

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 20 April 2021

People Strategy 2021-2024

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

Executive

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. It is recommended that the Policy and Sustainability Committee approves the People Strategy 2021-2024 which builds upon the work delivered through our People Strategy 2017-2020.
- 1.2. To note that our new People Strategy is essential in making sure we can deliver our new Business Plan (Our Future Council, Our Future City) which sets out an ambitious agenda for the Council to deliver against our agreed priorities.
- 1.3. To note that this paper describes our People commitments for 201-2024 which are further underpinned by our Strategic Workforce Plan 2021-2024. This Plan describes specific further actions we will take as an organisation to address the gaps between our current workforce and the future workforce during the same period.

Stephen S. Moir

Executive Director of Resources

Contact: Katy Miller, Head of Human Resources

Human Resources Division, Resources Directorate

E-mail: katy.miller@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 5522

Report

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report recommends a new Council People Strategy for 2021-2024 for approval, which applicable to all of our employees.
- 2.2 This new People Strategy is an essential enabling strategy and approach to support the delivery of our new Business Plan, known as *Our Future Council, Our Future City* which sets out an ambitious agenda for the Council to deliver.
- 2.3 The new strategy builds on the success of our 2017-2020 People Strategy against which much progress was made, and which has laid the foundation for the next phase of our development as an organisation and as an employer. Additionally, it seeks to address feedback from colleagues, both as a result of Covid-19 and how this has fundamentally changed both how and where we work for many colleagues but also in relation to broader changing expectations of our citizens and our role as one of the Capital City's largest employers.

3. Background

- 3.1 This People Strategy is for all of our workforce and sets out what we will do over the next three years to ensure we can deliver the priorities and actions set out in our [Business Plan](#) (Our Future Council, Our Future City 2021-2024):
 - Tackling poverty;
 - Becoming a sustainable and net zero city; and,
 - Promoting the wellbeing and inclusion of residents.
- 3.2 Residents' expectations, the changing nature of work and the workplace and the ongoing pressures on our financial resources mean we need to look again at how we design and deliver our services and engage and support our colleagues to work differently to deliver our priorities.
- 3.3 Internally, our colleagues have told us about the type of organisation they need us to become and we must address this through this strategy.
- 3.4 We need to ensure we can deliver on our ambitions by engaging and supporting our colleagues to work differently in a way that is financially sustainable. It requires our colleagues to be more agile, more empowered and more connected to our residents' lives and communities.
- 3.5 This next phase of our workforce journey reinforces our determination to further develop and enhance our organisational culture – building on our strengths and sharpening our focus on the areas for improvement.
- 3.6 We have identified three strategic themes, which underpin what we will do and how we will measure our progress and success:

- Living Our Behaviours;
- Maximising our Capability and Performance; and,
- Enhancing our Colleague Experience.

4. Main report

- 4.1 This People Strategy sets out the next phase of our workforce journey (2021-2024). It lays out what colleagues should expect from the Council as their employer and what the Council expects from our workforce.
- 4.2 It describes our People agenda priorities and actions to ensure we can deliver our new Business Plan: *Our Future Council, Our Future City*, which sets out an ambitious agenda for the Council to deliver against three key priorities:
- ending poverty and preventing adverse outcomes such as homelessness and unemployment;
 - becoming a sustainable and net zero city; and,
 - making sure wellbeing and equality are enhanced for all.
- 4.3 Additionally internally, our colleagues have told us about the type of organisation they need us to become one where they:
- are listened to and supported to do their roles to their best ability;
 - have the right tools and training;
 - feel empowered and in turn where unnecessary governance doesn't create blockers to agility and empowerment; and,
 - are supported with their wellbeing and can achieve a healthy work-life balance.
- 4.4 To ensure we deliver our Business Plan priorities, address colleague feedback, respond to the changing expectations of resident's and our workforce, requires us to look again at how we design and deliver our services, and engage and support our colleagues to work differently.
- 4.5 Equally, this strategy reinforces our determination to further develop our organisational culture – building on our strengths and sharpening our focus on the areas for improvement.
- 4.6 We have identified three strategic themes, which underpin what we do and how we track progress and measure our delivery and success;
- **Living our behaviours** – clear expectations for how we'll behave in everything we do, developing a culture of inclusion, respect and belonging;
 - **Maximising our capacity and performance** – ensuring we're recruiting and developing colleagues with the skills, experience and behaviours needed to deliver our priorities; and,
 - **Enhancing our colleague experience** – looking after each other through change, ensuring colleagues feel part of our organisation and, making wellbeing a priority.

- 4.7 Progress will be monitored and reported using the new Planning and Performance Framework, a separate update report for which is also on the agenda for this meeting of the Committee, and we will ensure that this strategy evolves, as we deliver upon our actions and to accommodate flexibility as called for.
- 4.8 This strategy should be read in conjunction with our 'Strategic Workforce Plan 2021-2024'. This Plan describes the specific further actions we will take to close identified gaps in our current workforce and the future workforce we need, to deliver the priorities in our Business Plan.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to the approval of the Policy and Sustainability Committee, work will start to ensure that colleagues gain visibility and understand this strategy and the implications for all.
- 5.2 The Human Resources Division will redesign our programme of work to reflect the strategic themes in this strategy and resource will be aligned accordingly.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 All programmes of work proposed within the People Strategy will be managed within approved budgets, both within the Human Resources Division and across Directorates.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will be published.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Business Plan](#) – *Our Future Council, Our Future City 2021-2024*
- 8.2 [People Strategy and People Plan 2017](#)
- 8.3 Strategic Workforce Plan 2021-2024
- 8.4 [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan](#)
- 8.5 [Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- 8.6 [Performance management framework](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – People Strategy 2021-2024

Appendix 1

Our Future Council People Strategy

2021 - 2024



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INTRODUCTION: OUR PEOPLE JOURNEY

Our people are, and will continue to be, our most important assets.

