

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Employment Committee
Date: 2nd September 2024
Report for: Information and approval
Report of: Director of HR

Report Title

Our People Plan 2024 to 2027

Summary

Our People Strategy has been refreshed and renamed 'Our People Plan for 2024-2027'. Our new People Plan builds on the work achieved over the last 3 years and outlines our key areas of focus for the next 3 years. The narrative is presented with this report for information and approval.

The branding for our 'People Plan' will be aligned to the branding and artwork presented in our Corporate Plan and in addition a summary document will also be produced for all colleagues to access.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Employment Committee:

1. Note the contents of the report; and
2. Approves the Trafford People Plan narrative for 2024-2027.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Angela Beadsworth Director of HR
Nina Kijowski, Head of Resourcing & Development
Bev Norton, Head of HR Operations

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The People Plan will support the delivery of council priorities by attracting, recruiting, and retaining skilled colleagues who align with our EPIC values and who are passionate in providing great services for our residents.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	The People Plan aligns to and has been informed by GM and national strategies and frameworks.
Financial	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
Legal Implications:	Outlined in the body of the report
Equality/Diversity Implications	Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal duty as a public body to have due regard to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations between key equality strands.
Sustainability Implications	There is nothing in the report that would undermine our sustainability plans.
Carbon Reduction	The People Plan can assist in supporting carbon reduction initiatives through education and promotion across the workforce.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	The People Plan aims to address recruitment and retention challenges with several ambitions aimed at attracting colleagues who align with our values to stay with us.
Risk Management Implications	A focus of the People Plan is on risk minimisation caused by failure to demonstrate compliance with employment legislation. We also have a focus on retaining skills and expertise so we can deliver our statutory and discretionary services well.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	There is a strong focus on achieving a culture of wellbeing in Trafford and this strategy is central to our success.
Health and Safety Implications	All Health and Safety aspects have been considered in producing the refreshed People Plan so that we enable risk to be managed effectively and consistently achieve a safe working environment.

1.0 Background

1.1 We are immensely proud of our people and recognise that they are our greatest strength. Our people give their best every day and this is testament to the great progress we have made in making Trafford a great place to work, do business with, and call home. We also pride ourselves on being a low-cost, high performing Council compared to similar authorities and we are responsive to the needs of our diverse communities and efficient in how we meet them.

1.2 We also recognise that Trafford, like most of the local government workforce continues to face challenges in terms of reduced government funding, increased demands for services, having to deliver more with less, combined with talent and skills shortages and challenges with competing with the private sector. This makes it even harder to attract and retain great people.

1.3 Our People Plan sets out our people priorities for the next 3 years. It describes how we will empower and develop colleagues to make an impact to be proud of, so that our residents, businesses, and communities thrive and together we achieve our priorities in the corporate plan.

1.4 Since publication of our last Strategy in January 2020, we have responded to a range of workforce challenges, not least a global pandemic, the onset of artificial intelligence, the rise of multiple social media platforms and a multi-generational workforce that expects different things from an Employer. We have also adapted to a 'new normal' and embraced new ways of working with our smart working approach that includes hybrid/remote working enabled by

M365 technology, recognising that we need to work even harder to attract and retain great people.

1.5 This has not prevented us from achieving some important accreditations and delivering some great people initiatives along the way. We have captured these in our refreshed People Plan as they form the basis for our future priorities.

1.6 We will undoubtedly face many more challenges and opportunities over the next three years including, a general election in July 2024, as we set out our refreshed corporate priorities. It's therefore important to us that we continue to anticipate these and support our people to be their best by providing them with the skills, resources, and resilience during an ever-changing employment landscape and work hard to ensure that they feel valued.

1.7 Our People priorities are simple – we know how crucial it is to attract, recruit and retain talented and skilled individuals who are proud to work for us and who share our ambitions for making Trafford a great place. We also know that there is a demand for talent and so we need to be in a strong position to be the employer people choose.

1.8 We have already achieved so much since our last People Strategy, but our borough is a place of constant change, so our future plan needs to be agile to stay ahead of the curve and ready to adapt to the needs of our residents, businesses, and communities.

2.0 Our People Plan 2024-2027

2.1 Our People Plan has been developed by working together with our people and our partners. We have listened closely to what is important to them and will continue to work in collaboration when implementing the plan. This plan builds on and refreshes the previous people strategy and whilst it is supported and enabled by our HR Team, it belongs to all of us that work at Trafford Council. We...

- Listened to feedback that colleagues shared at all our Colleague and Leaders Let's Talk Sessions.
- Engaged with our Staff Forum groups, Trade Union Colleagues, Mental Health First Aider and Pioneers.
- Listened and learned through briefings delivered at every Departmental Management Team meeting.
- Consulted with our Corporate Leadership Team and Executive Members.
- Revisited and reviewed our b-Heard employee survey results where 1,013 colleagues shared their feedback on questions connected to leadership, my team, wellbeing, and my manager.... they also shared their thoughts on questions such as "what makes this a great place to work?" and "What could make this an even better place to work?"
- Have reviewed external research and best practice from organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Development, Best Companies and the LGA.
- Surveyed colleagues to ask what they think we do well and what we could do better to recruit, retain, develop, and engage with our people.
- Analysed our recruitment and workforce data, insights, and feedback such as our exit interviews.

2.2 Our People Plan has also been shaped by the ambitions laid out in our corporate plan and other plans and strategies that underpin and support us to achieve our corporate priorities. Through our engagement sessions and feedback we received, we have identified our key priorities and focus areas in each stage of the employee lifecycle over the next 3 years.

2.3 Whilst our plan sets out our ambitions and priorities, it will be flexible. It is intended to be a live document which may change in line with new priorities, new thinking, and new

feedback. We will keep a regular check that we are on track and continually evaluate our success through employee feedback and data analysis.

2.4 We have outlined our ambitions for making Trafford an even better place to work under four headings that describe how we will attract, recruit, and retain creative, collaborative, and talented people who align with our values. We have outlined under each priority, why we feel it's important to focus on the theme, what we have achieved so far, how we aim to deliver our ambitions for the next 3 years and how we will know when we've achieved them.

