

People Strategy



We're
making
Belfast



Belfast
City Council



Foreword



Welcome to our People Strategy 2023 - 2026. This strategy sets out our approach to leading, managing, developing, supporting and engaging with each other to make the Belfast Agenda ambitions for our city a reality. Our aim is to make Belfast a better place for everyone and I am proud of the work that you do on a daily basis to make Belfast, and the lives of citizens better, often in challenging circumstances.

The People Strategy is aligned to our Corporate Plan 2020-2024 which is shaped by the Belfast Agenda and sets out our organisational priorities, our core values and the work that we will do to improve the quality of life for everyone in Belfast over a four-year period.

It is also closely linked to our Achieving Through People (ATP) Framework, which recognises that our people are at the heart of everything we seek to achieve and that our success is not just measured on what we do, but also how we do it. It sets out the types and standards of behaviour that are required of you to fulfil your role successfully and contribute to the city's success.

As well as setting out what the council currently has in place to help you develop in your job and reach your full potential, the People Strategy recognises that there are improvements to be made in how we lead, manage, engage and develop our workforce and the improvements that we intend to make are set out in the strategy's three-year action plan.

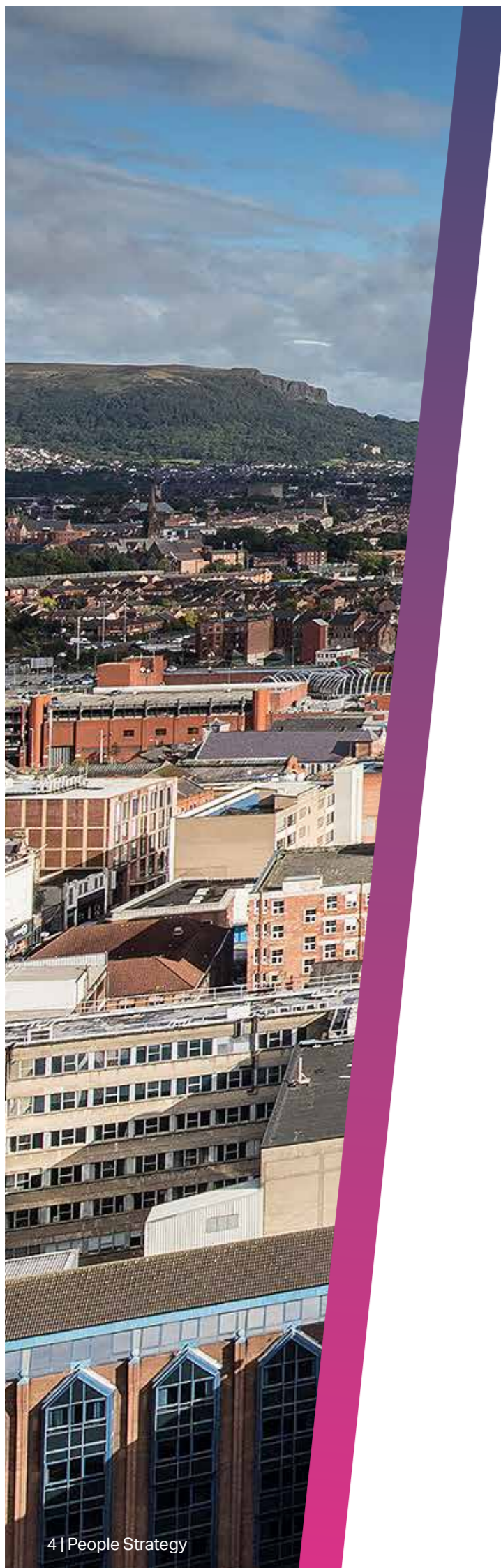
I am confident that all of you will continue to rise to the challenge and take pride in the contribution you make to the success of our city. We want to attract, retain and develop a talented workforce, to engage you and provide opportunities for you to progress within the organisation, while providing an inclusive and welcoming workplace for all that allows everyone to be their true selves at work.

We have agreed key performance measures that will help us measure the impact of the People Strategy and will be seeking feedback from you on a regular basis throughout the duration of the strategy on how you are managed, developed and supported in your roles.

