



Our People and Culture Strategy 2024 - 2027

Foreword



Lynsey Fulcher, Head of People
Cambridge City Council

I'm pleased to welcome you to our People and Culture Strategy for 2024 – 2027.

This strategy has been written with you – our current and future workforce placed at the heart of it. As a Council, most of what we do is delivered by our people – and we are extremely proud of the dedication and contribution you all bring to make a positive difference to our City.

Having not had a people strategy in place since 2011, we have had to think hard about what we want from this strategy, and we have listened carefully to your thoughts on what you want from us as an employer. Our lives and workspaces are in a very different place now. In a post-pandemic world, we all have different expectations from our employers and we want to work in different ways. This means we need to think differently about how we attract, retain, reward and develop you.

You have told us that wellbeing is more important than ever. We need to ensure we reduce stress levels whilst compassionately managing absence and performance to enable us to deliver our ambitious programme of change and transformation. To create the sense of belonging that we strive for, you have said our workplaces need to be truly inclusive – where you feel valued for being your unique self. Our new values and behaviours will help to shape this culture and our commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging is a golden thread throughout this strategy.

Our strategy is broader than a traditional people strategy. It provides a framework outlining our aspirations as a Council as well as our ambitions to lead on careers and employability support within our communities. The strategy describes the behaviours and expectations we have of our workforce, enabling us to support the changes that we need to see. Our new values and behaviours framework will help us to demonstrate how we live our four values of **Collaborative**, **Courageous**, **Compassionate** and **Accountable** in all that we do, and these will help us to monitor and celebrate our successes along the way.

The strategy has been written describing our Council in the future – jumping ahead to 2027 when we have achieved the ambitions outlined here. We hope this provides you with sense of what it will feel like working for Cambridge City Council - a place where we all work together to create an inclusive, compassionate and happy workplace.

The strategy is in effect the first chapter, the first step in our journey to 2027. More important now is making this a reality, and we have a great deal of flexibility to shape how we will achieve this. Starting by listening to existing colleagues, elected members and partners, we will work together to gather ideas and agree the actions and work needed.

I'm looking forward to working with you all and hearing your thoughts, ideas and plans to take us to 2027.

Lynsey

“ At Cambridge City Council we want to create a true culture of belonging. A place where we are all welcome, valued and listened to. A place where we belong and where we do the best job we can to benefit our communities, our citizens and our city. ”

Our People

Data as at April 2024

Our headcount is

859

with a full time equivalent of

748

Our average age is

47

3% of our workforce is under 25 years old

12% of our workforce is over 60 years of age

97% of our workforce have disclosed their diversity data, and of these

11% declare themselves from an ethnic minority background

Our average length of service is 10 years. We have 81 colleagues with over 25 years service and 26 over 35 years!

Our median pay gap is

6.81% and our mean pay gap is 0.95%

Our median ethnicity pay gap is 4.96% and our mean pay gap is -0.65%



7%

of our workforce declare they have a disability

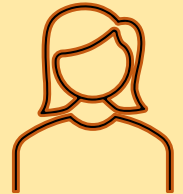
3C Shared Services



Some of our services are delivered in collaboration with our partners, and we pride ourselves on our partnership working.

49%

of our workforce is female



22%

of our employees work part time

This is in addition to many other informal flexible working patterns and approaches

Our current turnover is 13%, averaging

10

leavers per month

19 apprentices are employed within 15 different apprenticeship standards.

10% of our apprentices declare themselves from an ethnic minority background, and 53% are female

In 2023 we lost 6753 days to absence.

In 2023, we lost 2179 working days to mental health and anxiety – 32% of our total absence days



Our Values, Our Culture



COLLABORATIVE

We work with others to achieve better results



COURAGEOUS

We embrace change



COMPASSIONATE

We are kind and respectful to everyone



ACCOUNTABLE

We take ownership of our actions

We want to create a safe, ambitious, inclusive and welcoming environment where people want to work and importantly, want to stay. Our values are central to this and through listening to our workforce, we have already outlined the values that we want everyone in our organisation to role model.

A purposeful culture change should aim to embed these values to simply ensure that our culture is commonly described by our values, meaning that we demonstrate the values in all that we do. The embedding of our values will lead us to become a collaborative, courageous, compassionate and accountable Council.

