



# Workforce Development Strategy

2024-27



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# Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Introduction to the Workforce Development Strategy | > |
| CMT commitment                                     | > |
| Workforce profile                                  | > |
| Our future workforce challenges                    | > |
| Workforce development strategic themes             | > |
| Theme 1: Leadership and Management                 | > |
| Theme 2: Resilience and Wellbeing                  | > |
| Theme 3: Resourcing for a Strong Foundation        | > |
| Theme 4: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)  | > |
| We are proud to support                            | > |

# Foreword

## Workforce Development Strategy

Our [One City for All Council Plan 2023-27](#) sets a strong ambition to increase opportunities for everyone living in York to live healthy and fulfilling lives. It builds on our strengths, to help us prepare for the future, and improve the quality of life for residents. Our new [Corporate improvement framework](#) and [action plan](#) outline our commitment to continuous improvement and excellence.

As we embark on this ongoing transformation journey, our staff remain our greatest strength. We are fortunate to have such dedicated, skilled, and hardworking employees, and it was great to see that our workforce were highlighted as ‘fantastic’ by the recent LGA peer team especially during these times of financial uncertainty and ever increasing challenges.

Aligned with our core commitments to Equality, Affordability, Climate, and Health ([EACH](#)), our workforce development strategy outlines the importance of our people. By focusing on Leadership and Management, Wellbeing and Resilience, Resource management, and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) we will ensure we meet the current and future needs of our employees.

We recognise that public service delivery will continue to evolve, requiring us to adapt our operating model and anticipate workforce needs. Challenges like health inequalities, rising service demand, financial pressures, and climate change are at the forefront of our considerations. We will embrace new technology, address professional shortages, and

respond to an ageing workforce, ensuring our employees have the necessary future skills.

By working in partnership with City partners and our recognised Trade Unions and our employees, we aim to deliver the key ambitions of our Workforce Strategy. This strategy sets our priorities for the next three years, focusing on organisational development and transformation to uphold our values of “We work together, to improve and make a difference”.

Both my Corporate Management Team (CMT) and I wish to thank you for your dedication and hard work. Together, we will all continue to make the City of York Council a leading employer driving positive change for our workforce and community.



**Ian Floyd**

Chief Operating Officer

# CMT commitment

As we embark on the activities outlined in our [Workforce Development Strategy year 1 action plan](#), our commitment to delivering essential and statutory services remains paramount. Given our aging workforce, potential downsizing of the organisation and the challenges of a tight labour market, we recognise the critical importance of robust succession planning. We are dedicated to cultivating talent from within, building capacity and capability, this strategy will be a cornerstone as we progress into years 2 and 3, ensuring we have a resilient diverse team ready to meet future demands and transform council services.

All our managers are responsible for leading and building high-performing teams and ensuring the successful implementation of our workforce strategy. They will be supported in this effort through a series of 'Let's Talk Leadership' initiatives. We will celebrate the successes of City of York Council (CYC) and our individual employees, recognising that our collective achievements are built on each person's contribution. The health and wellbeing of our staff are of utmost importance, we are committed to addressing and supporting the specific challenges faced by local government employees.

Together, we will live our values of working together, improvement, and making a difference. By working as one team, we can harness the commitment to the city to deliver ambitions.

Ian Floyd and the Corporate Management Team



**Dave Atkinson**



**Sara Storey**



**Martin Kelly**



**Bryn Roberts**



**Peter Roderick**



**Pauline Stuchfield**



**Debbie Mitchell**



**Helen Whiting**



**Garry Taylor**




# Our Workforce Profile


Understanding the current profile of our workforce helps us to plan for the future. The City of York Council is committed to fairness and equality and in particular, promoting equality of opportunity for all and a culture that values and celebrates differences. As an employer, we want to ensure our workforce is representative of the community it serves and that we attract and retain talented employees from a wide range of backgrounds and with a diverse set of skills and experience.

A snapshot taken end of year 23/24 highlights key data we know about our workforce:

  
**Headcount**  
2605 (2212 FTE)

  
**Disability**  
7% of staff have a disability


  
**Sex**  
63% Female

  
**Sex**  
37% Male



  
**Average Sickness Days**  
per 11.3 FTE  
(rolling 12 months)



  
**Apprenticeships**  
70

  
**Staff Turnover**  
13% (Leavers 325)

  
**Age Profile**  
< 25 : 3%  
  
25-49 : 47%  
  
50+ : 50%

  
**High Risk Recruitment Areas**  
Social Workers, Building and Development control, Surveyors, Engineers and Electricians

  
**Gender Pay Gap**  
The MEAN is -0.8% (0.6%)  
  
The MEDIAN is -0.5% (-0.4%)  


