

Our 2024

**ONE
TEAM**

People Strategy



**North East
Derbyshire
District Council**

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Introduction

Each day, North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC) provides a diverse range of services to our communities. The quality, range, and effectiveness of those services is determined by the approach, commitment, and competencies of our people - our ONE TEAM.

At NEDDC we are proud of our people and all that is being achieved by them, we understand that continual organisational improvement relies upon the organisations capacity and ability to attract, retain, lead, manage, and develop our people. NEDDC is an organisation with a strong people centric culture that underpins everything that we do - not only do we value this greatly, but we also recognise that our future success very much relies upon this.

Developing our people and our organisation is integral to the successful delivery of our Council plan and strategic ambitions. We aim to provide an environment that produces a positive employee experience and through this helping us to further attract, develop and retain more people, talented and loyal people, at all levels throughout the organisation.

This strategy makes a clear statement about how the Council values and treats its people, and the culture it adopts, nurtures, and promotes, to enable everyone to achieve - this strategy represents a commitment to our existing employees, potential employees, and the organisations future.

North East Derbyshire District Council is a Great Place to work, where our staff really do make a difference to people's lives every day. Whether you are an existing staff member, an elected Member, thinking of joining us or you are an interested member of the community, thank you for taking the time to have a look at our People Strategy - we hope you enjoy the read.



Lee Hickin
Managing Director



Cllr Nigel Barker
Council Leader

Our Council Plan at a glance...



Creating a great place to live well



Creating a great place to work



Creating a great place to access good public services



Creating a great place that cares for the environment



To view our Council Plan scan the QR code

Our Vision

Putting strong community leadership at the heart of everything we do, we will create *A Great Place...*

Our Values

Our Values are:

- Be honest and accountable.
- Treat everyone fairly and with respect.
- Listen, involve and respond.
- Embrace change and innovation.
- Be collaborative, open and transparent.



Strategies helping to create 'A Great Place'


Objectives	A great place to live well	A great place to work	A great place to access good public services	A great place that cares for the environment
Key Strategy Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan Housing Strategy Strategic Asset Management Plan Healthy NED Partnership Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan Growth Strategy Strategic Asset Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan People Strategy Talent Pipeline Strategy Risk Management Strategy Engagement and Improvement Strategy Strategic Asset Management Plan Medium-Term Financial Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan Climate Change Strategy Strategic Asset Management Plan
Supporting Strategy Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor Economy Strategy Private Rented Sector Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor Economy Strategy Employment and Skills Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Strategy Communication Strategy Disposals and Acquisitions Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Change Action Plan
Regional Strategy Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Derbyshire - Making Our Move Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 Refresh Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Strategy 2023 Derbyshire Homelessness Strategy 2022 - 2027 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derbyshire Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Framework Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICB - People and Communities Strategic Approach to Engagement 2022-2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision Derbyshire Climate Change Strategy: 2022-2025 Derbyshire County and Derby City Air Quality Strategy 2020-2030 Derbyshire Natural Capital Strategy

Our Workforce

NEDDC workforce profile statistics - (as at April 2023)

Total number of employees
539 
Employee turnover rate
13.5% 

Employment status



Full Time	Part Time
61.2%	24.7%
Casual	
14.1%	

Length of service


- 0 to 6 mths = 6.9%
- 6 to 18 mths = 12.1%
- 18 mths to 4 yrs = 17.9%
- 4 to 8 yrs = 15.1%
- 8 to 14 yrs = 12.7%
- 14 to 20 yrs = 15.6%
- 20 yrs plus = 19.7%



Gender

 Male	 Female
52.5%	47.5%

76 trainee/career graded posts created, with a clear pathway for professional and personal development 

Total number of employees using hybrid or Agile working
181 

100% of employees  have received training, personal development or coaching within the last 12 months