Throughout the pandemic, we've worked together to maintain vital services in the most challenging of circumstances, embracing different ways of working and demonstrating real pride in the Council and our city.

We learned to communicate through Covid-19 safety measures and learning to navigate new technology and built a new culture around working from home. We also learned the value of delivering services from within communities, close to where people live and work.

There will be a time soon when we can start to return to our offices and buildings, but we must also recognise that the world of work has changed. This presents new opportunities to look again at how we'll work in the future. This People Strategy sets out a detailed vision and plan for how we need to change. We need to ensure we can deliver services that really meet the needs of our diverse and growing communities, while also looking after our own wellbeing and that of our colleagues.

It's important to note, however, that we're not starting this work from scratch. We'll be building on our 2017-2020 People Strategy, which focused on developing an agile and flexible workforce; developing our people's skills and strengths; and creating a great environment for delivery. We made a lot of

progress in delivering against this plan all of which lays the foundation for what comes next.

For example, since 2017 we've improved the experience for new starters, launched a new talent programme, agreed a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Plan, developed a new Performance Management Framework, rolled out leadership development, completed an inventory of all essential learning by role, and developed and agreed a colleague wellbeing Strategy and Plan. You can read more about what we have achieved in Appendix 1.

Our new People Strategy is essential in making sure we can deliver our new Business Plan: *Our Future Council, Our Future City* which sets out an ambitious agenda for the Council to deliver against three key priorities:

- ending poverty and preventing adverse outcomes such as homelessness and unemployment;
- becoming a sustainable and net zero city; and,
- making sure wellbeing and equality are enhanced for all.

However, other internal and external factors have also influenced this new People Strategy:

- Despite continued financial pressures, we must focus on our priorities and maintain the organisational capacity and

resilience to respond to change. Workloads remain a challenge and we want to ensure that we've done everything we can to help colleagues to manage this.

- We don't yet know the full impact of COVID-19 on the economy, but already it has had a significant impact on both the national and local job market. There is more that we can and must do to support both our colleagues and citizens to ensure they remain safe and well.
- We are working in partnership with other organisations, including the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, Education establishments and organisations whose expertise will support the delivery of our priorities.
- The changing expectations of what a multi-generational workforce want from their place of work and how we can support them with their wellbeing, work-life balance and feeling a part of our organisation from day one and during their employment with us.

What should you expect from this Strategy?

This People Strategy sets out the next chapter of our workforce journey. It lays out what colleagues should expect from the Council as their employer and what the Council expects from their workforce. This will include the behaviours we should all use at work and a commitment to hold colleagues to account when they don't live up to these behaviours.

We'll continue to ensure we all have the training we need to do our jobs well and continue to provide preventative and reactive support for colleagues' wellbeing.

We'll closely monitor our progress using the Planning and Performance Framework and ensure that this document evolves (as we deliver upon our actions and to accommodate flexibility as called for).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OUR PEOPLE STRATEGY 2021-2024

Our Future Council will be designed around what colleagues and citizens have told us.

In the last two years, tens of thousands of residents shaped a new 2050 City Vision saying that they want Edinburgh to be a fair, welcoming, thriving, and pioneering city.

Taking this forward, the Council's focus on tackling poverty, delivering a zero net carbon city, and promoting the wellbeing of residents remains more important than ever.

Internally, our colleagues have told us about the type of organisation they need us to become one where they:

- are listened to and supported to do their roles to their best ability;
- have the right tools and training;
- feel empowered and in turn addresses unnecessary governance which blocks to agility and empowerment;
- are supported with their wellbeing and can achieve a healthy work-life balance.



This People Strategy is for all of us. It sets out what we'll do for you over the next three years to ensure we can deliver the priorities and actions set out in Our Future Council; Our Future City. We have identified three strategic themes, which underpin what we do and how we measure our success.

- **Living our behaviours** – clear expectations for how we'll behave in everything we do.
- **Maximising our capacity and performance** – ensuring we give everyone the opportunity to develop the skills they need to do their job well.
- **Enhancing our colleague experience** – looking after each other through change, ensuring colleagues feel part of our organisation and, making our wellbeing a priority.

Living our behaviours

Delivering the level of ambition set out in Our Future Council requires further improvements to our culture. Through discussions with colleagues, we know that we need to do more to develop an inclusive culture, where people feel safe and able to raise concerns and potential risks knowing that they will be supported and heard. And through this Strategy we'll be clear about the expectations and behaviours we should expect from our colleagues.

Maximising our capacity and performance

We'll ensure everyone is clear about what's expected of them in their role. We' invest further in making sure there is sufficient training and development to keep us safe but also to support career development.

Enhancing our colleague experience

We recognise that change is inevitable and so will ensure we're honest about the impact of change (even when the messages might be hard) and that colleagues are engaged and supported through that change.