I hope you will take time to read the strategy and discuss with your manager the learning and development opportunities and other support available to you via our people polices as you work to achieve your own personal career ambitions while contributing to our success in delivering for the city.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Walsh'.

John Walsh
Chief Executive



Introduction

Everything you do leads to the success of what we do at Belfast City Council.

We provide a range of complex services in what is often an uncertain environment. These services touch the lives of everyone in this city. This is a powerful reminder of why we do what we do, and how we make a real difference in the city.

This strategy demonstrates our approach to leading, managing, developing, supporting and engaging with each other in order to deliver our corporate priorities and our Belfast Agenda goals. It sets out our ongoing intention, our need to collaborate and work in partnership. It also reinforces the need to continue to build strong relationships with each other, our elected representatives, trade unions and our strategic city partners.

On page six you will find what we currently offer you as an employer. There are plenty of attractions to working with Belfast City Council, both professional and personal. We want to help you be as proactive, motivated and as healthy in the workplace as possible. This strategy is an important part of that.

We developed our Achieving through People framework in partnership with you. The framework sets out our values and behaviours, how we want to work together to get things done. This is a continuation of that partnership work.

Our vision

Through the Belfast Agenda, the council, residents and stakeholders have set out a clear vision for the city:

Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone.

Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by all its citizens, free from the legacy of conflict. A compassionate city offering opportunities for everyone. A

confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region. A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world. A city people dream to visit.



What we currently offer as an employer

We expect a lot from you, and we offer a lot in return for your passion and commitment. We offer a wide range of fundamental benefits including pension and generous annual leave entitlements. In addition, you can request to work flexibly and there are a variety of health and wellbeing initiatives and career development opportunities.

On the job training. We are strongly committed to your learning and development. We offer a wide range of courses and development programmes as well as the chance to study for qualifications.



Learning and Development. We have personal development planning and offer an assistance to study scheme, as well as various short training courses, dependant on the role and service need.



Mind and body. We invest in your health and wellbeing through policies, procedures and strategies. We promote a range of initiatives and activities such as discounted leisure centre membership, and a cycle to work scheme. The health and wellbeing section on our intranet contains information about the health and wellbeing schemes we offer, including eye and ear tests, general health checks and our free and confidential employee counselling service. It also signposts to a range of physical and mental health and wellbeing resources.



Equality and diversity. We celebrate the equality and diversity in our workforce and energise this with our three staff networks.



- ABLE - Disability Support Network
- Proud - LGBT+ Staff Network
- The Women's Network

These networks provide opportunities to engage and work with staff across the organisation, and external stakeholders, to support equality and diversity.

Terms and conditions. We offer attractive terms and conditions including generous pension benefits and annual leave entitlement. We work in close partnership with four recognised trade unions to consult and negotiate on our people policies and procedures.



Staff offers. Including discounts on electronics, IT and mobile; food and drink; health and fitness; holiday and travel; home and garden; and tutoring.



Flexible working. We offer opportunities to request to work in flexible and agile ways, including part-time, term-time, job-share, homeworking and career breaks.



Saving for your future. You have the option to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (NI), which, along with generous employer contributions, provides you with the opportunity to exchange part of your annual pension for a one-off tax-free cash payment when you retire. We also hold pre-retirement seminars to help planning for retirement.



Achieving through People - our values

The Achieving Through People (ATP) framework recognises that our people are at the heart of everything we seek to achieve and that our success is not just measured on what we do, but also how we do it. The ATP Framework is underpinned by our organisational values, which guide the work of the council and inform our standards of behaviour.

Creativity



We are creative, always seeking new ways of working. Imagining and delivering a bright future for the city. We encourage innovation and new ideas in all that we do; giving positive recognition to those who contribute to our creativity.

Responsibility



We accept responsibility for our actions, individually and collectively. We act responsibly, respecting each other and taking care of Belfast's cultures and the environment.

Integrity



We are open and honest. We adhere to the highest possible ethical standards. We want the people of Belfast to trust us to do the right thing. We trust and support one another.

