

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday 12 March 2024

People Strategy 2024-2027

Executive/routine

Executive

Wards

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Policy and Sustainability Committee is asked to approve the People Strategy for 2024-2027.

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2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the refreshed People Strategy for 2024-2027.

3. Background

- 3.1 The People Strategy enables the delivery of the City of Edinburgh Council's Business Plan (Our Future Council, Our Future City) which sets out an ambitious agenda. The People Strategy will be underpinned by a refreshed Workforce Plan which will detail the workforce and people resources the organisation needs to deliver the Strategy now, for the future, and how we will achieve this. This will be presented to Committee in August 2024.
- 3.2 The refreshed People Strategy is underpinned by Our Behaviours which should be embedded in everything that we do. The delivery of the Strategy will be monitored through a People Strategy Action Plan, with quarterly updates to Policy and Sustainability Committee.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Edinburgh has a 2050 City Vision, informed by our citizens saying that they want Edinburgh to be a fair, welcoming, thriving and pioneering city. The Council's focus is on tackling poverty, delivering a net zero carbon city, and promoting the wellbeing of residents which remains more important than ever.
- 4.2 It is therefore vital that we continue to attract and nurture the most talented and public-service focused people, both locally and from around the world. Our People Strategy 2024-2027 sets out how we will achieve this. Our current and future employees are our greatest strength, and this Strategy sets out the five themes forming the foundations and framework required to deliver our Business Plan.
- 4.3 In developing the People Strategy, a robust consultation and engagement process has been undertaken to ensure that this Strategy captures the views, ambitions and feedback of our colleagues (past and present), our trade unions and our colleague networks. In addition, input from wider stakeholders and professional bodies have been considered so that we have a Strategy that is reflective of a collective vision, is ambitious, and helps to achieve our aspiration to be an employer of choice.
- 4.4 The consultation and engagement process followed several accessible approaches that ensured there was a way for all our people to participate and gathered a wide and diverse range of feedback. This included:
- Review of existing people engagement surveys and review findings recommendations and data (Culture Capture 2021, Inquiry Review Recommendations).
 - Dedicated Engagement Channel on Orb

- Senior Leader-Led Sessions
- Digital and Face to Face HR Led Sessions
- Colleague Networks' Focus Group and insight from our reverse mentoring programme.
- Trade Union Engagement

4.5 Following consolidation of feedback to inform the People Strategy, this has resulted in the creation of five key themes:

Theme	Key Actions Leading To:
Attracting the best people	Creation of refreshed 3 Year Workforce Plan Development of Recruitment, Talent and Attraction Plan Enhanced recruitment technology and platform Enhanced induction process Inclusive recruitment Development of our employer brand
Develop exceptional leaders	Embedding of Behaviours (Respect, Integrity and Flexibility) People centred culture Inspired, confident and empowering leaders Review of people manager roles and competencies
Foster a culture of equalities, diversity and inclusion	Refreshed Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter Mark Standards Enhance current and new Policy Development Strengthen and support Colleague Networks. Removing barriers
Grow and retain our talent	Career pathways, 'grow our own', employability strategy, development and progression across teams. Development of succession framework Skills development and enhancement and performance review framework review Enhance learning and development Developed skills in transformation, resilience and change Review of reward model and agency usage, in-sourcing.
Nurture a healthy workplace where our people can thrive	Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan Leadership wellbeing and role-modelling Employee voice pathway - internal Communication and Engagement Plan) Effective Trade Union partnerships Celebrating Successes

4.6 Future Reporting, Success Factors and Outcomes

4.7 Consideration has been given ongoing monitoring and reporting of the People Strategy as well as enhancement to the Workforce Dashboard and suite of key performance indicators. It is proposed that an update on the People Strategy Action Plan will be provided to the Finance and Resources Committee as part of the quarterly workforce dashboard.