Residents' expectations, the changing workplace and the ongoing pressures on our budget mean we need to look again at how we design and deliver our services, and engage and support our colleagues to work differently to deliver our priorities.

Our People Strategy 2021-2024 lays the roadmap to deliver on our ambitions by ensuring we engage and support our colleagues to work differently and, to deliver our priorities in a way that is financially sustainable. It requires our colleagues to be more agile, more empowered and more connected to our residents' lives and communities.

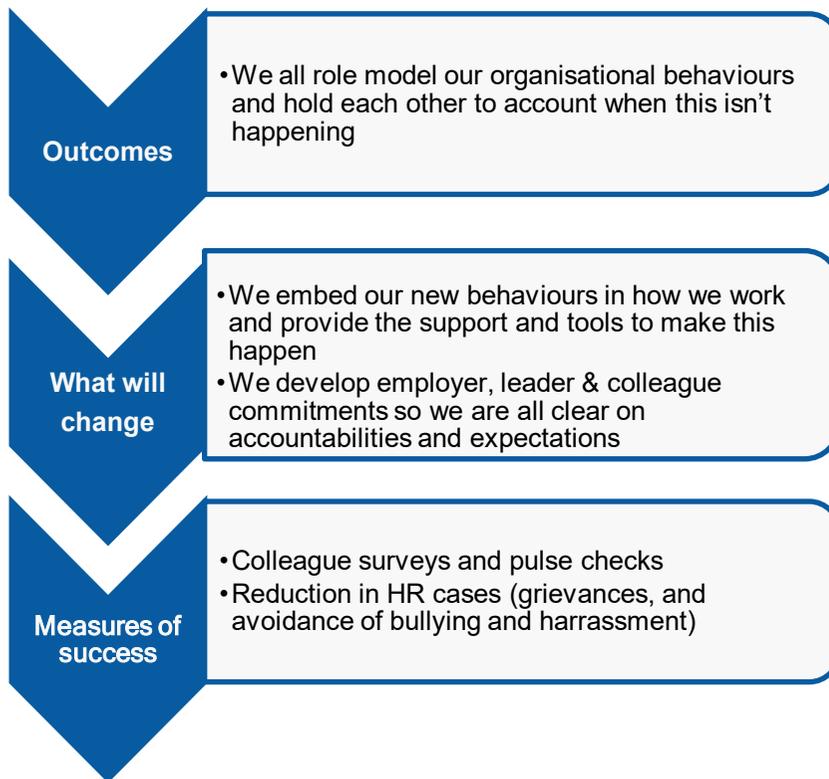
This next chapter of our workforce journey reinforces our determination to further develop our organisational culture – building on our strengths and sharpening our focus on the areas for improvement.

PEOPLE STRATEGY 2021-2024

STRATEGIC THEME 1: LIVING OUR BEHAVIOURS To develop a culture of inclusion, respect and belonging

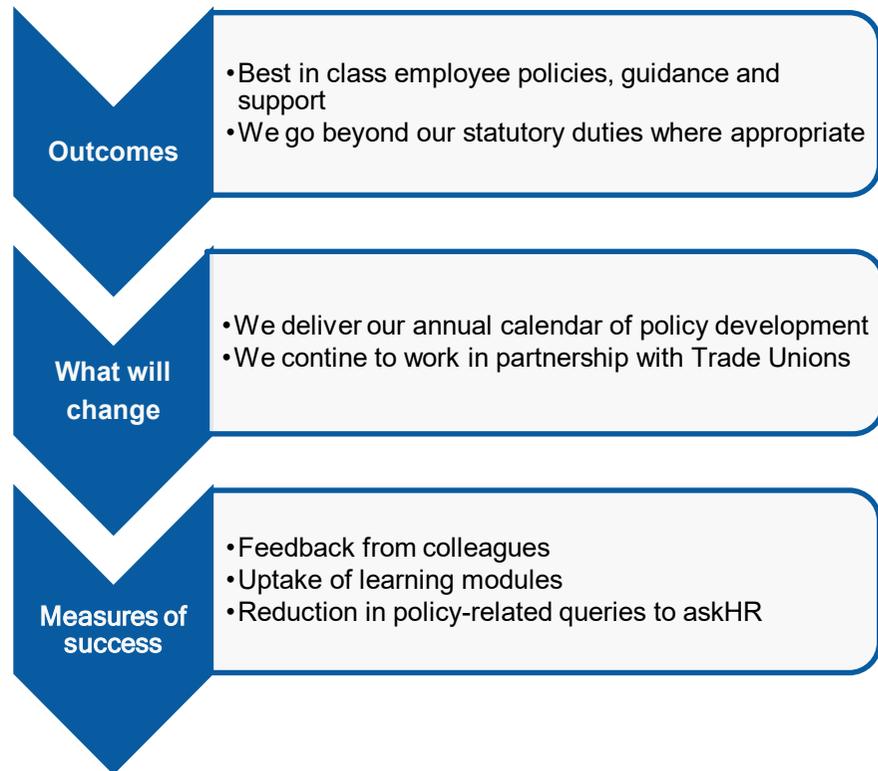
Action 1: Our behaviours

Identify and embed the behaviours we expect every colleague to demonstrate at work.