Problem solving



We overcome problems through hard work, ingenuity, determination and real resilience. We overcome barriers and resistance and use our creativity to think about challenges in a different way.



Achieving through People - our behaviours

Our ATP Framework also sets out the behaviours that are expected from all employees in order to be effective in our roles and serve the people of Belfast - irrespective of grade, area of work or professional expertise.

Theme 1

Understanding our city, council and customers

- 1 Corporate awareness
- 2 Customer and stakeholder focus
- 3 Political awareness

Theme 2

Working with others

- 1 Promoting equality and diversity
- 2 Partnership working
- 3 Your team role

Theme 3

Personal impact

- 1 Accountability and personal responsibility
- 2 Developing yourself and others
- 3 Communicating with impact

Theme 4

Service delivery

- 1 Embracing and contributing to change
- 2 Delivering results and managing our performance and risk
- 3 Managing our resources

Theme 5

Strategic leadership - developing and implementing our vision

- 1 Developing our aspirations and outcomes for the city
- 2 Engaging and connecting stakeholders to deliver our aspirations and agreed outcomes
- 3 Delivering for the city

"As an active member of our Proud LGBT+ Network, I work with other members of the group to improve the outlook and prospects of all LGBT+ employees within the council. My job also involves working with the public to advise, increase awareness and inform them about their waste, helping to facilitate better recycling. Given the scale of the problem with waste locally and globally, we all need to view waste as a resource that should be reduced, reused and recycled. My work, and that of my colleagues, has helped to significantly improve recycling rates in the city, and deliver tangible measurable results."

Darren Trowlen
Senior Resource Advisor

"I recognise the importance of getting out and talking to staff in person, and together with the other Managers, we've all made a commitment to do that more regularly."

Stephen Leonard,
Neighbourhood Manager

"The Customer Hub team is a huge new asset to BCC. The team has developed at an incredible pace and each member is committed to providing first class service delivery, helping services to put customers first and making a real difference in our city."

Cormac Quinn
Customer Development Manager



Meet our people

You are our greatest asset.

Who are the people behind the services at Belfast City Council?

You work in a variety of jobs: from frontline roles keeping our streets and open spaces clean, to working with the public to advise, increase awareness and inform them about their waste. You support culture, events and venues in the city, and at very poignant times for a family you help them deal with death of a loved one with care and dignity. Some of you work behind the scenes to ensure we get paid, fed, and support our health and wellbeing, or provide the digital services we need to do our job. These are just a few of the things you do to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the city - delivering the Belfast Agenda for the people who live here.

Meet us through our Frontline Focus magazine, staff intranet, mobile app and digital screens.



Our People Strategy Goals

The council will focus on achieving the following three goals during the lifetime of this People Strategy.



Delivering for Belfast

The council will retain, attract and recruit a talented workforce that is motivated to achieve our ambitious plans for the city.




Fulfilling my potential

The council will engage you and provide opportunities for you to develop and progress within the organisation.




A place for everyone

The council will be recognised as an employer that celebrates our success, the diversity of our workforce and the wellbeing of you.




Delivering for Belfast



We will retain, attract and recruit a talented workforce that is motivated to achieve our ambitious plans for the city.

We will provide a high quality, fair and straightforward recruitment and selection experience for candidates who apply for jobs within the council.

We will offer you a comprehensive induction programme when you join or move to a new role within the council.

We will embed our values and behaviours so we retain and attract staff who will live by our values in the workplace.

We will continue to invest in a working environment and IT systems to support you in the work you do.

We will support you when you apply for new roles within the council by providing training or e-learning on interviewee skills and selection techniques.

We will continue to focus on completing organisation reviews and reducing temporary working arrangements.

We will support our inclusive growth ambitions by targeting workless residents, residents with low skills levels, in work low earning individuals and people between 16 - 24 years who are not in education, employment or training.

We will develop our employability outreach programme and continue to offer work experience placements.



Fulfilling my potential

The council will engage you and provide opportunities for you to develop and progress within the organisation.

We will help you develop in your job and improve your ability to be able to compete for the wide range of jobs on offer.