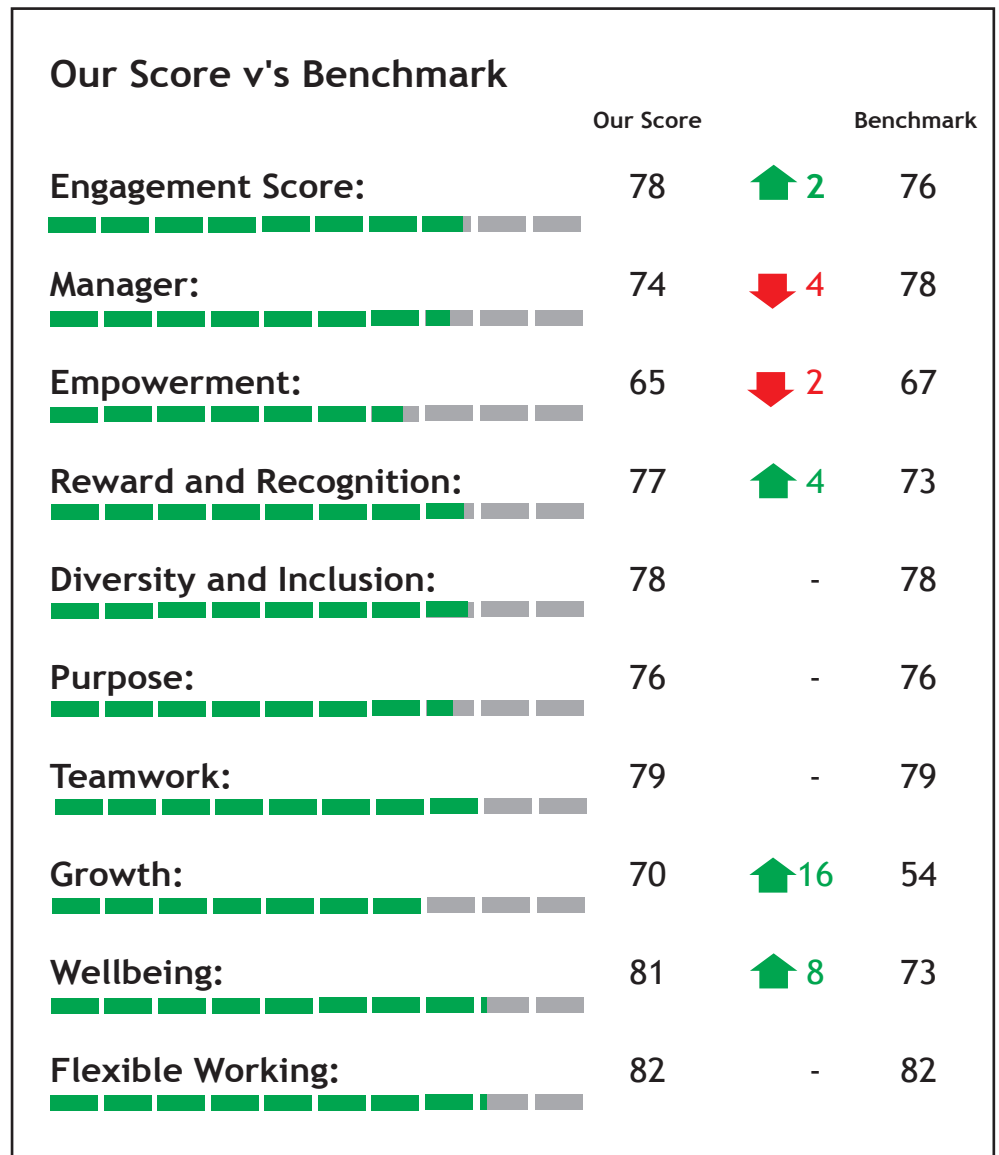
What they say

In December 2023 our Council conducted an employee survey, producing 309 responses - an overall response rate of 61%.

This exceeded the best previous response rate of 48%. The survey showcases the areas in which we exceed, but also, the areas upon which we need to focus on. The survey provides valuable feedback and insights into employee perspectives across different departments within the organisation and will help us to achieve more going into 2024.

The results are generated from different categories of survey questions. These were chosen following industry best practice, to ensure we have a broad view of the whole organisation. The benchmark includes averages of local authorities and private organisations results, which are of a similar size or output. The platform compares our results with the benchmark to see how we fair against others.

Overall, the employee survey indicates positive engagement, with scores exceeding benchmarks in areas such as engagement, reward and recognition, diversity and inclusion, purpose, teamwork, growth, wellbeing, and flexible working. However, there are opportunities for improvement in manager and empowerment categories as they fall a little below their respective benchmarks.



What's going well?

(Determined by the benchmark and best practice).

- 75% of employees feel like they belong at North East Derbyshire District Council.
- 94% of employees understand how their work contributes to the success of North East Derbyshire District Council.
- 83% of women at NEDDC feel a sense of recognition and respect from their peers.
- 80% of men feel that their work environment is safe and healthy.
- 93% of employees who started in the last 12 months are satisfied with the flexibility to choose their working arrangements.
- 92% of employees who have 1-2 years' service feel that the Council is a fair employer.
- 92% of employees who have 10+ years' service understands how their work contribute to the success of NEDDC.
- 77% of employees with 6-9 years' service feel that they receive recognition for good work.
- 92% of employees aged 20-29 feels that their work is well organised.
- 100% of employees aged 40+ feel that they maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- 86% of line managers and team managers feel a sense of recognition from their co-workers.
- 88% of service managers feel that the council keep them updated.
- 100% of Director and directors feel that their opinion counts.
- 89% of employees feel that they have received enough training to fulfill their job role.