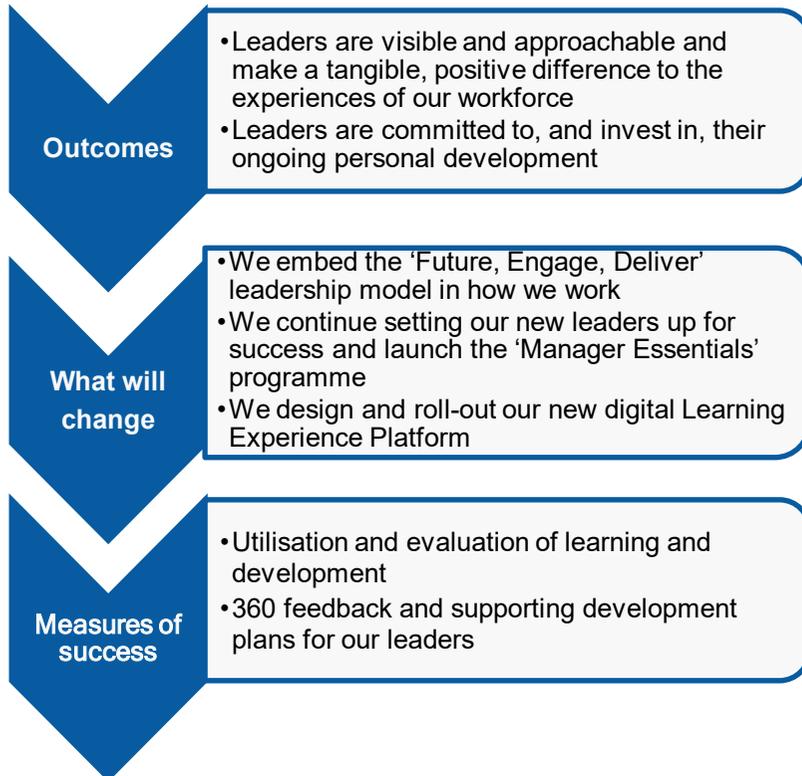
Action 2: Employment policies

Develop best practice inclusive policies, guidance and learning which reflect our culture.



Action 3: Leadership

Support our leaders to be confident, self-aware and to deliver using our expected behaviours.



Action 4: Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)

Build our culture of equality and inclusion and influence positive change for our workforce and city.



What happens next:

- We complete the work with colleagues to develop our new behaviours. By June 2021 we will have agreed new behaviours for the Council and will work to embed them in all we do through to 2024.
- We will deliver on reviewing and refreshing the agreed employment policies, guidance and training in our annual calendar.
- We launch and embed our new Managers' Essential training from May 2021.
- We continue to evaluate and evolve 'Setting New Leaders Up for Success'.
- We launch our new digital Learning Experience Platform by summer 2021.

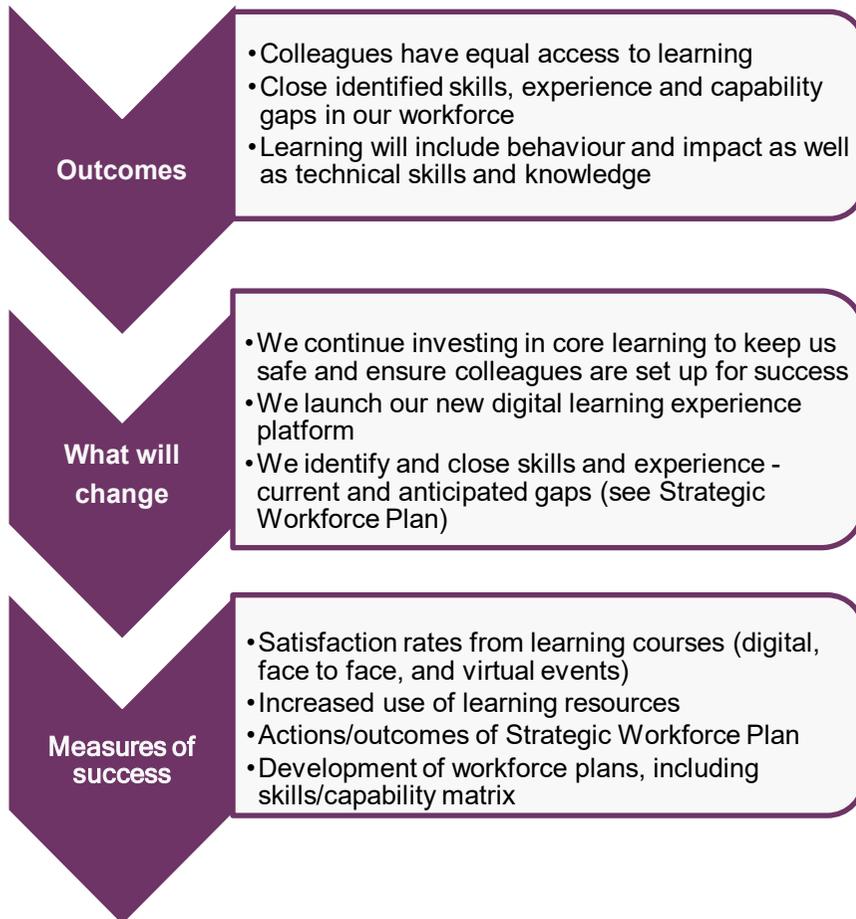
- We sharpen our focus on leadership development, continue with Future Engage Deliver, Conversation Spotlight, Change Leadership and 'Be Well to Lead Well'.
- Deliver on the commitments in our D&I Strategy and Plan including employee equalities reporting; review and strengthen all D&I related learning; support Colleague Networks to grow and have a voice; complete an external equalities audit on our recruitment approach; roll-out our annual event calendar, comms and celebrations; introduce reverse mentoring; address findings from culture capture.
- We complete the work with colleagues to develop our new behaviours. By June 2021 we will have agreed new behaviours for the Council and will work to embed them in all we do through to 2024.

