and one that is echoed with all newly formed unitary Councils is that some staff choose to find

new opportunities outside of the Council. Whilst turnover of staff is essential to a healthy organisation, where this increases to a higher level than would be expected it can have an impact on the organisation. It is therefore essential that the Council focuses on recruitment and retention to ensure that it has the 'talent' needed to drive forward the organisation and deliver high quality services.

- 5.3 Local Government reorganisation was reset and reprofiled to April 2021, following the outbreak of the global COVID 19 pandemic to be 'Safe and Legal Plus' for Vesting Day on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. This meant transformation activities were reprioritised and some carried over to be completed after vesting day. This also delayed permanent structures being in place for some services. Redesigning the Council's operating models and services and getting the right structures in place continues to be a key piece of work that will have a positive impact on the organisation.

### **Disaggregation**

- 5.4 There are a number of employees who work jointly across North and West Northamptonshire Council. Whilst the arrangements ensured that adequate structures were in place on vesting day and that disaggregation could be aided, its impact on the organisation from a people perspective is acknowledged and clarity for North Northamptonshire Council's workforce is even more important as a result.

### **Key Themes**

- 5.5 The Plan set out at **Appendix A** has five key themes;

- Creating inspirational leadership;
- Investing in our people;
- Attracting and growing talent; and
- Engaging and motivating and
- Transforming together.

- 5.6 The key themes and the clarity that the plan provides will support staff in understanding the Council's commitment to them and also how they can own and shape the Council's future.

- 5.7 Expected benefits for both employees and residents and customers are set out within the People Plan. The Council is focussed on delivering the best possible services and this has to be balanced and supported by a happy and healthy workforce.

- 5.8 For employees, the expected benefits are,

- greater engagement and feeling more valued and supported;
- improved job satisfaction;
- clear career pathway;
- increased skills and knowledge; and
- more empowered and driven.

- 5.9 For residents and customers, the expected benefits are,

- a flexible operating model and a workforce that has the right skills, expertise and is motivated and engaged to support their goals and ambitions.
- a confident workforce empowered to make decisions and be accountable; and
- joined up working across all services.

5.10 The People Plan attached at **Appendix A** is intended to address the key opportunities and challenges that the Council has and provide clarity on the priorities for its workforce for the upcoming years. The Council could choose not to implement a People Strategy although it is believed that this would be detrimental to the continued shaping of the new authority and establishing a North Northamptonshire culture.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

6.1.1 There are no additional resource or financial implications at this stage to consider as a direct result of implementing the People Strategy.

### **6.2 Legal**

6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation however individual decisions which may result from the introduction of the Strategy will be considered where appropriate.

### **6.3 Risk**

6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.