2.5 Our People Pledge is that by 2027 we will have achieved our ambitions as set out in summary below and described more in the People Plan attached as an Appendix to this report.

Work with us

We are an employer of choice with a clear and defined employer brand. Through our modern recruitment practices we attract a diverse and talented range of people from our local communities and beyond, who are proud and passionate to work with us.

Learn and Grow with us

Everyone has access to informal and formal learning and development opportunities that equip them with the right knowledge and skills to do their best job and develop their careers with us. Our offer continually evolves and focuses on the skills needed today and the skills needed for the future.



Stay and Thrive with us

We have a strong employment offer and flexible working practices with clearly defined roles that motivate and support our people to do their best work. Our people are recognised and rewarded for a job well done and feel valued.

Belong and Connect with us

Our EPIC values and behaviours are lived and demonstrated by all our people in the way they do their work and the decisions they make.

All our people connect with our corporate vision and priorities and understand how their voice can make an impact and shape how we work together.

We champion wellbeing and celebrate diversity.

3.0 Our achievements in summary

3.1 We are proud of our achievements over the last three years, and they have formed the building blocks for our future focus – some of which are outlined below:

- Achieved Real Living Wage accreditation & Member status of the Good Employment Charter
- We successfully pay over 21000 colleagues monthly in Trafford Council, Schools, Greater Manchester Police, Members, and partner agencies.
- Achieved fostering friendly accreditation.
- Introduced bike mileage for staff.
- Achieved Carer Confident accreditation.
- Introduced Working Well passport.
- Introduced an employment pledge for Care Experienced people.
- Implemented Smart Working with many staff able to work in a hybrid manner.
- Achieved member status of the GMB domestic violence charter.
- Achieved 'one to' watch accreditation with Best Companies.

- Designed and delivered 25 cohorts of our EPIC Manager programme with 210 attendees.
- Introduced Leap into Management, Leadership and Senior Leadership Programmes upskilling 14 colleagues resulting in 5 promotions and successes with 22 colleagues are currently progressing through the programmes.
- Delivered our kick start programme. Offered 26 placements within the council which lead to 13 kickstarters' being successfully offered further opportunities upon completion of their placements.
- Supported 26 Colleagues to undertake the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship with 16 colleagues successfully completing the programme and a further 10 progressing through.
- Signed the Greater Manchester Pledge – demonstrating our commitment along with our other Local Authority partners to improve the stability of Childrens Social Care Workforce
- Automated the business case process to increase visibility of the hiring process.
- Developed an in-house coaching offer, upskilling 4 coaches through the apprenticeship levy. Our coaches have successfully completed 62 coaching relationships supporting colleagues with their personal development.
- Designed and launched our EPIC Manager programme, delivering 25 cohorts with 166 sessions and upskilling 210 colleagues in subjects such as role as leader,
- Mental Health First Aiders and Pioneers in place since 2019.
- Successfully delivered 26 Lets' Talk and 26 'All Colleague' events with high attendance and engagement levels.
- 6 staff forums in place and successfully operating with good attendance levels.
- LeadHership coaching and mentoring programme in place for women of colour with 7 candidates graduating.

4.0 How will we measure success?

4.1 Within Our People Plan we have outlined how we will measure the success of our ambitions, and these will help us to know if we need to continue with gusto, change direction, or increase support to enable us to achieve them.

4.2 Our plan is to remain agile so that we can respond successfully to future demands, and we will communicate any changes to our priorities as required.

4.3 We feel that the priorities set out in the Plan will bring us closer to being able to meet our aspiration to be an Employer people choose to and feel proud to work for and is reflective of the communities we serve.

5.0 Next steps

5.1 The design and branding of the final version of the Plan will follow the format of the Corporate Plan and we will work with the Communications Team to produce the visual and summary versions.

5.2 We will undertake a series of engagement activities to promote and launch our new People Plan and Priorities.

6.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that Employment Committee:

- (i) Note the contents of the report; and
- (ii) Approves the refreshed People Plan narrative for 2024-2027.

Appendix 1- Our People Plan 2024-2027

Our People Plan

2024 – 2027

Introduction - Cllr Cath Hynes and Sara Todd

We are proud of our people and the progress we have made in making Trafford a great place to work, do business with, and call home. We also pride ourselves on being a low-cost, high performing Council compared to similar authorities and we are responsive to the needs of our diverse communities and efficient in how we meet them. This is because our colleagues go above and beyond every day to ensure that we meet the needs of our residents, businesses, and communities.

Although many parts of the borough are prosperous by Greater Manchester's standards, people in some areas face hardship in their daily lives. That's why healthy and independent lives for everyone is a priority for us. We want to raise living standards and life expectancy across the borough. We are also committed to a thriving economy and homes for all. The best start for our children and young people is a major priority, as is addressing the climate crisis. We are a Council that doesn't just help people to cope but also to thrive. That's why we're also committed to making sure there is culture, heritage, and sport for everyone. There's a lot to do, there's a lot to achieve.

Our People priorities are simple – we know how crucial it is to attract, recruit and retain talented and skilled individuals who are proud to work for us and who share our ambitions for making Trafford a great place. We also know that there is a demand for talent and so we need to be in a strong position to be the employer people choose.

Since our last People Strategy was published in January 2020, we have had to respond to a range of workforce challenges, not least a global pandemic that has meant we have adapted to a 'new normal' and embraced new ways of working and technology. We will undoubtedly face many more challenges and opportunities over the next three years as we set out to achieve our corporate priorities. It's therefore important to us that we support our people to be skilled, resourceful, and resilient, and work hard to ensure that they feel valued.

We have already achieved so much, and our borough is a place of constant change, so our People Plan needs to be agile to reflect our thinking and be able to respond to future demands and stay ahead of the curve over the next three years.