STRATEGIC THEME 2: MAXIMISING OUR CAPABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

Ensuring we're recruiting and developing colleagues with the skills, experience and behaviours needed to deliver our priorities.

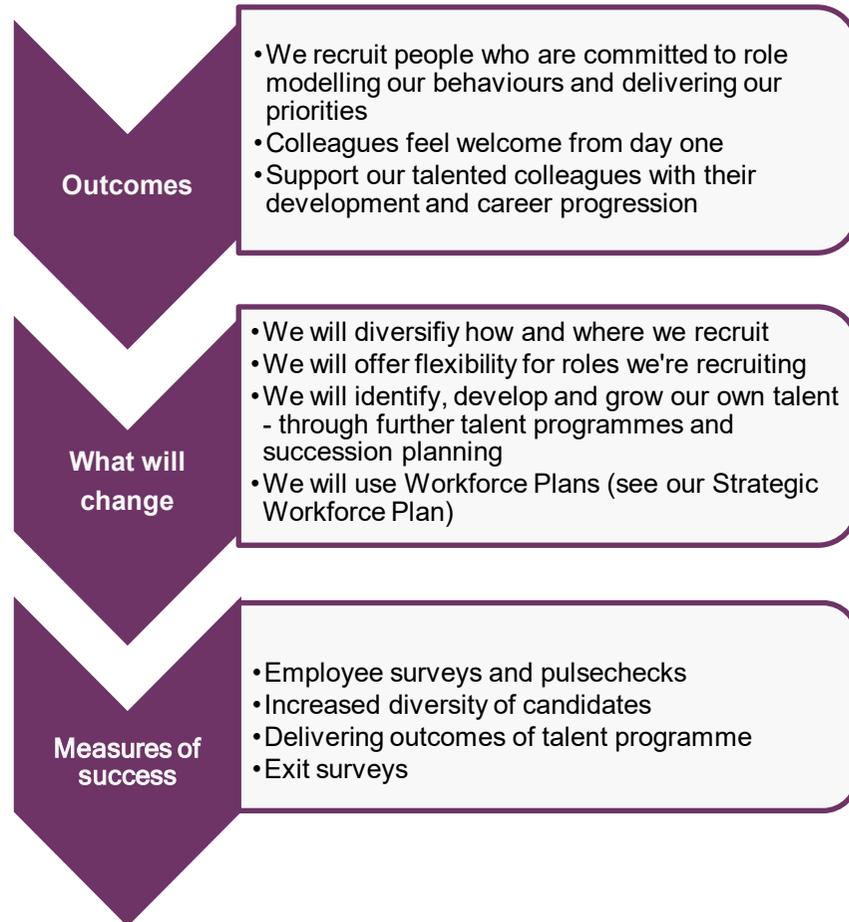
Action 5: Learning

Create a learning culture and make it easier to develop our own internal talent.



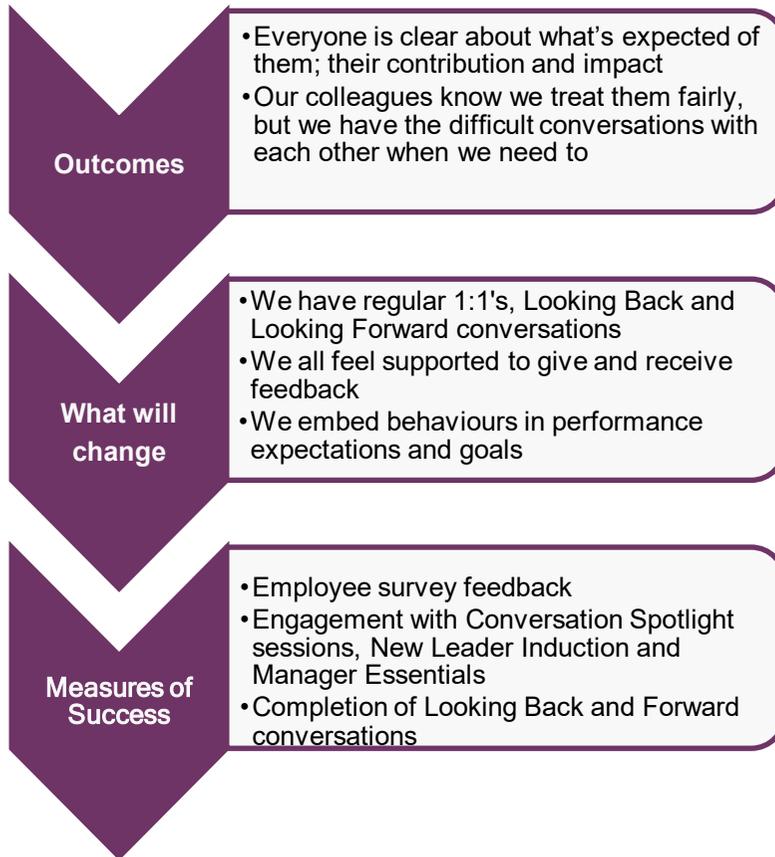
Action 6: Resourcing and Talent Development

Be innovative and inclusive in how and where we recruit to attract high quality candidates and develop our internal talent.