Our values are weaved throughout each of our five strategy themes, providing rich descriptions of our aspired-to culture. Rather than a series of proposed actions, our strategy describes the Council as if these aspirations have been achieved, so each of us can visualise what it will feel like being part of Cambridge City Council in 2027.

Our Equality Pledge

Underpinning our whole culture and values is our equality pledge. Our equality pledge for Cambridge is *“to be an international city which celebrates its diversity and actively tackles intolerance and discrimination”*.

This also applies to us as an employer, and this strategy links our people ambitions with our equality pledge. This ensures we consider equality and diversity in all that we do to enable us to be a truly inclusive employer – one where we are all listened to and a Council in which we all feel we belong.

Context and Drivers



“You Said” ...

Feedback and insight from our current employees, leaders and trade unions has been key to shaping this new people strategy.

The feedback provided has helped us to set the vision and aspirations outlined in this strategy, including the wishes listed here.

You have told us you want to:

- understand how your role contributes to our wider organisational priorities, and how you help to make a real difference to our communities.
- help us achieve our environment and net zero aims.
- work in an organisation where your values, beliefs, identities and cultures are respected, where you feel listened to, valued for your contributions, and where you feel safe and comfortable to be yourself at work.
- help the Council to be high performing, being the best Council we can be for our communities and residents.
- continuously develop, being purposeful and deliberate in personal and professional development.
- help ensure our workforce is diverse across all levels and in all teams.



External Factors...

For many of us, our working lives have changed beyond recognition in recent years, with us having to adapt and learn new skills.

Legislation and the economy provide additional challenges that affect how we work and what our communities want from us.

We need to continually adapt to the changing needs that current and future employees of Cambridge City Council want from us as an employer.

We acknowledge and understand that:

- external economic issues challenge not just our communities, but also our people, and we need to support our workforce with these challenges.
- Cambridge is a place of high employment, meaning that we operate in a competitive employment market and often face challenges in filling roles.
- Cambridge is a fast growing city that is becoming more and more diverse. We need to better understand the diversity of the people and communities that we serve.
- we need to transform the Council so we can continue delivering our priorities and provide quality services despite reduced funding and income.
- we need to increase our digital skills to provide a faster, more personalised and accessible service for customers and to help us to adapt and thrive in an increasingly digital future.
- we need to be flexible and agile to enable us to adapt to legislative changes as well as the changing expectations and demographics of our customers and communities.
- we are an ambitious council with a significant growth plan for the next 15 – 20 years. The term of this strategy will help to position us as service provider, place maker and community facilitator to achieve these plans.

Our People Themes

Our Council Vision

The Council has a clear vision to lead a united city, 'One Cambridge — Fair for All', in which economic dynamism and prosperity are combined with social equality and environmental justice. An international, entrepreneurial, diverse and welcoming city, which is a great place to live, work and learn and which protects its most vulnerable.

Our Four Key Priorities to 2027

1. Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030.
2. Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need.
3. Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness.
4. Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all.

Our People Themes

Our Council vision and Target Operating Model provide an overview of the type of Council we want to be. The people and culture strategy takes these a step further and specifically considers the people implications - the things that we, as existing and future employees of Cambridge City Council, can do to help make this vision and operating model a reality.

Our strategy has five interlinked themes, with our people and a sense of belonging at the heart of the strategy.

The strategy will be supported by our 'People Plan' outlining the detail on how we will, and have, achieved the aspirations outlined here.



At Cambridge City Council we are engaged, motivated and supported to balance work and life commitments to deliver positive outcomes for our residents and communities.

We are an inclusive, diverse and people-oriented Council where we all feel welcome.



To ensure we are an inclusive and welcoming place to be:

- We create a safe environment and culture to encourage our workforce to share their views and experiences. Our people feel comfortable in sharing how we can improve ways of working and to call out inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour, irrespective of role, grade or personal characteristic.
- We have a good understanding of how people want to be communicated with.
- We have excellent flexibility within roles across the organisation and this in turn has a positive impact on how people manage their work life balance.
- Our structures enable people to work across functions, and partners, and our people feel welcome and supported when working outside of their own teams.
- We have an excellent wellbeing offering and encourage people to take time to look after their own physical and mental wellbeing – both within their role and in their personal lives.
- Our “My Conversations” appraisal process encourages continuous conversations between individuals and their line manager, building good working relationships and creating a culture of support and compassion.
- Our leaders and managers support their teams and know where and when to sign post people to for more information and support.
- We have regular Town Hall and all staff conversations about diversity and inclusion.