4.8 This will also incorporate refreshed key performance indicators, and these will be further developed as part of the implementation of the new Oracle HR/Payroll System. However, it is anticipated that we will seek to report on the following measures as well as the current workforce data:

Theme	Success Measures/KPIs
Attracting the best people	Vacancy rate Time to hire Number of apprentices
Develop exceptional leaders	Increase in culture score in colleague engagement survey. Increase in colleague engagement Increased colleague satisfaction with employer
Foster a culture of equalities, diversity and inclusion	Completed rates for diversity characteristics. Representation rates for diversity Characteristics compared to the UK working Age population (Scotland Census 2022)/ Stonewall
Grow and retain our talent	Turnover Retention of new hires % of permanent roles filled internally. Completion of statutory training Reduction in agency usage Reduction in redeployment
Nurture a healthy workplace where our people can thrive	Sickness absence – long and short term Reduction in employee relations formal cases Reduction in overpayments

4.9 The intention would also be to provide a “deep dive” of individual Themes to each Committee to allow wider understanding of detail of activity, challenges, successes and impact.

4.10 Workforce Plan

4.11 Key to delivery is having a robust and refreshed Corporate Workforce Plan which is aligned to the Business Plan and the People Strategy. This is a key document which will set out the workforce drivers in the next 12-36 months. The plan will detail the establishment gaps, comparing the future staff demand with our current workforce numbers and skills. It will also profile the numbers of staff and new roles required to achieve all of this and will be augmented by more detailed service workforce plans.

4.12 Workforce Planning is best described as:

“Getting the right people with the right skills and competences in the right place at the right time to deliver the best quality services, within a budget that you can afford.”

In practice this will involve the following:

- Designing our future workforce – understanding what the workforce needs to look like to meet service need and influencing this process by ensuring that workforce considerations are part of the service and financial planning process.
- Developing our future workforce – through recruitment, retention, education commissioning and staff development.
- Delivering our future workforce – by understanding the management actions that will be necessary to ensure our workforce plan is delivered and that our staff, service partners and stakeholders are engaged in the process.

4.13 The aim is to present a refreshed Workforce Plan to Policy and Sustainability Committee in August 2024.

5. Next Steps

5.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Sustainability Committee approve the development of the refreshed People Strategy for 2024-2027.

6. Financial impact

6.1 All programmes of work proposed within the People Strategy and associated Action Plan will be managed within budgets, both within the Human Resources Division and across Directorates. Consideration will be given to resources required for activity with appropriate business cases developed for consideration aligned to workforce spend.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

7.1 The People Strategy incorporates a specific theme in relation to Equality and Diversity and a key outcome will be the refresh of the Councils Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Plan and Gender Pay Gap commitments. In addition a key aspect of year 1 activity will be the commencement of a review of the reward framework and application of the Fair Work principles for the whole workforce.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

8.1 The Strategy aligns with the Councils Business Plan and 3 key priorities including delivering a net zero carbon City. Focus will be given to how this is embedded in the redesign of services to ensure sustainable practices as part of the Workforce Plan, as well as refreshed engagement practices in the Internal Communication and Engagement Plan.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

9.1 There are key risks in relation to recruitment of staff within the risk register and this Strategy sets out activity to mitigate that, and more widely seeks to improve

retention, turnover and overall workforce engagement, capacity and capability. It will ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and seek to implement good practice in all that we do. It has considered the wider community impact in relation to employability strategies and engagement with our workforce of the future.

9.2 An Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the People Strategy.

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 Not applicable.

11. Appendices

Appendix – People Strategy 2024-2027

Our People Strategy 2024-2027

Creating a great place to work together
for the people of Edinburgh



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Foreword from our Corporate Leadership Team

Our People Strategy sets out our ambitions for making the City of Edinburgh Council a place where people want to come to work and stay and grow their careers – a workplace where everyone feels included and able to thrive.

In 2023 we introduced our Behaviours of Respect, Integrity and Flexibility after widespread engagement, listening to the views of our people. It is through living these behaviours in everything we do that our work will make a positive difference to the city and the lives of our residents and communities every single day.

The strategy outlines our vision for how we deliver the Business Plan through our people – attracting a talented and committed workforce who are passionate about what we do for our city, investing in their development and careers, aspiring to excellence in leadership and building a culture where everyone can thrive.