We are delighted to share our People Plan. This Plan builds upon the great work that we have already achieved and sets out our People priorities and areas of focus for the next three years for becoming an even greater place to work.

In our Plan, we describe how we will empower and develop colleagues to make an impact to be proud of, so that our residents, businesses, and communities continue to thrive and by working together we achieve our priorities in the corporate plan.

Our People Plan will be a living document, ready to adapt to the needs of our residents and we will continually review our commitments, adapt to changes, and update our promises to make sure our colleagues feel supported to do their jobs well, so our residents, businesses and communities of Trafford can thrive.

Our Vision, Our Priorities...



Our Values...

We are immensely proud of our EPIC Values, which we developed together back in 2019. Our recent consultation has confirmed they remain relevant across the organisation. That is why they will continue to underpin everything we do and provide a framework for how we work together to achieve our corporate priorities. Our Values are integral throughout this people plan and underpin all the work outlined in the 4 pillars of our plan.

We inspire and trust our people to deliver the best outcomes for our customers, communities and colleagues.

We Empower



We are People Centred



We value all people, within and external to the organisation and give those around us respect. We will act with honesty and integrity in all that we do.

We build relationships, collaborate; treat people as equal partners and work together to make things happen.

We Collaborate



We are Inclusive



We are committed to creating an environment that values and respects the diversity and richness differences bring.

How did we shape our People Plan?

Our People Plan has been developed by working together with our people and our partners. We have listened closely to what is important to them and will continue to work in collaboration when implementing the plan. This plan builds on and refreshes the previous people strategy and whilst it is supported and enabled by our HR Team, it belongs to all of us that work at Trafford Council. We...

- Listened to feedback that colleagues shared at all our Colleague and Leaders Let's Talk Sessions.
- Engaged with our Staff Forum groups, Trade Union Colleagues, Mental Health First Aider and Pioneers.
- Listened and learned through briefings delivered at every Departmental Management Team meeting.
- Consulted with our Corporate Leadership Team and Executive Members.
- Revisited and reviewed our b-Heard employee survey results where 1,013 colleagues shared their feedback on questions connected to leadership, my team, wellbeing, and my manager.... they also shared their thoughts on questions such as "what makes this a great place to work?" and "What could make this an even better place to work?"
- Have reviewed external research and best practice from organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Development, Best Companies and the LGA.
- Surveyed colleagues to ask what they think we do well and what we could do better to recruit, retain, develop, and engage with our people.
- Analysed our recruitment and workforce data, insights, and feedback such as our exit interviews.

Our People Plan has also been shaped by the ambitions laid out in our corporate plan and other plans and strategies that underpin and support us to achieve our corporate priorities.

From all this feedback and engagement with colleagues we have identified some key priorities and focus areas at each stage of the employee lifecycle. Whilst our plan sets out our ambitions and priorities, it will be flexible. It is intended to be a live document which may change in line with new priorities, new thinking, and new feedback. We will keep a regular check that we are on track and continually evaluate our success through our employee feedback.

Our 4 Pillar Plan ...

Work with us

We are an employer of choice with a clear and defined employer brand. Through our modern recruitment practices we attract a diverse and talented range of people from our local communities and beyond, who are proud and passionate to work with us.

Learn and Grow with us

Everyone has access to informal and formal learning and development opportunities that equip them with the right knowledge and skills to do their best job and develop their careers with us. Our offer continually evolves and focuses on the skills needed today and the skills needed for the future.



Stay and Thrive with us

We have a strong employment offer and flexible working practices with clearly defined roles that motivate and support our people to do their best work. Our people are recognised and rewarded for a job well done and feel valued.

Belong and Connect with us

Our EPIC values and behaviours are lived and demonstrated by all our people in the way they do their work and the decisions they make.

All our people connect with our corporate vision and priorities and understand how their voice can make an impact and shape how we work together.

We champion wellbeing and celebrate diversity.

Work with us...

Introduction...

We know that attracting and recruiting talented and skilled individuals who are proud and passionate to work with us is crucial to our continuing success and vital in supporting us to achieve our corporate priorities.

Our ability to recruit and retain people is impacted by ever increasing financial restraints, cost of living pressures, changing demographics and post pandemic trends. We are not alone in facing these challenges and that's why we are doing all that we can to promote and celebrate Trafford as an EPIC Place to work.

Despite the above challenges our turnover rate has remained stable at 11.80% and we have successfully recruited to over 1507 vacancies over the last 3 years. This demonstrates that we are still able to provide opportunities to our people to grow their careers with us and attract talent to work with us.

We will continue to think creatively and develop more opportunities for career graded roles and pathways so that in these instances we "grow our own talent." This is something our people said was key moving forward and reflected in the feedback of our engagement survey in 2022, specifically for entry level roles.

A successful Trafford is one that has a workforce that is reflective of the of the communities we serve. We will continue to collaborate with colleagues in our BAME staff forum and other community groups and equality networks to increase opportunities to residents from ethnically diverse communities and take positive action to increase the diversity of our workforce at all levels.

Our colleagues also told us that we have a great story to tell, and that we should do even more to sell Trafford as a great place to work.

We will, focus on defining a clearer and more compelling "employer brand." A brand that is bold and celebrates the benefits, breadth, variety, and rich purpose that a career at Trafford Council has to offer. We will further develop our Greater Jobs website to reflect our employer brand and use social media channels to share our story and shout out loudly about Trafford – an "EPIC" place to work.

We recognise that a one size approach doesn't fit all. How we recruit to legal roles will be different to how we recruit people to work in our schools and care homes, but our values will remain the same. We will continue to build our presence at local careers fairs and community events and strengthen our connections and partnerships with schools, colleges, universities, and community groups to promote the many specialist careers that are available at Trafford.

Our people were clear that they want an innovative, modern recruitment processes and systems. We will look externally to benchmark our processes and maximise the opportunities of our new Applicant Tracking System to make our processes leaner and timescales shorter.