  
**Ethnicity Pay Gap**  
The MEAN is 9.1%  
  
The MEDIAN is 4.9%  


# Our Future Workforce Challenges

The nature of local government and work is constantly evolving, and this is especially true for our workforce. As an employer, we have a unique opportunity to serve residents and communities, offering job roles that provide satisfaction in undertaking public duties. However, we face several challenges in this dynamic environment, shifting workforce demographics, budget constraints, increasing service demands, and fast-paced technological advances which are costly to develop. There are also challenges to retain talent in a competitive employer market with traditionally lower pay rates for some professions, when coupled with professional skills shortages, the need to consider agency and temporary staff solutions often at a higher cost are necessary.

The Workforce strategy aims to assist in addressing these challenges by:

- Developing our current and future leaders.
- Creating a positive and psychologically safe culture that encourages respect, trust, creativity, and innovation.
- Providing an inclusive working environment and attractive employment offer to support the recruitment and retention of our future workforce.
- Upskilling the workforce to meet future needs.
- Embracing digital technology to aid automation and streamlining.
- Offering a holistic health and wellbeing benefits offer.
- Providing a positive work-life balance and flexibility.

# Workforce Development Strategic Themes

The Workforce Development Strategy has been categorised into the following four main areas.

**Leadership and Management**



**Resilience and Wellbeing**



**Resourcing for a strong foundation**



**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)**



# Theme 1: Leadership and Management

**Our goal is to foster good leadership and management practices that promote a positive and productive culture. To achieve this, we will:**

- **Strengthening Leadership:** Cohesive leadership with clear visibility and united goals, enhancing strategic decision-making, embedding core values across all levels and supporting our workforce.
- **Performance Management:** Implement a robust performance management framework and culture recognising excellence and empowering managers to manage service limitations effectively.
- **Digital Proficiency:** Provide support for managers to become proficient in digital tools and AI, enhancing their ability to lead remote teams effectively.
- **Financial Planning:** Ensure sound financial planning and governance structure to support cost pressures and service delivery.
- **Communication and Engagement:** Transparent communication about future changes, involving employees in decision-making processes where appropriate.
- **Culture:** Further reinforce our core values and expected behaviours across all levels of the Council. Develop leadership values centred on trust, respect, and professional understanding.
- **Collaboration:** Co-design solutions to support our city and council, building strong foundations in the city and regionally.

## Alignment with Our Core Commitments and Values:

- **Equalities:** Promoting leadership that reflects our diverse community and embedding inclusive values at every level, fostering a collaborative approach.
- **Affordability:** Strengthening financial planning and governance to meet budgetary constraints while working together to find innovative solutions.
- **Climate:** Encouraging sustainable decision-making processes that and make a meaningful difference to our environment.
- **Health:** Fostering a supportive environment to improve mental and physical well-being.

### Outcomes – what we plan to achieve

There is effective, supportive leadership and management giving employees a clear sense of direction and purpose. The Council's objectives and challenges are aligned with employee goals for a cohesive effort and improved productivity.

### Measures of success:

- Performance Development Reviews completion rates improved
- Completion rates of essential e-learning training improves.

# Theme 2: Resilience and Wellbeing

**We are committed to embedding good practices regarding wellbeing and engagement to promote and maintain a safe, supported, resilient and skilled workforce. To achieve this, we will:**

- **Health and Safety Culture:** Promote a culture where health and safety are prioritised, with proactive hazard identification and risk assessments.
- **Absence Management:** Equip managers with tools to manage and support employee absence effectively, compassionately and in a supportive manner.
- **Wellbeing Awareness:** Raise awareness about self-care and available support services.
- **Flexible Working:** Support work-life balance through a range of flexible working practices.
- **Employee Engagement:** Conduct regular staff surveys to understand and reach out to our teams across all aspects of the employee journey including times of change to ensure that support and communication is effective. Review employee benefit packages to ensure we aim to be an employer of choice with a competitive market offer for employees.
- **Continuous Learning:** Provide opportunities for continuous learning and development to enhance skills and capabilities. Including coaching and mentoring support to help staff adapt to and thrive in an ever-changing organisational environment and support to develop own continuous professional development from a variety of sources.

## Alignment with Our Core Commitments and Values:

- **Equalities:** Ensuring all employees have access to support and opportunities for development, working together to create a fair and equitable workplace.
- **Affordability:** Maintain competitive benefits within budget, ensuring we make a difference in the lives of our employees.
- **Climate:** Supporting flexible working to reduce commuting and associated emissions.
- **Health:** Creating a healthy work environment that supports physical and mental well-being, fostering a culture of mutual support.