We will support continuous two-way engagement with you on key issues and we will engage directly with staff to understand how well we are doing as an employer.

We will work with you to improve your understanding of the contribution you make to Belfast Agenda outcomes.

We will develop and support managers so they can have regular conversations with their teams about performance and development needs.

We will develop a structured approach to succession planning and we will identify the future skills needed by you to deliver Belfast Agenda outcomes.

We will engage with you to co-design new ways of working when we make changes that improve our performance and our customer focus.



A place for everyone

The council will be recognised as an employer that celebrates our success, the wellbeing and diversity of our workforce.

We will develop a culture of respect and inclusivity by increasing awareness and understanding of diversity issues and implementing progressive policies and procedures.

Our staff and leadership profile will reflect, and be representative of, the communities we serve.

We will deliver health and wellbeing improvements for our staff and raise awareness of employee support facilities.

You will feel that your work is recognised when you contribute to the success of the organisation and the city.

What we are doing

Here is a summary of the ways we will commence delivery of our People Strategy goals over the next 12 - 18 month period, running after the strategy launch in October 2023. We have produced an action plan that accompanies this strategy and provides further detail on these actions and when we plan to deliver them.

To support what we are doing, we will also implement these supporting activities:

- Keep our policies and procedures under review to support delivery of our ambitions in the Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan.
- We will identify workforce requirements to deliver our business now and in the future and develop plans and tools to ensure that we have the right people and skills where and when we need them.
- Develop hybrid working patterns where it suits the needs of the job.

Delivering for Belfast



- Offer regular staff support, training or eLearning sessions on interviewee skills and selection techniques.
- Update our approach to Corporate Induction.
- Review and implement our approach to individual performance management, cascading gradually to all tiers.
- Promote Belfast City Council as an employer that offers an exciting and diverse range of opportunities and roles.

Via Inclusive Growth Strategy:

- Support our inclusive growth ambitions through recruitment of suitable entry level posts, e.g. apprenticeships, and through volunteering and placement opportunities.
- Provide ring fenced job opportunities to the long term unemployed, providing pre-recruitment employment academies and increased employability outreach in communities to support our inclusive growth ambitions.
- Continue our leadership role in working with employers across the city to create pathways to employment.

Fulfilling my potential



- Update our learning and development policy to include a review of the PDP process.
- Improve signposting to personal development opportunities for managers and staff.
- Develop a staff mentoring scheme that supports continued personal development and career progression.
- Provide additional opportunities for on-the-job development, work shadowing and project roles across the organisation.
- Participate in Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) review of recruitment processes.

- Produce and implement a workforce development plan to underpin new ways of working.
- Continue to develop our frontline staff through the frontline development programme.
- Continue to develop our leaders and managers at all levels through our leadership development programme.
- Continue our focus on completing organisation reviews and reducing temporary working arrangements.

Via our Internal Communications Strategy, which ensures we continually address the need for all

areas of our organisation to remain connected and engaged through communication:

- We will continue to use feedback to work on the development of new channels and our regular channels.
- We will continue to make every effort to keep staff informed with accurate and timely information.

A place for everyone



- Show continued visible commitment to our people by working towards and achieving Diversity Charter Mark - Gold Level.
- Implement our gender and LGBT+ action plans and build on existing equality and diversity awards and accreditations to demonstrate our continued commitment to equality and diversity.
- Develop a Race Action Plan that focuses on making the council more reflective of the communities we serve.
- Offer all staff an annual programme of

training to support employee health and wellbeing, including:

- positive mental health and emotional wellbeing training (with a focus on resilience);
- first aid mental health training;
- stress awareness training for managers; and
- initiatives on improving your lifestyle including yoga, nutrition and physical care.