We know that there are significant national challenges to attract and retain social workers, specifically with Children's Services. In 2024 we had on average 4.76 social worker vacancies a month. We have taken steps to encourage colleagues to join us permanently by signing the Greater Manchester (GM) Pledge, alongside starting to build connections with schools and colleges to promote careers in social care and delivering bespoke recruitment campaigns and webinars to attract colleagues to apply for social work roles with us. More importantly, we have made great progress in growing our own talent by supporting 26 colleagues to undertake the social work degree apprenticeship programme. We recognise, however, there is still more to do nationally and locally in this space.

And finally... As one of the largest employers in the borough we have an integral role to play in offering opportunities to those who need them most. In collaboration with colleagues in Children's Services we have already supported. We will strengthen and expand our entry level careers offer by providing more apprenticeships, work experience opportunities, internships, graduate placements, T-Levels, and career pathways so we attract to a multi-generational workforce to work with us.

Our Achievements since 2020....

- Designed and launched our Values Based Recruitment Programme. Upskilled **230** managers in our recruitment process to interview and appoint candidates whose values align to our own.
- Delivered our kick start programme. Offered **26** placements which lead to **13** kick starters being successfully offered further opportunities with us upon completion of their placements.
- Introduced a **Supported Internship Scheme** with Trafford Council as the host employer. Working in collaboration we have supported **5 young people** to successfully complete the programme and secure further employment opportunities.
- Supported **26** Colleagues to undertake the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship with **10** colleagues successfully completing the programme and a further **16** progressing through.
- **Signed the Greater Manchester Pledge** – to demonstrate our commitment along with our other Local Authority partners to improve the stability of Children's Social Care Workforce.
- Increased our presence at community and jobs fairs, attending over **18 events** from 2023 to date.
- **Automated** the business case process to increase visibility of the process for hiring managers.

Our Focus 2024 – 2027...

- **Improve and increase access to entry level roles**– We will strengthen and expand our entry level careers offer by providing more apprenticeship opportunities, internships, Graduate and T-Level placements.
- **Improve our Work Experience Offer** – We will define a corporate work experience process and offer and proactively promote this to schools, prioritising opportunities to care leavers and those from ethnically diverse communities.
- **Increase the number of career graded roles** – Specifically for roles where we experience low retention and attraction rates. We will use the apprenticeship levy to help us develop and grow our own skills and support people to develop their careers with us.
- **Define an employment offer for our care experienced cohort** – In line with our Corporate Parenting responsibilities we will work collaboratively with our colleagues in Children's Services and Inclusive Economies team to design an offer that can provide a great start to a career in local government.
- **Develop a Clear and Compelling Employer Brand** - Our brand will centre around our EPIC Values and promote the benefits, variety and purpose a career at Trafford can bring.
- **Develop our Greater Jobs and Council Website Content** - We will continue to update and develop content for our Greater Jobs Website that reflects our employer brand. We will widely promote this content.
- **Increase our Social Media Presence** – We will proactively use social media channels to promote roles and careers at Trafford alongside our employer brand.
- **Increase our Community Engagement** – We will work more closely with our communities and community groups to increase awareness of the roles on offer at Trafford and offer more bespoke support for candidates from ethnically diverse communities to apply for our roles.
- **Improve our recruitment process and systems** – We will improve, automate, and modernise our processes. We will maximise the opportunities of our Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to improve the candidate and hiring manager experience by streamlining our processes and using improved data and report outputs to shape our service delivery.
- **Strengthen Partnerships** – We will build stronger partnerships with schools, colleges and universities to help us expand our channels to attract future talent.
- **Review and refresh our onboarding Process** – We will review and modernise our onboarding process to make use of digital developments and to ensure all successful candidates receive a warm welcome to Trafford.
- **Deliver targeted recruitment programmes** - We will work with Directorate/Communications Leads to deliver targeted recruitment campaigns for adult and children's social care roles and support the reduction of agency staff through the GM pledge. We will further develop specific content to promote roles in this sector on our Greater Jobs website.

How will we measure our success?

- Increased number of work experience placements offered to students from ethnically diverse communities.
- Increased number of apprenticeship, internship, graduate and t-level placements offered across the organisation.
- Increase in the number of career graded roles offered across the organisation at varying levels.
- Pro-actively support an increased number of care experienced people engaging in work experience and employment support opportunities.
- An increased number of shortlisted applications and appointments from candidates from ethnically diverse communities.
- Incremental increase in Greater Jobs website hits for vacancies and content; we will define targets for increased hits after setting a baseline in year 1.
- Design and launch our own social media channels and strive for 500 followers in year 1 on our main channel. Incrementally increasing followers in years 2 and 3.
- Reduce the length of time between advert to making an employment offer.
- Reduced spend on agency workers.

Learn and grow with us...

Introduction...

We know that investing in learning and development has a flood of positive outcomes for our people and our organisation. In an ever-changing world a modern and innovative learning and development offer is central to our success. It supports us to attract and retain talented people and stay one step ahead of the curve.

We recognise that the skills we have today are not necessarily the skills we need for our future growth. We want to ensure our offer not only supports people to develop in their roles and their careers but focusses on developing critical skills that underpin our corporate plan and that help us achieve our 5 corporate priorities such as digital skills development and a continuing focus on change management and leadership development.

Developing our current managers and aspiring managers remains a priority. We will continue to invest in their development so that they can role model our values and behaviours. We will upskill all our managers in core coaching skills and techniques so that coaching becomes part of everyday management and leadership practice.

Trafford, like many other organisations has an older workforce. To future proof our workforce and ensure talent continuity we will develop a more robust and formal approach to talent and succession planning specifically focusing on leadership and specialist roles. We will work with our directorates to identify jobs, skills and potential competency gaps and design a new leadership behaviour framework.

To support the growth and development of those identified under succession or as talent for the future we will design a programme to support our senior managers and our next generation of leaders to step into more senior roles. We will ensure these colleagues are equipped with a range of skills that close the gaps between operational and strategic management, have a better leadership awareness and a range of leadership styles that will help them to further develop their people and lead our organisation through future challenges. This programme will complement our existing EPIC manager programme and LEAP into Management and Leadership Programmes.