As we focus on building capacity and capability to achieve our goals for Edinburgh – a city facing significant growth over the coming years - it is more important than ever to state our commitment to condemning all forms discrimination and supporting any colleague who experiences it. Our People Strategy lays out our ambitions for achieving a culture of tolerance and equity.

We look forward to seeing the commitments in the People Strategy come to life to support the delivery of the Business Plan through our Actions Plans and being supported and embedded by our local Directorates, managers and colleagues.

Context

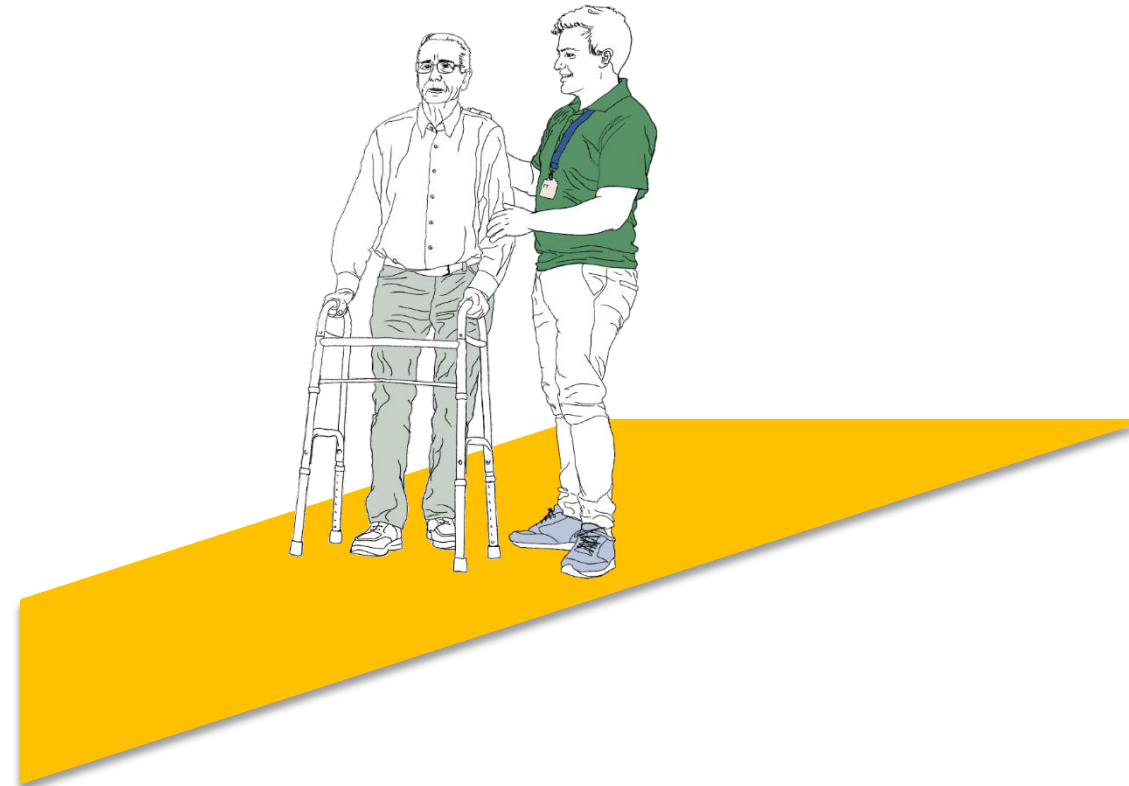
The 2050 City Vision for Edinburgh, informed by our citizens and our partners, states that we want Edinburgh to be a fair, welcoming, thriving and pioneering city. With more than 50,000 new residents expected over the next 20 years, putting pressure on our communities, housing, and the city infrastructure on which we all rely, our Council's focus on tackling poverty, delivering a net zero carbon city, and promoting the wellbeing of residents remains more important than ever.

Our Council Business Plan sets out the need for us to work differently if we are to deliver our priorities in a way that is financially sustainable. We need to develop as an organisation to reflect changing working practices, looking at innovative ways to ensure we can deliver best-value services, whilst supporting a thriving workforce in a supportive, inclusive and safe environment.