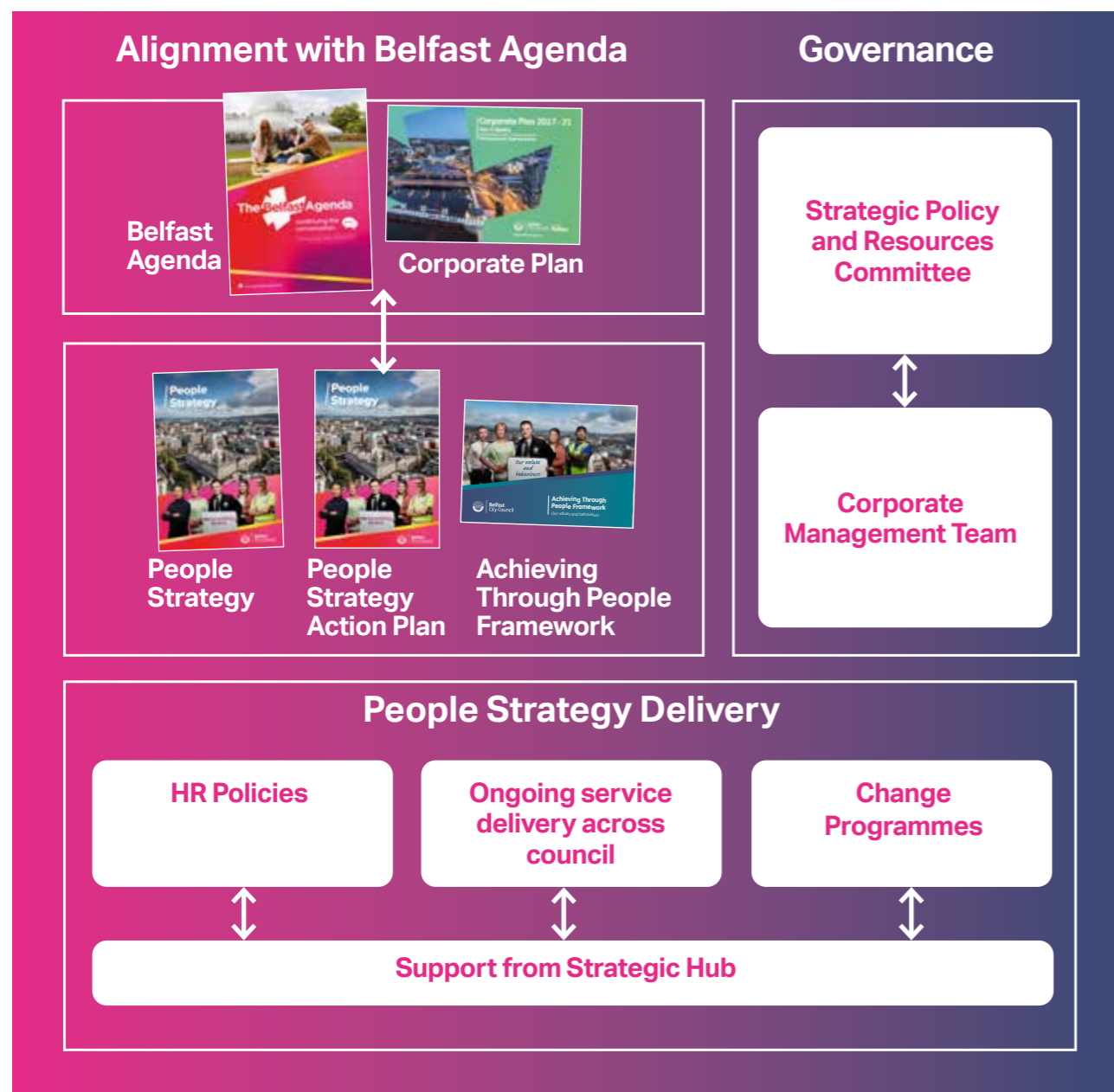
- Continue to promote better psychological health through an employee counselling service, which provides confidential help and support.

- Ensure that all our people have working environments that are conducive to them performing at their best.

How it all fits together

Our People Strategy is an ambitious programme of cross-cutting activities that must all fit together to successfully deliver. Our Corporate Management Team (CMT) will do this by agreeing delivery plans and allocating the necessary resources, both human and financial, to ensure delivery of the plans.

We will develop a small number of qualitative and quantitative measures that will allow us to actively measure success.





Belfast
City Council

Human Resources

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