We know through our engagement survey and feedback that some colleagues do not feel as strongly as others that the “training provided is of benefit to them personally.”

We will strengthen our learning offer for colleagues who do not have line management responsibilities and develop a range of learning resources and courses, to empower colleagues to self-direct their learning. Whether this is to support them to be the best they can be in their

current role or supports their career development. More formally our Apprenticeship levy is one source of funding that we will continue to utilise to help strengthen our formal learning offer to all colleagues.

Through our Business Partners we will also work more closely with Directorates to identify specific gaps in technical and on the job training so that we are more proactive and planned in our approach. We will also continue to support our Adults and Children's Directorates to strengthen and develop the support and learning offer to our newly qualified and experienced social workers.

To support us to further embed learning into the culture of the organisation we will also focus our energies on helping our workforce become life-long learners. This means recognising that learning can take place formally, informally, and in a social context. It goes beyond just offering a set list of available courses.

We will experiment with new learning approaches and methodologies so that there are more opportunities for informal learning. We will also continue to capitalise on digital enhancements, such as viva engage, our new share-point site and our new e-learning platform to make sure that learning becomes more agile, accessible, and engaging.

And finally... Our current pool of qualified coaches' deliver an invaluable service to colleagues, supporting their personal and professional development. We recognise that we have not yet maximised their potential and will invest in their development and further promote the benefits and value of coaching to support us to develop and embed our coaching culture so that our colleagues have every opportunity to learn and grow with us.

Our Achievements since 2020....

- Introduced **LEAP** into Management, Leadership and Senior leadership programmes. We have upskilled **14** colleagues resulting in **5** promotions and successes.
- Developed and In-House coaching offer. Upskilled **6 coaches** through the apprenticeship levy and supported **7** more who are progressing through the qualification. Those qualified and in training have supported **62 colleagues** with their wellbeing and personal development.
- Designed and launched our EPIC manager programme, delivering **26** cohorts, **166** Sessions and upskilling **210** managers.
- Launched a core **member induction programme** for all newly elected members.
- Designed and delivered a bespoke **change management** and **leadership programme** for adult social care colleagues.

Our Focus 2024 – 2027...

- **Promote learning and Apprenticeship Opportunities** – We will refresh our intranet pages and continually promote the learning opportunities both formal and informal that are available at Trafford. This includes opportunities available through our apprenticeship levy and upskill programme.
 - **Strengthen our Coaching Programme** – We will develop and increase our existing pool of qualified coaches. We will promote and increase reach and uptake of this service.
 - **Develop a Talent and Succession Framework**- We will develop a more formalised approach to identify future talent and succession planning for senior leadership and specialist roles. We will design a leadership behaviour framework to support us to create a consistent leadership culture.
 - **Develop a senior leadership development programme** – We will develop and deliver a bespoke senior leadership programme to support our heads of service and service managers to develop the competencies within our leadership behaviour framework.
 - **Deliver targeted Equality, Diversity and Inclusion learning** – We will mandate anti racism, diversity and inclusion training for all elected members and senior staff as part of our Race Equity Strategy.
 - **Increase training attendance** - We will work in collaboration to promote and increase attendance on training that supports awareness raising and achievement of our corporate priorities, such as Carbon Literacy.
 - **Strengthen our learning and support offer to Social Workers** – We will work in collaboration with service development leads to strengthen our learning and development offer to newly qualified and experienced social workers to support their professional growth and increase retention.
- **Introduce a broader Learning Offer** – We will design and deliver a programme of courses to support all colleagues to develop in their day-to-day roles and to support their career progression and wellbeing.
 - **Co-Design and Develop a Digital Skills Programme** – We will support our colleagues in IT to enable them to provide a blended programme for digital skills development to ensure that we have a digitally skilled and enabled workforce.
 - **Introduce, evaluate and build upon the GM Inclusive Leaders Programme** – In collaboration with GMCA we will introduce a positive action development programme to help more staff from diverse groups to develop and progress. We will evaluate and build upon this programme.
 - **Increase coaching capabilities across our leadership population** - We will upskill all our managers and leaders with coaching competencies and skills to help embed coaching in everyday leadership and management practice.
 - **Implement our new E-Learning System** – We will improve our users experience and review corporate and job role specific requirements to make sure that time spent by colleagues on their personal development is targeted and relevant.
 - **Maximise the opportunities of digital developments** – We will utilise all available digital developments to increase and develop our learning offer and use these developments to encourage formal and informal learning.

How will we measure our success?

- Increased the number of colleagues accessing and completing a range of apprenticeship qualifications.
- Increased number of staff accessing our coaching service alongside a positive evaluation of colleagues who have accessed the service.
- Incremental increase in our overall engagement scores relating to “personal growth” across all employment bands specifically for questions. “The training in this job is a great benefit to me personally” and “There are limited opportunities for me to learn and grow within this organisation”.
- Increase in positive responses to b-Heard survey relating to questions under the “leadership” and my “manager” factors of engagement.
- Succession planning process completed for all CLT, Directors, Heads of Service and identified critical/specialist roles.
- Incremental increase in the percentage of promotions to senior management and critical/specialist positions filled internally.
- Successfully tested, configured, and launched our new e-learning platform ensuring that all Trafford colleagues and their historical training records are migrated successfully.
- An increased number of colleagues accessing e-learning related to their personal development.

Belong and connect with us...

Introduction...

We want Trafford to be a place where everyone connects with our vision, priorities and values and feels engaged and empowered to shape the work they do, so that we collectively achieve our ambitions as set out in our corporate plan.

We know that feeling connected to the jobs that we do and understanding the part that we play in contributing to the overall goals of the organisation has an immense impact on how engaged our employees feel. We want all colleagues to have a clear sense of direction and a shared purpose, irrespective of which directorate they work in or role that they do. Over the next 3 years we will, therefore, focus on bringing our corporate plan and priorities to life to make them meaningful and purposeful to all.