We employ more than 19,000 people delivering a diverse range of services essential for our residents or to support our colleagues to keep our city running at its best. It's therefore vital that we continue to attract and nurture the most talented and public service-focused people. Our current and future colleagues are our greatest strength.

Our organisational culture is founded on Our Behaviours of Respect, Integrity and Flexibility and we're committed to driving positive change to create a workplace:

- that's open, positive, inclusive and safe for all.
- that supports and allows everyone to be their best self and do their best work.
- that celebrates the benefits of our diversity.
- where everyone feels trusted, valued and recognised for their contribution.
- where people feel safe and able to raise concerns and potential risks knowing that they will be responded to fairly and effectively.



How we developed Our People Strategy

This strategy has been developed following engagement and consultation with a wide range of people, including our:

- colleagues
- colleague networks
- people leaders, and
- trade unions

It's been further informed by the results of the Culture Capture undertaken by Lane4 in 2021, the recommendations of the Inquiry and Review and insights from research, including the experiences

of those who generously participated in our reverse mentoring scheme.

We've used data insight from exit interviews, our demographic trends and the analysis of our gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps to shape our priorities.

External data insight has included the review of published research into trends, seeking out best practice and expert information from other local authorities and public and private sector organisations, including youth organisations.

Our People Strategy themes

Our People Strategy is underpinned by Our Behaviours and the seven principles of public life. Based on the research highlighted above, it will focus on five intrinsically linked themes to support the delivery of Our Council Business Plan.

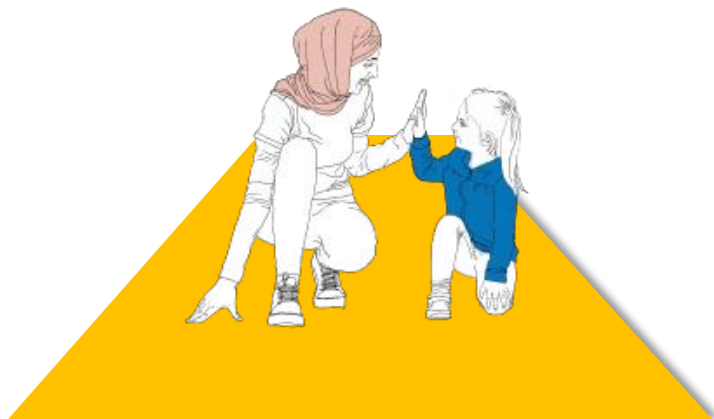
- Attract the best people
- Develop exceptional leaders
- Foster a culture of equalities, diversity and inclusion.
- Grow and retain our talent
- Nurture a healthy workplace where our people can thrive

These themes will be supported by an action plan - a living document that will evolve over the duration of this strategy to meet the ever-changing needs of our colleagues and residents and will ensure we measure our progress through the creation of a suite of key performance indicators.



Attract the best people

The City of Edinburgh Council's future depends upon attracting people with the capabilities needed to deliver and enable first-class services for our citizens. Our recruitment practices will leverage what the city has to offer, so we attract the best people in a competitive jobs market. Without skilled people we simply cannot deliver the right outcomes for the public. Our priority is to attract people in areas identified as having current or likely future skills gaps. We seek to attract people with potential and relevant experience from a range of sectors and all walks of life. This requires us to review not just how we bring people into the Council, but also where and how we source people and how we induct new joiners into our culture.



How we will do this

Developing our employer identity

We'll be clear to all prospective candidates locally, nationally and beyond about who we are as an employer, what to expect from us and what we expect from them, and we'll have a distinct and inclusive online presence.

Improving our recruitment technology

We'll introduce a new recruitment platform that will improve the recruiting manager experience and ensure a simpler, fair and inclusive candidate experience. We will look to work with Partners to enhance the application experience for candidates, including the national advertising platform.

Enhancing our recruitment and selection practices

We'll improve and simplify our adverts and recruitment documentation ensuring they include Our Behaviours and what to expect from us as an employer through development of our identity.