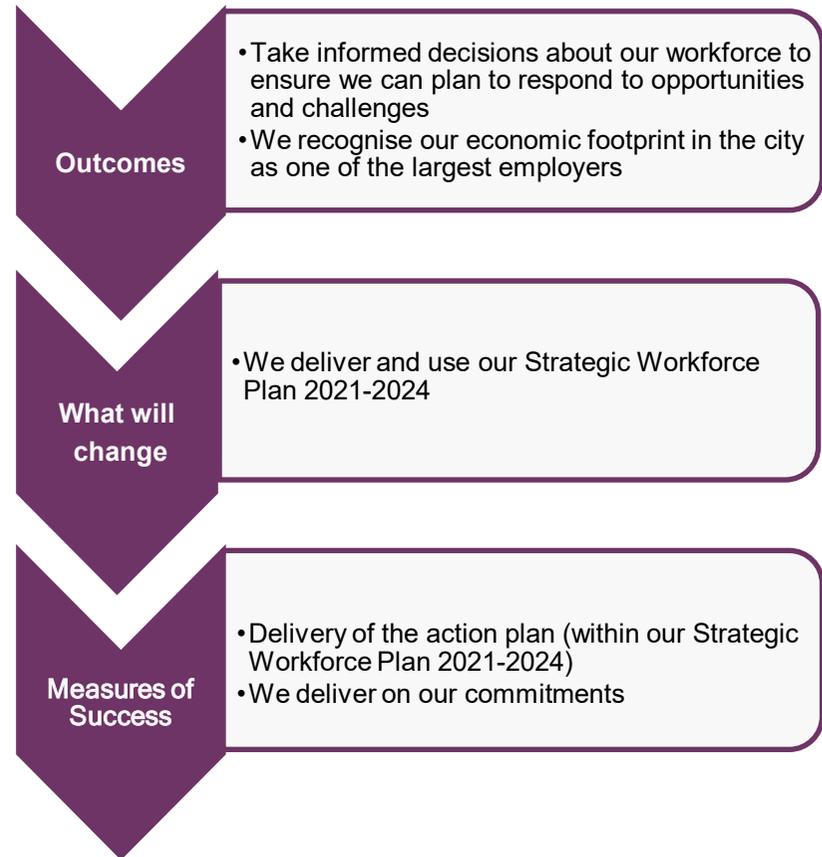
Action 7: Performance management

Embed conversations about goals, development, and delivery for all colleagues.



Action 8: Workforce planning

Deliver our strategic priorities by making informed decisions about our workforce.



What happens next:

- Year on year we're clear on what is required for role-related learning and how to maximise the annual budget for this.
- We deliver our Strategic Workforce Plan commitments 2021-2024.
- We evaluate the current Talent Programme and design the next one for launch at the end of 2021.

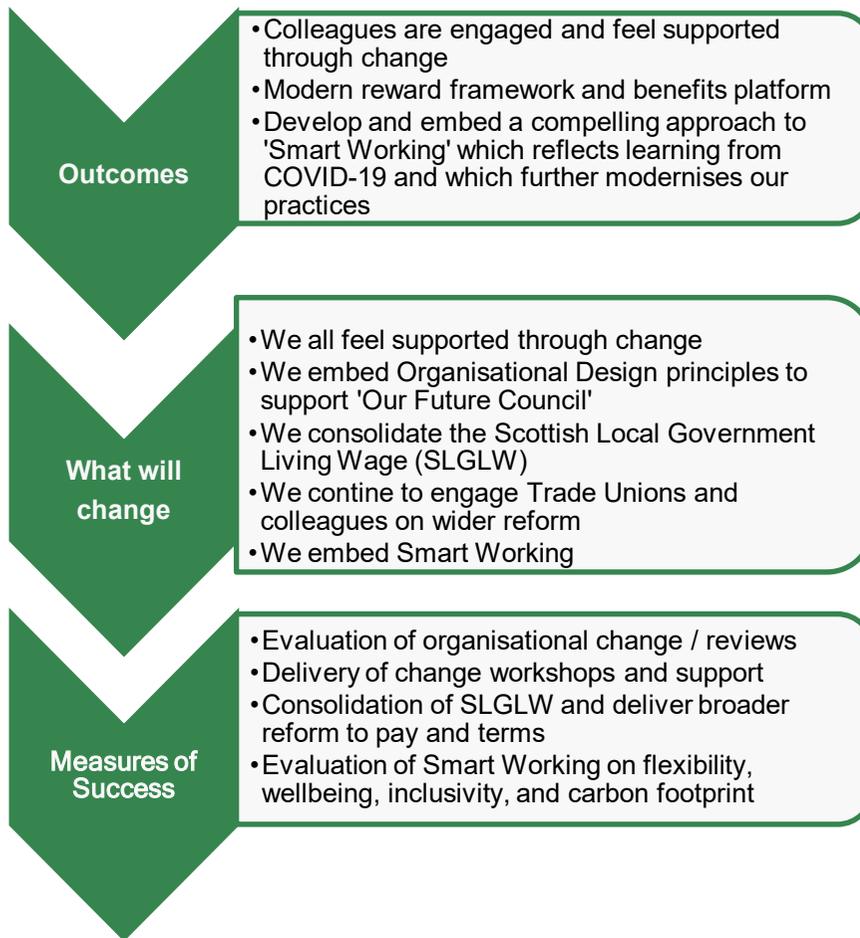
- We continue to embed Corporate Induction and New Leader events.
- We automate and improve candidate and recruiting line manager experience and maximise additional recruitment platforms.
- We build our new behaviours into colleague Performance Management and embed this approach.
- We build our new behaviours into all aspects of recruitment.