To help colleagues to further connect with our priorities and values and to have impactful conversations we will also review, refresh, and explore how we can digitalise our EPIC Check in process. Feedback told us that whilst the current form has impacted successfully on the quality of conversations it is not always easy to navigate or applied consistently across the organisation.

We have worked immensely hard over the last few years to develop our culture to reflect our EPIC values. We have focused on developing our wellbeing offer and culture alongside enhancing our employee diversity profile.

Our EPIC Pioneers have played a key role in supporting us to promote and embed our values. Over the next 3 years we will focus on growing our network of Pioneers to support us to deliver a programme of activity that will re-energise and further embed our EPIC Values. This will help ensure that wherever anyone works in Trafford, there is consistency in how our values are lived and role modelled. Something our colleagues told is us important to them.

Our staff forums have also played an instrumental role in shaping the work that we do and supporting positive solutions to challenges. An example of which is the introduction of the Working Well Passport. This was introduced as a direct result of feedback from our disability staff group. In our work to shape this plan our colleagues told us this passport has already had a positive impact and should be consistently promoted and communicated.

We will continue to promote and collaborate with all our equality and diversity staff groups as we recognise that it's important to have safe spaces for our people to network, listen and contribute to discussions.

Alongside our informal engagement channels our engagement survey enables our workforce to share their voice on key factors of engagement such as my manager, leadership, personal growth, and wellbeing. We will undertake a further survey and encourage more people to participate and share their views so that we continue to listen and act upon their feedback.

There are already lots of opportunities to engage and network with colleagues in Trafford such as Our Leadership Summit, Leaders and All Colleague Lets' Talk events. We will continue to develop and shape these events based on colleague feedback and to highlight some of the great work being undertaken under each of our corporate priorities.

To help us to connect with colleagues even further we will maximise the digital communication tools available to us. These tools will enable us to share updates on corporate priority progress, success stories related to our values and support us to develop a culture of informal learning and sharing.

We recognise that there can be challenges in working and balancing home life. Alongside our employment policies and flexible working options, we know that having colleague wellbeing regularly on the agenda, enables us to normalise a range of topics and makes it easier for colleagues to feel empowered to look after their own wellbeing. Supporting a culture of wellbeing will continue to be a priority.

To further support individual wellbeing and to encourage a connection to Trafford, the Place and the communities we serve we will continue to promote and champion the benefits volunteering. We will review our policy and seek for ways to increase these opportunities.

And finally... We know if we get the working conditions right, we can achieve our ambitions for our people to feel engaged, supported and connected, that in turn can stimulate innovation and creativity.

Our Achievements since 2020....

- Designed and Delivered 2 Leadership Summit's in 2020 and 2023. Alongside successfully delivering 26 Leader's Let's Talk Sessions and 26 All Colleague Let's Talk Sessions.
- Designed and Delivered a Pulse Survey in 2020 with a 51% response rate.
- Delivered our b-Heard survey in 2022 Achieving One to Watch Status.
- Achieved an increase engagement score in our 2022 survey from 635.1 to 649.7. We also saw a positive increase in scores relating to Leadership, My Manager, Personal Growth, Wellbeing and Giving Something Back.
- Refreshed and revised our wellbeing offer with a calendar and resources with a full calendar of events in place.
- 4 Staff forums in place, with good attendance levels and helping to shape new solutions to how we work.

Our Focus 2024 – 2027...

- **Reinvigorate and reinforce our EPIC Values** – We will design a programme of activity centred around our values and behaviours. We will bring our values to life further with visual cues, case studies, stories and toolkits and through informal and formal learning events and two-way communications.
- **Increase our EPIC Pioneer Membership**– We will recruit more pioneers and celebrate and promote the work of our pioneers through digital channels and our intranet.
- **Deliver Our Leaders and Colleague Let’s Talk Sessions** – We will continue to deliver our Let’s Talk Sessions to managers and colleagues. We will shape the development of these sessions based on feedback from our colleagues, whilst updating on progress and activity against our corporate priorities and EPIC Values.
- **Deliver an annual Leadership Summit** - We will build on our 2023 Leadership Summit and deliver a yearly summit to leaders across the organisation.
- **Develop a programme of engagement centred around our corporate priorities** – We will work in collaboration with our communications team to promote and embed our corporate priorities across the organisation. We will capitalise on digital developments to foster two-way communications to aid staff understanding of progress and important updates.
- **Deliver an All-Colleague Survey and act upon feedback** – We will continue to use this feedback to shape our corporate employee engagement action planning alongside regular reporting and “you said... we did” updates to ensure we continuously improve as an employer.
- **Refresh and Relaunch our EPIC Check in Paperwork and process** – We will streamline and explore how we digitalise our check in process so that it is more user friendly and easier for us to capture the outcomes and data of conversations relating to objectives, values, personal development, and succession planning.
- **Develop our Wellbeing Action Plan** –Renew this annually to ensure it underpins our People Strategy. This will build upon the current schedule of events to include but not limited to, promoting our Occupational Health Provision, Mental Health First Aiders, and delivering a variety of wellbeing training for all colleagues, focusing on key areas such as resilience and digital wellbeing alongside further developing our wellbeing offer to managers.
- **Design and Deliver a Corporate Induction Programme** – We design an induction programme that helps colleagues to feel connected to us from the start and to understand the role they and others play in shaping and contributing to our success.
- **Promote volunteering opportunities** – We will continue to promote and encourage colleagues to undertake volunteering opportunities to give something back to our local communities.

How will we measure our success?

- Improve our overall response rate to our next engagement survey to achieve a response rate of more than 51%.
- Incremental increase to engagement questions within “my company” and “feedback” factors of engagement, relating to the questions:
 - I believe I can make a valuable contribution to the success of this organisation.
 - I feel proud to work for this organisation.
 - I am excited about where this organisation is going.
 - What is expected of me in my work is made completely clear to me.
- 75% attendance and positive feedback on the corporate induction programme.
- An increased number of EPIC Pioneers with representation across all parts of the organisation.
- An increase in engagement scores relating to the question “senior managers truly live the values of this organisation”.
- An increase in the overall engagement scores relating to Health and Wellbeing.
- An increase in attendance figures from each directorate to our Let’s Talk events.
- Obtain and promote a positive employee advocacy score relating to our Let’s Talk events and Leadership Summit.