### Outcomes – what we plan to achieve

We have a resilient workforce that can meet challenges while staying true to the Council's values and behaviours and themselves. The majority of the workforce is positive when discussing their employment, which is shown in improving employee survey results.

### Measures of success:

- Sickness absence rates and attrition in line with regional benchmarking
- Return to Work interviews completion rate improved
- Results of the employee survey improving over the next 3 years.



# Theme 3: Resourcing for a Strong Foundation

Continuing to prioritise recruitment, retention, career development, pay, reward, and recognition strategies is essential for building a resilient and robust workforce to meet the evolving needs of our services and community. To achieve this, we will:

- **Organisational Design:** Regularly assess the organisation's structure to ensure it is fit for purpose and flexible to respond to changes. Ensure robust, clear and fair restructure, redeployment and redundancy processes and appropriate support to all affected.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** Streamline recruitment processes, reduce reliance on agency staff, and implement strategies for retention.
- **Fair Pay and Reward Structures:** Provide an affordable, equitable and fair package of terms and conditions of employment and benefits aligned with the council's goals and values.
- **Apprenticeships:** Promote apprenticeship programmes to attract and develop talent, particularly among young people and underrepresented groups.
- **Customer Service Enhancement:** Invest in training and technology to improve service delivery and responsiveness linked to the Customer journey and experience reviews.

## Alignment with Our Core Commitments and Values:

- **Equalities:** Offering equitable opportunities and fair reward structures, ensuring everyone has the chance to contribute and improve together.
- **Affordability:** Implementing cost-control measures while maintaining service quality, demonstrating our commitment to making a difference within budget.
- **Climate:** Investing in technology to reduce the use of physical resources and improve efficiency, working together for a sustainable future.
- **Health:** Providing development opportunities that enhance job satisfaction and well-being.

### Outcomes – what we plan to achieve

The workforce holds the necessary skills and experience to perform their role, vacancies are recruited in a timely way. Employees are satisfied with their line management, the culture, affordable benefits and receive the appropriate support and development.

### Measures of success:

- Reduction in agency spend.
- Reduction in employee turnover.
- Increase in number of apprenticeships.

# Theme 4: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

**Our Commitment:** To address workplace inequalities, foster an inclusive, supported environment, and oppose all forms of intolerance and discrimination. To achieve this, we will:

- **Diversity Initiatives:** Implement measures to increase workforce diversity and ensure community representation. Address disparities in promotion, training, and retention.
- **Inclusive Culture:** Launch initiatives to foster an inclusive workplace where every employee can thrive.
- **EDI Networks and Allies:** Strengthen EDI networks and support advocacy.
- **Equality Profile Declarations:** Encourage employees to declare equality profiles to better understand workforce needs.
- **Human Rights and Equalities Training:** Enhance training programmes for all staff to promote awareness and competence.
- **Zero-Tolerance:** Enforce policies against bullying and harassment, ensuring a safe, supported workplace for everyone.
- **Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reporting:** Monitor and address pay disparities.
- **Employee Voice:** Establish platforms such as e-hubs to capture and amplify employee feedback and ideas, fostering a collaborative environment where ideas for improvement and innovation are welcomed.

- **HR Policy Development:** Develop clear, inclusive HR policies.

## Alignment with Core Commitments and Values:

- **Equalities:** Promoting diversity, addressing disparities, and creating an inclusive environment where we work together to improve and make a difference.
- **Affordability:** Implementing fair pay practices and efficient use of resources, ensuring equitable outcomes that benefit everyone.
- **Climate:** Encouraging innovative practices that consider environmental impact, working together to make meaningful progress.
- **Health:** Supporting a safe and inclusive workplace that enhances overall well-being.

## Outcomes – what we plan to achieve

A workforce that is representative of the City of York, inclusive of different backgrounds, heritages, genders, socioeconomic, disabilities and cultural diversity. Where everyone has equitable opportunities and there is a sense of safety and belonging.

## Measures of success:

- Workforce data becomes more aligned with York's demographic.
- More employees choose to disclose if they have a disability or identification of ethnicity.

We are proud to support

Disability Confident Employer  
White Ribbon Accreditation  
Armed Forces Covenant  
Stonewall Diversity Champions

## Supporting Documents

One City for All Council Plan 2023-27

CYC Draft Equity, Diversity and  
Inclusion Strategy 2024-27

Equality Framework for Local  
Government

Corporate Improvement Action Plan

Corporate Improvement Framework  
and LGA recommendations

Our 10-Year Strategies



For advice regarding the application of this document, please contact:  
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