Areas to work on:

(Determined by the benchmark and best practice).

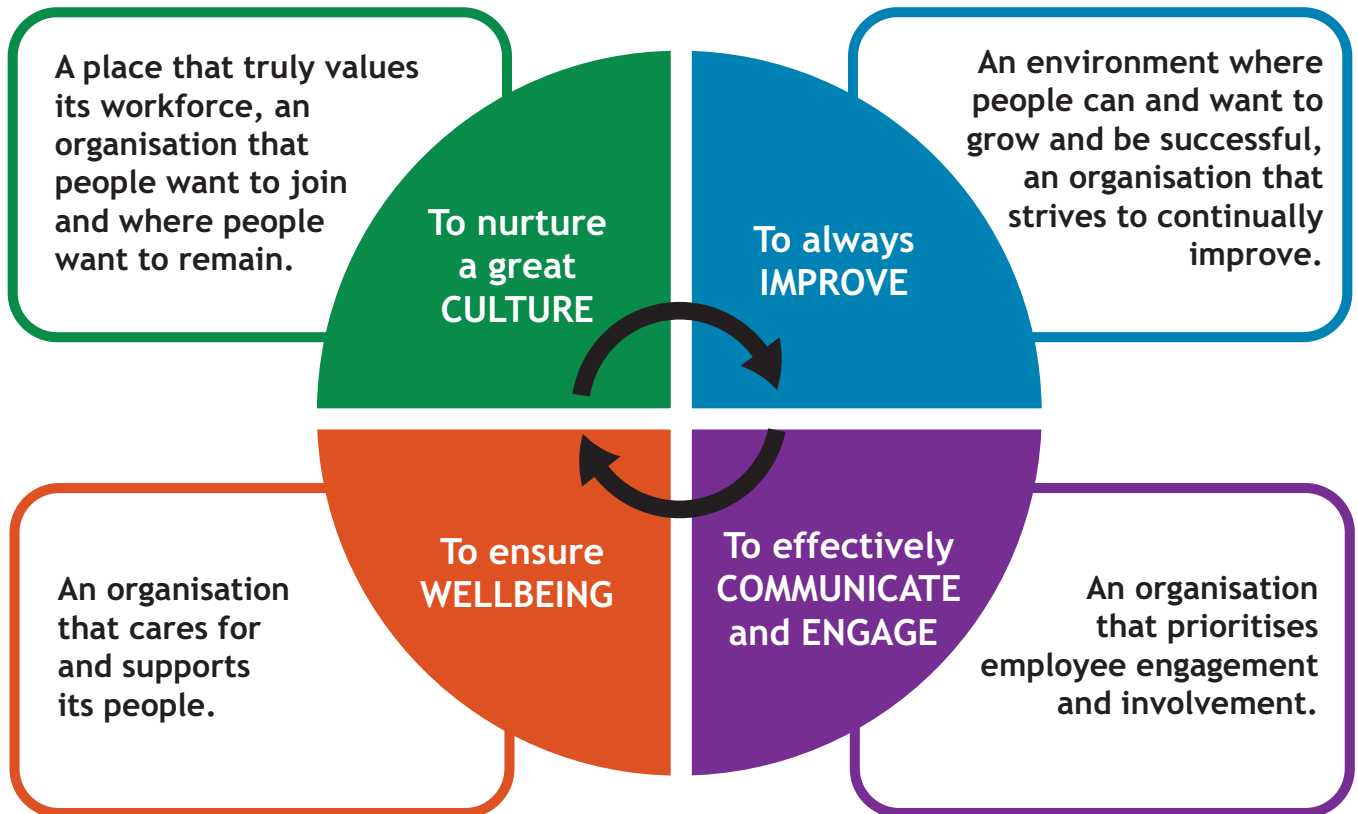
- 57% of employees feel that service areas work well together.
- 70% of employees understand the objectives of the Council Plan.
- 66% of employees would stay at NEDDC if a comparable job was available.
- 63% of employees feel that their opinion counts.
- 66% of employees feel that they can contribute to decisions that affect them.
- 40% of women at NEDDC feel less empowered in their roles than men.
- 52% of employees who have 6-9 years of service feel empowered in their role.
- 43% of 60-69-year-old employees feel that their opinion counts at work.
- 60% of Officers and team members feel that they can contribute to decision that affect them.