This theme helps us to meet our equality pledge by:

- *Promoting a culture of allyship in the workplace – where we stand up against discrimination and proactively promote equality and diversity regardless of our personal backgrounds. We understand that this helps to create a more diverse, equitable, and productive environment where we all feel valued and supported.*
- *Empowering all of our people. Our flatter structures naturally enable our people to have the confidence and power to change and challenge behaviours.*
- *Placing wellbeing at the forefront of all of our employment policies and practices. Our wellbeing offering provides support to all of our people, from those needing reasonable adjustments to those with caring responsibilities or just wanting to improve their work life balance.*

Theme One: Being an inclusive and welcoming place



We measure the success of this theme by:

- All employee surveys.
- Monitoring family friendly/flexible working requests.
- Reviewing employee relations casework.
- Monitoring our wellbeing offering.
- Our My Conversations approach.

Theme Two: Attracting and retaining our people



At Cambridge City Council we attract the best people, in the most effective way possible. We are a place where people want to work, learn and grow and where we can all be our best selves.

We create an environment in which we can all develop to meet both present and future needs.



We measure the success of this theme by:

- All employee surveys.
- Monitoring recruitment and retention data.
- Engagement in career pathways and work experience.
- The success of our apprenticeship and graduate programmes.

To ensure we are able to attract and retain our people:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of all of our recruitment and retention practice and initiatives, creating an environment in which we all feel we belong, we are welcome and we want to stay working here.
- Our recruitment brand is compelling and consistent with our values. People positively recognise us as a local employer and are attracted to our roles.
- Our resourcing processes and expertise enable the council to attract the best talent and build and retain a highly skilled, resilient workforce.
- Our managers understand their short- and long-term resourcing requirements.
- We unlock barriers for people from different communities to apply for our roles, including those disadvantaged by other systems or opportunities. We work with others to lead on careers and employability support to our communities.
- We have found new and innovative ways to attract and retain people. Our career pathways, work experience programmes and apprenticeship opportunities are aligned and have helped us to find long term solutions to particularly hard to fill operational roles, and teams with an ageing workforce.
- We have excellent links with local schools and colleges to ensure that our diverse range of roles is known and attractive to those in their early careers.

This theme helps us to meet our equality pledge by:

- *Having a workforce that is reflective of our population.*
- *Retaining employees as we feel heard, and our personal characteristics and beliefs add value to the contribution we make as a whole Council.*
- *Actively considering, reporting on and taking action to ensure diversity is fully reflected across pay bands, roles and Groups.*
- *Working with staff groups to help drive strategy and develop inclusive policies and practices and services.*
- *Working with and being visible in our diverse communities – we use our influence as a Council to work in partnership with our communities to promote the positive contribution that diversity brings to our community and promote equality of opportunity.*

At Cambridge City Council we live by our values in all that we do. This creates a collaborative environment where we are accountable for our own work and the impact this has on the communities we support.

We are courageous and compassionate in the way we work internally and with our partners, and our thriving working environment supports this.



We measure the success of this theme by:

- Employee surveys.
- Tracking patterns in employee relations cases.
- Engagement with staff networks.
- Sharing experience and learnings.
- The value and take up of volunteering opportunities within our workforce.

To ensure we are living our values:

- Our groups are designed to have flat structures and encourage empowerment. The purpose of roles drive how we write job descriptions and we have clear expectations of our work and accountability within it.
- We understand how our role impacts on climate change and we take steps to minimise this impact.
- We have developed a culture that encourages open discussions about performance, development and continuous improvement.
- Our approach to health and wellbeing upholds the ethos of early intervention and positive mental and physical wellbeing.
- We provide meaningful work aligned to the values and objectives of the Council as well as our Target Operating Model.
- We all have different lived experiences. We value the strength and positive contribution diversity brings.
- We work across traditional functional boundaries and understand that through collaboration we share knowledge and experience and achieve better results.
- We are brave to challenge and change. A courageous approach alongside a supportive environment means we seek out and embrace new ways of working that lead to positive outcomes for our communities.