STRATEGIC THEME 3: ENHANCING OUR COLLEAGUE EXPERIENCE

Looking after each other during change, ensuring our colleagues feel part of our organisation and making wellbeing a priority

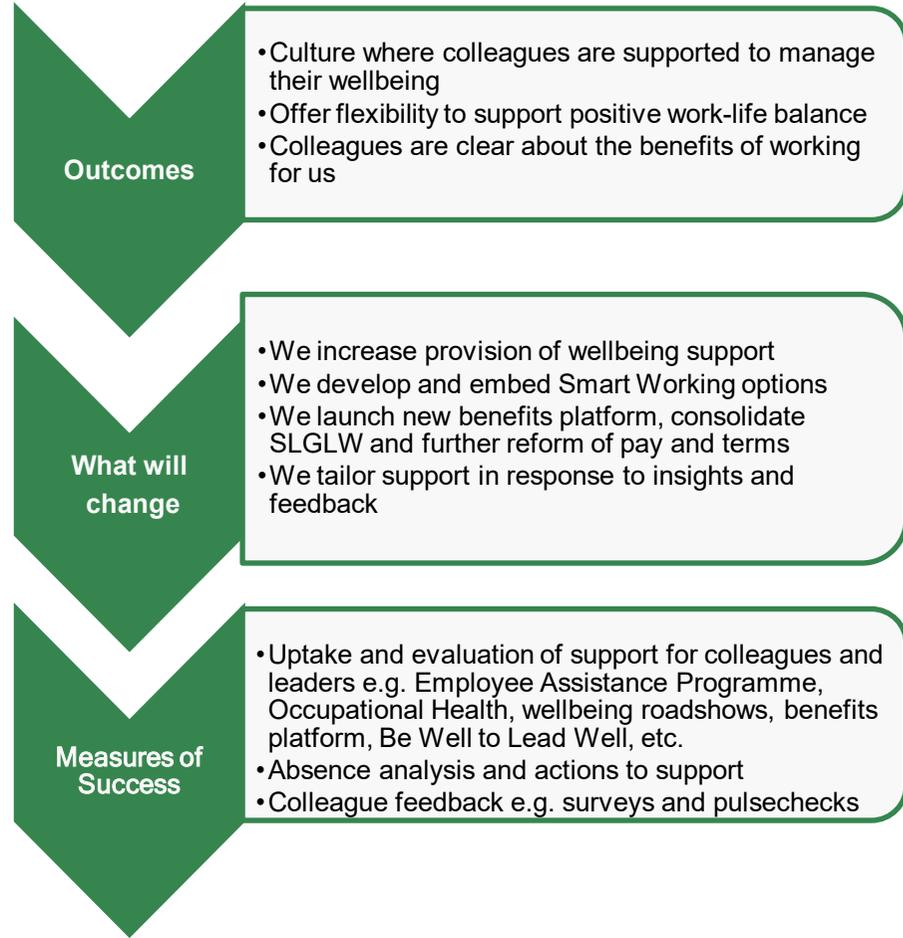
Action 9: Organisational change

Change is outcome-focused, research-based, collaborative, and drives continuous improvement of outcomes and services.