Stay and thrive with us...

Introduction...

Alongside attracting great and diverse people to work for us it is key that we also retain high performing colleagues and create the right conditions for all to stay and thrive with us alongside a strong employment offer.

It's also important that we know where our current and future workforce challenges will be, and working closely with our HR Directorate Business Partners, knowing what our people data is telling us will help us to channel our focus into those areas that need the HR service support the most. In feedback from the last b-heard survey in 2022, colleagues told us that they felt that some roles and responsibilities are not defined within teams, leaving confusion amongst some staff which is why we are reviewing the way we design jobs and will refresh our role profiles.

We also know that we need to do the basics beautifully, so we will have a renewed focus on ensuring that our employee experience is the best it can be and that our teams supporting it are agile, responsive and customer focused. We will continue to support managers to be great People Managers so that they lead their teams to be their best and the HR team will roll out a bespoke programme to help them to apply a range of HR policies and management practices, so they feel more confident and empowered in their roles. This will also help colleagues to feel that employment policies and processes are applied consistently. This came through strongly in the people strategy evaluation feedback.

We know that a strong employment offer has at its core, fair pay and benefits, meaningful roles, and an inclusive and supportive culture. We are proud of the progress we have made in achieving Member status for the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter and being a Real Living Wage Accredited Employer. We will also seek to sign up to the Age Friendly Employer pledge in 2024, to sit alongside our wide range of accreditations that demonstrate we are an Inclusive and fair employer.

Alongside our ambition to attract a diverse range of talented people, it is also important to us that we retain, particularly those who are specialist or who work in roles where skills are scarce. With a wide range of career and succession opportunities, we will support professional and job-related learning and encourage growing our own talent. By providing qualification routes linked with salary progression in career grades, colleagues can choose to stay with Trafford and excel in their chosen field.

The challenges around cost of living and increased inflation have contributed to concerns around income and this played out in responses from our b-heard survey in 2022. We have worked hard to ensure that we offer a fair and competitive pay structure and that it meets equal pay compliance, and our equal pay audit will help us to identify where we may need to make some changes. Alongside this, we continually review our financial wellbeing offer and have a comprehensive package of support in place for colleagues to access and an example of where we align

to our values is when we allowed colleagues on Universal Credit to access the last pay award in 3 monthly instalments so they wouldn't lose their financial support package.

Alongside pay, it's important that we keep our ways of working under review so that our colleagues feel able to be their best and thrive at work. Colleagues told us following the pandemic that they wanted more flexibility in how they performed their roles, and we introduced our 'smart working' hybrid working model that is in place today that allows colleagues to vary where they undertake their work according to the needs of their service.

We also have a range of home and personal supportive employment policies and employee benefits, including our agile and hybrid working model to balance work, wellbeing, and home life to support us to do our best work wherever that may be. Supplemented with a range of cost-effective employee benefits ranging from salary sacrifice schemes for car lease, bike to work scheme and home technology to discounted gym membership and staff discount scheme with many high street retailers, restaurants and cinemas, our aim is to support our workforce to stay, work and thrive with us and this includes having a safe and healthy work environment.

Recognition will remain an important feature of our people priorities, and we will ensure that our colleagues feel noticed and appreciated for their part in ensuring Trafford remains a great place to work, to live and do business with. We will celebrate their success with them at our annual Time to Shine event and throughout the year with our bi-monthly EPIC Star nominations and cheers for peers thank you e-cards.

And finally...The most recent Local Government Workforce Survey from the LGA shows a median average labour turnover rate of 14% and our 23/24-year end figure is 11.80%. This suggests we are in a strong position to avoid the disruption that excessive turnover causes, and our focus over the next three years will enable more colleagues to stay and thrive with us.

Our Achievements since 2020....

- Achieved **Real Living Wage** Accreditation and Member status of the **Good Employment Charter**.
- Introduced **Bike mileage** for Staff.
- Implemented Trafford **SMART** Working, supporting many staff to work in a hybrid manner.
- Delivered **2** Time to Shine Events and our EPIC Star Awards.
- Achieved member status of the **GMB Domestic Violence Charter**.
- Launched "**Your Safety, Your Wellbeing**" and a range of toolkits to update manager responsibilities and help keep colleagues safe at work.
- Achieved "**Carer Confident**" Accomplished employer status.
- Launched a shared **AVC** Scheme – A way of developing an additional pension pot with Tax and National Insurance savings.

Our Focus 2024 – 2027...

- **Sign up to the Age Friendly employer Pledge** - We will demonstrate our commitment to support employment and retention of older workers underpinned by a range of supportive policies and initiatives to that they feel valued and stay with us so that we can benefit from their experience in developing our future talent pipeline.
 - **Undertake an equal pay audit** – we will demonstrate our compliance with an equality proofed pay structure and consistency in pay and grading, benchmarking with our local authority & GMCA peers.
 - **Embed more career grades into the pay structure** – we will create linked career grades that allow progression across multiple grades and access into senior leadership roles linked to our ambition for a talent and succession pipeline of the next generation of leaders.
 - **Embed colleague recognition in all we do, enhancing our current offer** – we will deliver our EPIC stars, Cheers for Peers and annual Time to Shine and Long Service achievement events and learn year on year from what went well.
 - **Enhance our workforce planning and people analytics capability** we will invest in workforce planning capacity and use our census and protected characteristics data to inform and shape our workforce strategies to improve diversity in the workforce and especially at senior levels.
- **Refresh our role profile** - we will design jobs that have purpose and meaning, are clearly stated and understood, and colleagues can feel a real sense of achievement clearly able to see where they can make their impact in supporting achievement of Council's priorities.
 - **Refresh our health and safety policy** – we will review our policy and processes so that we remain able to offer a safe and healthy work environment and all risks are minimised.
 - **Continually improve the employee experience** – we will work hard to ensure we get the basics right so that from day 1, any changes to employment contracts are enacted and communicated in a timely, accurate and professional way, working seamlessly with our colleagues in the HR Shared Service and utilising digital platforms where we can.
 - **Design and deliver a bespoke training programme for managers on 'How to HR'**. We will deliver a blended programme for managers focussing on people management policies and process so that our managers feel supported and empowered within their roles.
 - **Maintain our accreditation to the Good Employment Charter** - taking steps to elevate practices in the characteristics as required by the charter standards.