This theme helps us to meet our equality pledge by:

- *Working in partnership with staff groups to collaborate on projects and work.*
- *Holding us all to account for meeting our public sector equality duty.*
- *We all play a role in challenging discrimination, regardless of whether we are the ones that have experienced it.*
- *Actively listening to each other – being kind, compassionate and non-judgemental.*
- *Encouraging us to exchange skills, insights and perspectives through successful mentoring and reverse mentoring schemes.*
- *Creating a supportive and safe space for us to share experiences of discrimination and inequality.*
- *Having visible leadership for equality, diversity and inclusion.*

Theme Three: Living our values



Theme Four: Rewarding, recognising and celebrating us



At Cambridge City Council we have fair and transparent pay and reward mechanisms that motivates us and drives high performance.

We recognise the achievement of our values and we encourage everyone to celebrate our successes.



We measure the success of this theme by:

- All employee surveys.
- Reducing our pay gaps.
- Reviewing working patterns.
- Monitoring recognition and reward.

To ensure we reward, recognise and celebrate us:

- We take time to celebrate and share our successes internally and externally.
- Reward is values driven - we feel valued for how we do things through the demonstration of our values and behaviours as well as what we do.
- We can all clearly see the links between what we do and the positive impact this has on our communities.
- Our comprehensive benefits package is attractive as well as aligning to our corporate priorities.
- We pay real living wage foundation rates and apply Cambridge Weighting to our lowest paid roles to support our community wealth building strategy and reduce in-work poverty within our own workforce.
- We regularly report on our pay gaps and have taken proactive actions to reduce these gaps.
- We acknowledge and understand that we cannot always be competitive in our pay, but attract, reward and recognise people in different ways.
- We proactively redress inequalities people face in order to promote equal opportunities to career advancement, reward and recognition.
- Through regular conversations, our managers understand our individual motivations and development needs, and regularly discuss and celebrate our achievements.

This theme helps us to meet our equality pledge by:

- *Having flexibility to enable us to work around our personal lives, beliefs, religious festivals and caring commitments.*
- *Proactively celebrating diversity and different experiences in all that we do.*
- *Understanding our gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps and taking steps to reduce these.*
- *Recognising when we are proactive in promoting EDIB and rewarding this.*
- *Understanding what we want to achieve and removing the barriers we face.*

At Cambridge City Council we take a deliberately developmental approach to foster a culture of learning. We plan for our current and future skills requirements.

Learning and development opportunities can be accessed by all of us, and we are actively encouraged to gain new skills to personally and professionally progress.



We measure the success of this theme by:

- All employee surveys.
- Reviewing internal appointments and promotions.
- Increasing skills development, especially the success of LEAD Cambridge.
- Our wellbeing and learning and development offerings.
- Our My Conversations approach.

To ensure we develop excellent people, managers and leaders:

- We take a long term view of resourcing and development to enable us to grow in areas where there are national skills shortages, roles which are hard to fill or those that we typically look externally to fill.
- We are encouraged to take personal ownership for our own development. Opportunities are inclusive and regular conversations take place about our learning and development.
- We consider development from the start of an individual's journey with us from welcome and induction events through to ensuring people leave us with more transferrable skills than when they joined.
- We join up all of our developmental activity, from apprenticeships, work experience, early and later careers initiatives.
- We are encouraged to take time to attend training and wellbeing events and there is time and forums for us to learn from each other.
- We consider development against our behaviours and not just skills, acknowledging that this is a different mindset.
- We work in collaboration with partners to help develop our own skills and to positively impact our communities.
- Career development is considered inside and outside of professional functions – broadening our skills and encouraging flexibility and movement across traditional functions.
- We have developed practical measures to ensure that career progression is inclusive for all.

This theme helps us to meet our equality pledge by:

- *Training our managers to lead an empowered and inclusive workforce, using skills such as facilitation and coaching.*
- *Leading in an empowered and compassionate way to foster good relations.*
- *Providing support and training on what equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging means and how to put this into practice in our work.*
- *Developing inclusive initiatives to help improve workforce diversity and support career development and representation across pay grades, groups and teams.*

Theme Five: Developing excellent people, managers and leaders



The Journey to 2027

The People and Culture Strategy 2024 – 2027

The People Plan

(Detailed action plan, produced in collaboration with our workforce)

LEAD Cambridge

(Programme and approach to support management development)

All Employee
Survey One
(2024)

All Employee
Survey Two
(2026)

All Employee
Survey Three
(2027)

The People and Culture Governance Board