We'll continue to develop our recruitment and onboarding processes, making them easier for recruiting managers.

Enhancing our welcome and induction experience

We'll enhance our welcome and induction programmes to include more colleagues.

Inclusive recruitment

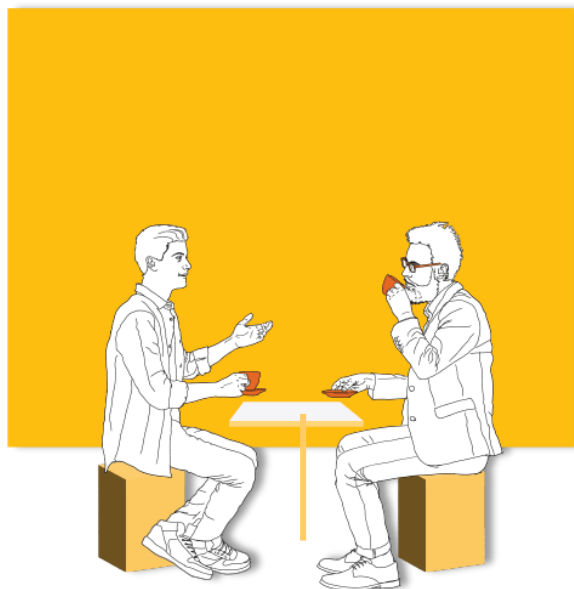
We'll prioritise finding ways to attract a diverse candidate pool and provide guidance to recruiting managers on taking positive action to recruit a workforce that's representative of our city.

Workforce planning

We'll introduce strategic workforce planning. We'll use data to identify key roles, skills gaps and risk that inform resourcing decisions. Workforce planning data will be used to create cohesive plans which will inform succession planning and improve diversity in recruitment. It will be used to support service redesign and transformation.

Develop exceptional leaders

We need to develop impactful, strategic leaders as well as strengthen line management capability across the City of Edinburgh Council. We need to ensure line managers have the time to fulfil their role in developing their teams and are skilled in doing so. We wish to be recognised for the way our leaders lead, living and role modelling Our Behaviours and leading effectively through change. We will develop an inclusive approach to leadership which will allow us to identify and grow our leaders at all levels to drive leadership excellence and capability.



Our culture and Our Behaviours

Through our performance framework, we'll ensure our leaders are ambassadors for high quality service as well as role models for behaviours, wellbeing, culture and equalities, diversity and inclusion making a positive difference to the experience of our colleagues in the workplace.

Manager capability

We'll enhance the existing manager development opportunities to upskill our existing managers to develop their people and develop a blend of resources and learning that supports colleagues to move into their first people manager role.

Design of manager roles

As services are re-designed, we'll review the job design of our manager roles, prioritising frontline managers, to ensure that they focus less on the technical aspects and more on effective leadership and management activities. We will ensure our Managers have the skills and empowerment to lead service transformation and innovation.

Developing our leaders

Implement and further evolve our Leadership Development Programmes. Develop and strengthen leadership and management development and encourage all colleagues to develop and apply their leadership capabilities regardless of grade and management responsibilities. This will include the introduction of an inclusive talent management approach and enhancing the range of core and professional/specialist learning.

Foster a culture of equalities, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Inclusion is central to the success of the Council's People Strategy. We firmly believe that everyone is unique and should be respected for their differences and our Strategy focuses on making this a reality.

Building a diverse workforce means we can leverage different skills and perspectives to improve decision-making and better meet the needs of the citizens we serve. Increasing our diversity and building an inclusive workplace will also help the Council become more creative and innovative, as well as increasing our ability to keep attracting, retaining and growing talent from different backgrounds and with different characteristics.

An Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

We'll develop a new EDI strategy that captures our vision of an anti-discriminatory, anti-racist workplace and underpins the delivery of this people strategy.

We'll update our Equalities policy to reflect our EDI strategy and organisational culture.



Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter Mark standards

We're committed to improving the working experience of all colleagues through achieving Equally Safe at Work bronze by October 2025 and Disability Confident Leader status, as well as participating annually in the Stonewall UK Workplace Equality Index. We will consider other quality marks as well.

