

**MORAY COUNCIL**

**WORKFORCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**(2023-2026)**

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# MORAY COUNCIL

## WORKFORCE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

(2023-2026)

### 1 Introduction

This workforce and organisational development strategy is designed to help the council develop and maintain a skilled, motivated and flexible workforce and to adapt as an organisation in order to be able to deliver sustainable services to the community that make a difference, address inequality and are fit for purpose.

### 2 Corporate Vision

The council's vision is to make life better for everyone in Moray, where there is a positive future for all, within a vibrant economy, with empowered and connected communities.

Moray is an area of diverse natural beauty where people choose to live, learn, work and enjoy. To deliver this, the council's priorities are:

- **Our People** : Provide opportunities for people to achieve their potential and be the best they can be throughout their lives
- **Our Community**: Empower and support communities to build capacity
- **Our Future**: Drive economic development to create a vibrant economy for the future

While delivering these priorities the Council will also work towards creating a sustainable council that provides valued services to our communities underpinned by our values of ambitious, fair, responsive and improving, working together for a better Moray.

The Council's Corporate Plan is currently under review. While this may bring changes to priorities and values, this strategy is designed to develop a flexible workforce of the future that is empowered and enabled to adapt to future priorities and demands.

Moray has a unique demographic profile that when considered in conjunction with external and internal challenges combine to influence the Council's workforce planning approach. The main challenges to be addressed are transforming how the Council operates to reduce costs, delivering services as efficiently as possible and meeting increasing demands on services. Continuing to deliver services while the Council adapts to meet these challenges and transforms the way it operates requires the workforce to embrace change and improvement and be enabled and empowered to do so and this is the main focus of this strategy.

Moray Council believes that its workforce, their skills, capacity and commitment are the key to delivering, improving and transforming council services and that it is essential that the workforce is developed, deployed and managed effectively to be able to do their best at work. This includes having strong leadership to provide vision, direction and support, that employees are enabled and empowered to embrace change, are skilled to respond and make a positive difference to identified need through professional competence, excellent

customer service and technological skills and competence as the pace of digital solutions for service delivery are increased.

### **3 Priorities for 2023-2026**

Pressures and priorities for services such as increased demand, reducing budgets and having to find new ways to meet current and new areas of need mean having to prioritise what and how services are delivered. At an organisational level, this requires increased pace and depth of transformational change, reshaping to the council of the future, changes to ways of working and finding ways to become more sustainable. This means there is a requirement for strong leadership to provide vision and direction, workforce development to prepare for and deliver transformation and change and ensuring the council can recruit and retain the right people to take this work forward.

As a consequence of the very difficult financial circumstances within which the Council is operating, because much of the budget is employment costs, there could be significant change ahead for the Council's employees, ranging from different ways of working to workforce reductions. Supporting people to achieve transformation and change will be a key priority.

With sometimes less tangible outputs, transformational change, strong leadership and workforce development take time to deliver. Leaner structures and reduced capacity suggest an effective approach is to empower people within and across services. This will require a clear purpose and direction, set through strong visible leadership with supporting systems and infrastructure that provide a framework of guidance and support to help foster a culture of initiative and innovation which ultimately will enable the development of flexibility and adaptability within teams.

Leaders play a critical role in supporting the transformation of council services and achieving corporate priorities and outcomes. Developing leadership skills and capacity is therefore a key priority to ensure a strategic approach to creating an environment that encourages transformation, effective communication and engagement and improved performance across services and encouraging collaboration and partnership working.

Ensuring workforce flexibility and adaptability to be able to meet the council's future requirements will remain a major theme for the foreseeable future. This is likely to also be tailored to service specific requirements such as having a needs led and people focused approach in health and social care, or a customer focus for front line operational teams.

Recruitment challenges include increased turnover, fewer suitably qualified and experienced applicants for council jobs, issues recruiting in specific areas such as craft and fleet services, social work and social care and some teaching posts and demand anticipated to increase in particular sectors such as social care and social work, specialist and senior posts. In addition to this, the increased flexible and remote working opportunities available generally has had an impact on recruitment to posts for which job holders previously would have had to be located in Moray, further depleting the pool of potential candidates. There is the capacity to mitigate this impact in terms of attracting people living elsewhere to work remotely for the Council, however there are specific consequences to this which would have to be carefully balanced and considered. While this is a pattern that is evident nationally and at least in part relates to a shortage of supply the

situation is exacerbated by Moray's remote geography and the size and scale of some of our services. The Council will continue to identify ways to nurture and develop talent to meet future demand including encouraging the use of traineeships and apprenticeships where sustainable and will meet a recruitment gap.

Underpinning all of the above is the requirement to ensure staff health, safety and wellbeing for a safe, healthy and resilient workforce.

The main workforce priorities for this plan therefore are:

- Leadership Capacity and Development
- Workforce Planning and Change
- Organisational Development
- Future Proof Employer of Choice
- Health and Wellbeing

Leadership Capacity and Development: prepare and develop strong and visible current and future leaders to provide the strategic and organisational capacity to develop the agenda for and direction of the organisation.