How will we measure our success?

- Achieve age friendly accreditation.
- Maintain stable levels of turnover at 12% or below ensuring we are below the national average.
- Incremental increase in engagement scores relating to the questions under fair deal and feedback factors.
- Reduce number of permanent staff who leave within the first 2 years of employment.
- Reduce sickness absence days to 9.5 and reduce incrementally in years 2 and 3.
- Introduce a refreshed role profile.
- Complete an equal pay audit by March 2026.
- Increase nominations for our recognition schemes - EPIC stars and annual Time to Shine event.
- Implement a refreshed health and safety policy.

Working in Partnership with us...

Introduction...

Working with us also extends to the relationships we build via our partnership and collaborations . We know it is important to foster great relationships to help us respond to the challenges we face. We are always stronger together.

Since 2017, we have worked in partnership with Greater Manchester Police to provide a transactional HR, Payroll and Pension Shared Service across our workforce. It is the only non-NHS public sector collaboration of its kind in Greater Manchester (GM), and this not only saves us money, but also builds resilience and allows us to navigate complex situations more easily, because of the relationships we have built.

We provide people services to schools and other organisations across Greater Manchester. This allows schools to access support in areas such as health & safety, wellbeing, HR Consultancy, recruitment advertising, payroll, and pension services. Working with schools increases our resilience, whilst creating a conduit for schools to learn from each other. That is why we want to continue to grow our service offer and remain the service schools choose to trust with their people services, whilst responding to the challenges of academisation.

We also work in partnership with colleagues across Trafford to embed our four Equalities Strategy objectives - inclusive leadership, improving equalities workforce data collection, reducing health inequalities, and reducing hate crime. Across GM, with our local authority colleagues, we are also collaborating to embed a culture of inclusion, with a focus on a fairer Greater Manchester for all. We are working together on producing a Trafford Race Equity framework that aligns to the Greater Manchester strategy and a refreshed Equalities Strategy for 2025 onwards.

And finally..... as an active member in the family of Greater Manchester Local Authorities, this has allowed us to collaborate on several key contracts, helping us to ensure we get good value for money and reducing contract management overheads. It also allows us to share best practice and data intelligence with our local authority colleagues in those common areas of employment challenge, so we don't duplicate effort and we fully maximise our people resource and budgets.

Our Achievements since 2020....

- Reviewed and recontacted our **collaborative contracts** with our Local Authority partners, including our Me learning, Greater.Jobs, Applicant Tracking System, and our Occupational Health Contract.
- Supported the GM Civic and Community Leadership Programme, aimed at **increasing the representation** of people from **ethnically diverse communities** in areas of civic and public life.
- Joined a **collaboration** for the renewal of **iTrent contract**, allowing GMP and the Council and made **significant savings** across the life of the contract when compared to the cost of the product on other frameworks.
- **Extended** our level of HR support with an external client, whose purpose aligns with our **corporate priority** of healthy and independent lives for everyone, with payroll and HR consultancy services.
- Introduced **targeted HR support** to clients to positively address future budget challenges.
- Continued to roll out **self-service functionality** to the customers we work with, securing our relationships whilst also increasing access for hard-to-reach groups.

Our Focus 2024 – 2027...

- **Strengthen our HR offer to schools** – We will review and update our HR Offer and explore new opportunities to deliver our services to organisations across Greater Manchester, whilst responding to the challenge of academisation.
- **Renegotiate our partnership agreement with Greater Manchester Police** – We will agree a plan for the future to ensure that our ways of working feel fair to both organisations.
- **Develop an employee relations tracker** – We will develop an employee relations tracker through our I-Trent system which will enable us to report and track data more accurately.
- **Re-tender and secure our collaborative contract for the Employee Assistance Programme** – We will ensure that confidential, free, 24/7 support is available to our employees when they need it most.
- **Seek new opportunities to collaborate on people related procurement activity** – We will ensure that we secure products and services that are value for money and well supported by our providers.
- **Maximise social value opportunities in all people related contracts** - We will ensure that we understand and track opportunities to maximise value for the benefit of Trafford.
- **Improve the customer experience** – We will introduce a new digital customer relationship management (CRM) platform that will provide us with more streamline ways to communicate, with better data and reporting functionality.
- **Continue to work closely with HR networks** – We will continue to work closely together and share best practice and learning and consider opportunities to collaborate.
- **Support the achievement of a refreshed Equalities Strategy** - We will work with colleagues to update the Equalities Strategy so that from an employer perspective, we can meet our public sector duty responsibilities.
- **Support the achievement of Trafford’s Race Equity strategy** -We will work with colleagues across GM and Trafford to embed a race equity framework that aligns to the GM Strategy.

How will we measure our success?

- Evaluate all future contracts to establish where collaboration can be achieved.
- Produce and promote an updated HR offer to clients requesting HR services.
- New Employee Assistance Programme contract in place and working well.
- Successful implementation of the employee relations tracker on I-Trent.
- Clear visibility of Social Value opportunities for people related contracts for Trafford with an increase in utilisation.
- Implementation of a refreshed digital CRM platform.
- Refreshed Trafford Equalities Strategy in place and reflective of our public sector employer duty.
- The Trafford Race Equity framework is in place and all people related aspects are communicated and implemented.

A Great Place to Work...