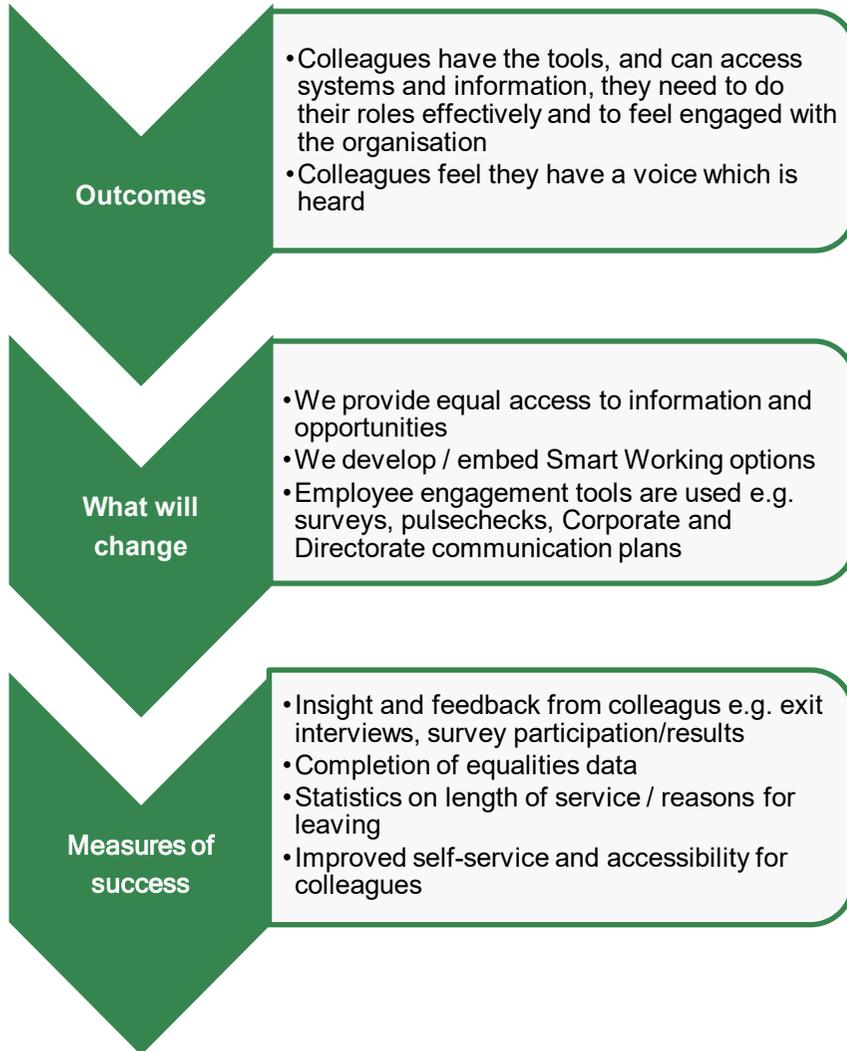
Action 10: Wellbeing

Take a holistic and preventative approach to colleagues' mental, physical and financial wellbeing.



Action 11: Engagement and Enablement

Ensure our colleagues feel engaged and valued, have a voice and are listened to, and are able to access information and systems to make their working lives easier.



What happens next?

- We'll continue to embed our Managing Change Policy, guidance and support (went live in November 2019).
- We'll achieve approved budget savings through organisational reviews and VERA (where required).
- By 1 April 2021, we will have consolidated the Scottish Local Government Living wage into our pay framework and will have started work on looking at broader opportunities to reform pay and benefits.
- In readiness for August 2021 ('return' to offices) we will have developed and communicated guidance on 'Smart Working' options which support flexibility, wellbeing, work-life balance and which seek to reduce our carbon footprint.
- We'll continue with our wellbeing support for colleagues including: Employee Assistance and Occupational Health; Be Well to Lead Well and Change Readiness sessions; Virtual Wellbeing Roadshows. The approach we'll design for Smart Working will support this.
- By June 2021 we'll have launched our new Employee Benefits Platform and where we can, we'll continue to add more benefits.
- By the end of summer 2021 we'll have developed options for consideration to enable all employee access to systems and information.

Appendix 1

Our 2017-2020 People Strategy: Key achievements

An evaluation was undertaken (through focus groups and survey) to assess delivery against the commitments made in our previous People Strategy. There has been considerable progress in delivering the commitments made and much of this work lays strong foundations to move forward with our next chapter.

Building an agile and flexible workforce

Redesign and automate (as much as possible) our recruitment experience	✓ Ongoing
Design a new onboarding experience for colleagues and new leaders	✓
Develop a new Recruitment and Selection Policy, with new guidance and training	✓
Increase social media presence and engage in direct hire of candidates	✓ Ongoing
Readiness for planning for leaving the European Union	✓
Design and launch recruitment campaigns e.g. teachers	✓
Support the delivery of organisational reviews (including revised policy, process and guidance)	✓ Ongoing
Complete review of engagement of temporary workers	✓ Partially achieved (more work to be completed on workforce models in 2021)
Develop and produce workforce dashboard insight	✓
Write a new Managing Change Policy with new guidance and training	✓ Embedding
Develop and embed Workforce Planning	✓ Partially achieved (see Workforce Plan 2021-2024)

Developing people's skills and strengths

Coming together of our Wider Leadership Team and leader cohorts	✓ Ongoing
Inventory of all formal learning and development	✓
Launch of revised specific role-essential learning	✓

Launch of a new induction approach, welcome event, refreshed and engaging eLearning for all new employees	✓
Develop and launch onboarding for new leaders	✓
Review and develop revised exit interviews	✓ Developed (to be embedded 2021)
Develop our Leadership Framework including embedding 'Future, Engage, Deliver' for our leaders	✓ Embedding
Establish leadership ambassadors and early adopters for leadership development	✓
Leverage innovation and creativity to drive improvement	✓ Partially achieved in pockets (see Workforce Plan 2021-2024 actions)
Develop and launch a new Talent Programme	✓
Develop career paths	Further work required

Creating a great environment for delivery

Develop a new organisation-wide performance management framework, policy and learning	✓ Embedding
Develop a rolling programme to review all our employment policies	✓ Ongoing
Develop and agree a Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Plan including publishing a full gender pay gap reports	✓
Developing our approach to reward and recognition	Some progress but ongoing work for 2021-22
Develop a holistic wellbeing strategy and plan	✓ Embedding
Procure and manage an Employee Assistance and Occupational Health platform	✓
Design and implement a new HR model and achieve cost savings	✓

Appendix 2 – Strategies and Frameworks for further context

In developing this People Strategy, a number of approved Strategies and Frameworks were considered to ensure due consideration and alignment.

- [Business Plan](#) – *Our Future Council, Our Future City 2021-2024*
- Strategic Workforce Plan (Policy and Sustainability Committee - April 2021)
- [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan](#)
- [Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [Performance management framework](#)
- [Edinburgh Guarantee for All](#)
- [People Strategy and People Plan 2017](#)
- [Digital and Smart City Strategy](#)