Long term constraints on public spending continue to require innovative approaches to services with a focus on preventative spending through early proactive interventions. Partnership and joint working is increasingly important as part of this agenda to ensure that services respond to local needs in a cohesive manner. Project management and the development of the 'soft skills' required to create an environment of change and transformation are also key.

Leadership and management skills and capacity are a key priority to enable the culture of the organisation to adapt and change to meet the challenges of changing service delivery particularly within the context of reduced budgets. Developing our leaders to have the skills, influence and impact to lead the organisation through the next phase of transformation and change will require new approaches, skills and strengths.

To address these issues we will:

- ◆ Review the external landscape for alternative approaches to leadership
- ◆ Develop the corporate approach to capture the skills and strengths required for leadership through transformation
- ◆ Implement a programme of leadership development activity that enables and empowers strong visible leadership

Workforce Planning and Change: manage the contraction and re-shaping of the Council workforce to achieve a sustainable skilled and motivated workforce for the future aligned to the Council's priorities.

As the cumulative effect of annual savings builds, and taking into account the significant change required to support future sustainability, a more fundamental review of what and how activities are undertaken is necessary in order to continue to reduce costs. Funding arrangements mean that this is likely to impact on particular services more than others. The Council will review the Transform approach to managing change to reshape the

workforce. The intention is to achieve a reduction in the pay bill and number of people employed and to minimise compulsory redundancies, providing security of employment as far as possible.

To address these issues we will:

- ◆ Review the Transform approach (and relevant change management procedures for teaching staff) to manage workforce changes
- ◆ Manage employee relations and consultation comprehensively and sensitively in relation to workforce change

Organisational Development: ensure that employees are empowered and enabled to embrace and be prepared for change through encouraging flexibility and adaptability as new ways of working are brought in and roles develop and change as a result of service delivery changes.

To address these issues we will:

- ◆ Develop, implement and review initiatives to create a culture where employees are prepared for and embrace change
- ◆ Support employees to adapt to new ways of working that will make the council more efficient and provide improved levels of service to customers including improving and embedding digital skills and competence
- ◆ Review the employee review experience, while ensuring that all employees have the opportunity to participate in a review process on at least an annual basis
- ◆ Review Management Appraisal Framework

Future Proof Employer of Choice: ensure that Council services are well-resourced by making the Moray employment package as attractive as possible and deploying recruitment strategies tailored to local requirements.

Analysis of recruitment difficulties being experienced by the Council indicates that the underlying reasons can generally be grouped as follows:

- Qualifications - insufficient or no qualified candidates (for professional posts)
- Experience - qualified candidates but no experience (for professional senior or management posts)
- Market Forces - candidate pool available but turning down jobs as able to earn more working in other local sectors e.g. retail, construction, oil and gas
- Visibility – lack of visibility of council jobs if not looking on My Job Scotland

In addition to this the expansion of remote / flexible working has opened up opportunities for jobs further afield which has increased the competition for high calibre candidates locally.

The situation in some areas e.g. the Care At Home service continues to be challenging and focused work with the service is ongoing.

There also remain residual issues in relation to some secondary teaching and promoted posts. While this is in part due to a national supply shortage, there is added complexity from the rural nature of Moray and our small schools, which attract lower salaries for promoted posts.

To address these issues we will:

- ◆ Consider recruitment and retention activities to promote employment opportunities and profile of Moray Council as part of a planned programme of work, linking with local economic partnership initiatives where possible
- ◆ Establish clear pathways for support, training and experience for professional development for professional and specialist posts (grow your own)
- ◆ Develop trainee and apprenticeship programmes where these are considered a viable solution to areas with recruitment challenges
- ◆ Develop an approach to succession planning that builds internal capacity whilst ensuring equal opportunity

Health and Well-being: pro-actively support the health and well-being of employees.

It is important that employees are supported to attend work and managers supported to proactively manage sickness absence. The main causes of absence in the Council are mental health and musculo-skeletal disorders. Targeted action is taken in areas where absence is highest with specific attention paid to services with a direct replacement cost (i.e. Teachers, Social Care).

The Annual Health and Safety report identifies an issue with increasing numbers of incidents of violence and aggression within schools. Work to address this is underway as part of the Additional Support Needs Review.

To address these issues we will:

- ◆ Increase awareness of mental health and the number of mental health first aiders
- ◆ Review proactive measures that may reduce sickness absence rates
- ◆ Provide support for reducing incidents of violence and aggression in schools as set out in the agreed ASN action plan

## **9 Plans**

The delivery of this strategy is set out in more detail in the Corporate Workforce Plan.

As circumstances develop throughout the period of the strategy, the management of the workforce will adapt to address issues as they emerge. Workforce planning requires a long-term approach and so in a number of areas work will build from research and projects carried out under previous workforce plans.

## **10 Resources**

Resources continue to be stretched within the HR and OD services and while this strategy recognises the workforce issues and sets direction, a degree of prioritisation is required as it is not possible to take all of the actions forward.

## **11 Review**

Monitoring and review will take place through the Personnel Forum and CMT with 6 monthly updates which will highlight any workforce plan adjustments required related to the budget and corporate financial planning. The workforce plan will be an evolving document

that is modified to respond to issues as they arise specifically including continuous improvement in key areas and ensuring there is a focus on delivery of priority outcomes. There will be a formal annual review of the plan and strategy.