Policy development for our colleagues

We'll ensure all our policies are developed using inclusive language and integrate EDI into all aspects of our recruitment, progression and development, employee lifecycle and pay & reward. We will consider new and emerging policies.

Protecting our colleagues from bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct

We'll make clear in policy, guidance and communication how to disclose unacceptable behaviour experienced while working. We'll develop dedicated learning for all colleagues about unacceptable behaviours. We'll create separate policy and guidance for harassment relating to sex.

Through our partnership working with recognised trade unions and our colleague networks we'll ensure that diverse perspectives are listened to when decisions are made.

Removing Barriers

We'll develop ways to take positive action measures to reduce disadvantage, meet different needs and increase participation. By listening to all colleagues, we'll learn and seek to tackle systemic barriers and remove them over the long term.

Grow and retain our talent

Having recruited the right people, we need to ensure they wish to remain working for us and reflect Our Behaviours, whilst having opportunities to develop and follow different career paths which support personal growth.

The Council's greatest asset is its people, which is why we are investing in developing the potential of all colleagues. A key driver of delivering great services and transformation is the strength of an organisation's approach to learning. As part of our ambition as a learning organisation, we will enhance the culture for effective learning and growth through formal in-person learning, blended with digital resources, experience on the job and through cross team relationships.

We will actively promote employability programmes, secondments and agility across services. Our approach to reward and recognition will be a key factor in whether we achieve our retention and attraction aspirations.

We will also continue to build effective relationships with our trade unions and staffside in all aspects relating to our workforce.

Learning and development

We'll provide all colleagues with access to high quality, blended learning opportunities (face to face and digital) enabling them to develop the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their role confidently and thereby delivering successful outcomes for our residents.

We'll help colleagues to achieve essential qualifications for their role and support continued personal development that extends beyond core or role-specific learning requirements, providing professional growth.

We'll provide colleagues with access to learning in one place through a modern learning experience platform.

Growing our own talent

We'll develop meaningful career pathways, enhance our performance framework to support succession planning and how we continue to fill key roles. We'll offer development for our people to build their careers with us within and across roles, and specialisms and also transition to other areas. We'll develop creative approaches to extending careers that take account of our workforce profile and support life transitions.



Adapting to change

We'll invest in building the skills of our people to identify opportunities for improvement and prepare for change. We appreciate the value of certainty for employees and their wellbeing and the importance of supporting them to build resilience. We also recognise flexibility as an employer working model. We will consider a low carbon approach to workforce design and modelling.

Reward and recognition

Working within public sector constraints, we will apply a flexible and fair approach to reward and recognition, recognising colleagues' contributions and achievements, comply with Fair Work principles, and positioning the City of Edinburgh Council as a preferred employer across the public sector in the UK and beyond

Nurture a healthy workplace where our people can thrive

The Strategy's emphasis on ensuring colleagues' wellbeing and safety so individuals feel able to speak up, offer ideas and ask questions, will help the Council and colleagues to thrive and grow together.

One of the Council's priorities is to create good places to live and work in Edinburgh. The People Strategy shows what each of us can do to support and improve the wellbeing of everyone working for the City of Edinburgh Council and create and engender a culture of openness, transparency as well as an organisation that learns from successes and failures.

A wellbeing strategy and action plan

We'll develop a wellbeing strategy and action plan that enables everyone to pull in the same direction, drawing on expertise from across our organisation including poverty prevention, mental health and trauma-informed practice. Our focus will be on identifying the causes of poor health and wellbeing and working to address key contributing factors from both an individual and corporate approach.

Leadership wellbeing and role-modelling

Leaders play a key role in the wellbeing of their team members. As such our focus will be to continue to provide support and create opportunities for them to look after their own health and wellbeing, as well as increase their understanding of how to support their teams.

Thriving at work

Working with services and workforce planning data, we'll assess the factors that enable colleagues to thrive at work and together deliver more "good days at work".

Recognising and celebrating success

We'll develop mechanisms to recognise and celebrate colleagues for exceptional contributions.

Employee Voice

Embedding Our Behaviours into everything we do on a daily basis is key to creating a safe environment where people feel confident to speak up and their views will be listened to. "Humanising" our workplace is to reinforce that there's a human being at the heart of every working process with their own unique experiences and views.

We'll continue to develop our two-way channels of communication, providing simple and effective opportunities for colleagues to make suggestions, air their views, and participate in peer support and decision-making. We will consider our employer identity and develop an internal communication and engagement plan and set out how we will use colleague feedback.

We'll also engage effectively with our trade unions and staffside to ensure collective collaboration in listening to our colleagues and informing policy and workplace initiatives.

A flexible working culture

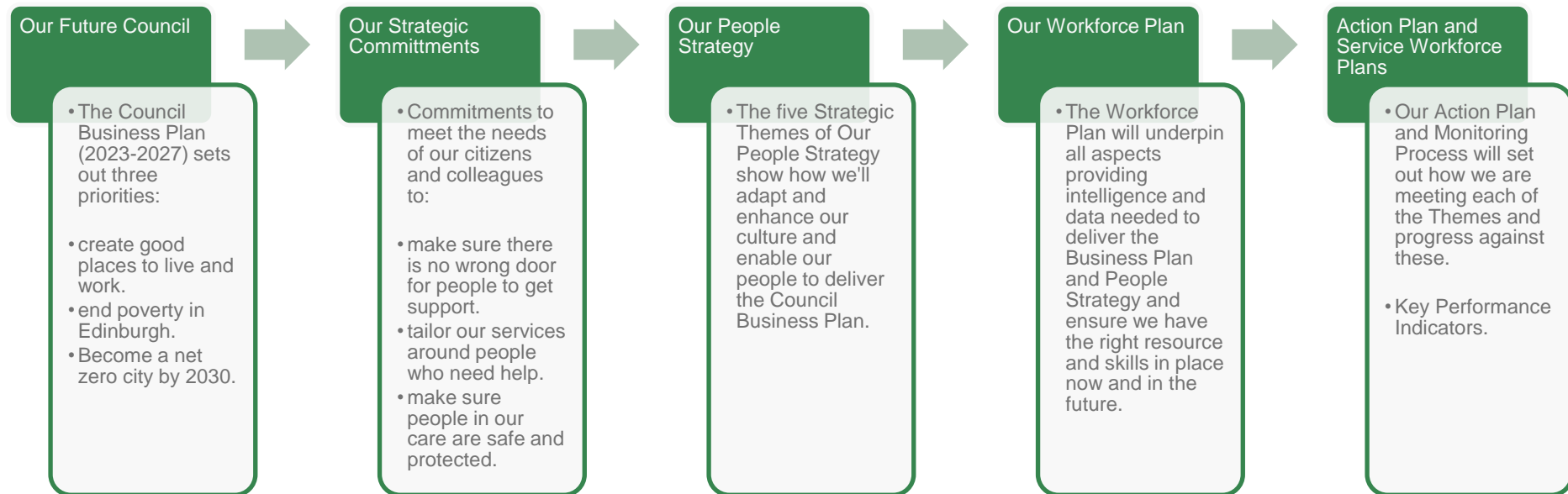
Flexibility and control over decision-making at work improves wellbeing, inclusion and productivity. We'll continue to be a flexible employer and promote flexible ways of working aligned to service need.

A trauma-informed and responsive culture

We'll support our colleague wellbeing and practice in line with the National Trauma Transformation Programme and use the Roadmap for Creating Trauma-informed and Responsive Change to guide our development of support, policy and practice.

From Strategy to delivery:

implementing and measuring the effectiveness of Our People Strategy



Progress will be reported annually to the Policy and Sustainability Committee. Workforce Dashboards will be presented quarterly to the Finance and Resources Committee along with deep dives on each Theme. We'll use quantitative and qualitative data to measure our progress including pay gap reports, recruitment data, exit interview feedback, sickness absence data and employee experience surveys. In addition we will also undertake an all staff survey at the mid-point of the Strategy to measure progress and seeks colleague feedback.