The results of the survey influence the actions identified within this People Strategy and will be used to formulate an action plan for improvement including more targeted surveys in the coming months designed to drill down further into specific themes. We will run the full survey every 12 months to further inform our direction.

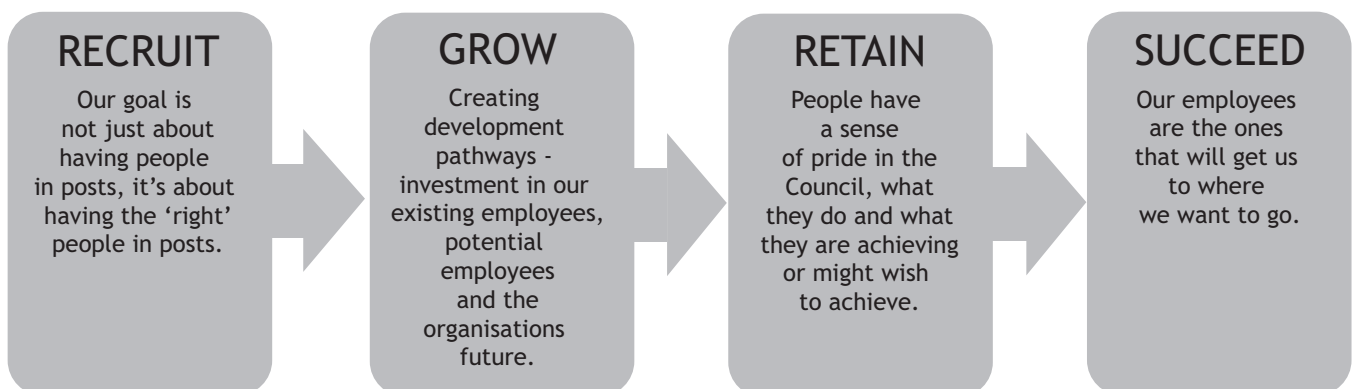
Our People Strategy vision

‘To continue to embed an environment for our people to grow and be successful, helping to ensure that our organisation delivers great services and is a great place to work’

This is underpinned by four key objectives or ‘cornerstones’...



So that we can effectively...



Nurturing a great culture



ONE TEAM Leadership - we are 'ONE TEAM'

When we say 'We are ONE TEAM' we are effectively describing our CULTURE - it's how we operate and the sense of feeling we experience when considering our organisation.

It can be hard to define, but you can feel it - an organisation where employees feel seen and heard, where leadership and management is transparent, and where individuals and teams are proud and excited to work together and for each other to achieve results.

Many organisations will boast a great culture - too often however this is limited to perks and benefits alone, and whilst these may be great to have, they may often be superficial - a great organisational culture goes much deeper.

All the elements within this strategy document certainly contribute. The substance however, of our ONE TEAM culture, lies in how our people are valued, trusted, and encouraged to achieve and develop.

We are an organisation that has strong, people centric foundations, that form the sub-structure upon which everything else is built - after all, our people are the ones that will get us to where we want to go.

Our ONE TEAM culture begins with a belief in leadership, adopting the right behaviours and the right organisational ingredients and then actively nurturing these so that they shape the day-to-day activity and decision making.

These help us to harness ideas, energy and enthusiasm whilst promoting 'buy in' from everyone within our organisation. Behaviours and ingredients which are grounded in a belief in and aspiration for effective leadership at all levels, a belief in the power of team and the recognition of the contribution we all make in delivering organisational success.



We are ONE TEAM

- We plan together
- We experiment together
- We deliver together
- We create together

- We share the big picture
- We share thoughts
- We share the load
- We share the wins and the losses

As an organisation we embrace innovation, creativity, new ideas and new ways of working to ensure our council reaches a sustainable position.

We challenge functional barriers, encourage, coach and empower our colleagues to engage, develop talent, harvest ideas and energy from within, create an environment where people want to be successful and take ownership and most importantly - be ONE TEAM.

Stay connected through:

- Leader briefings
- Team meetings
- Service Managers Forum
- Workforce workshops
- Employee Liaison Group
- Employee survey
- Extranet
- Your line manager
- Assistant Directors and Directors

Look out for:

- Leader and Deputy Leader site visits and drop in's
- Senior Leadership and Senior Management 'back to the floor' sessions
- Employee awards and other engagement sessions.

Beliefs, behaviours, and key organisational ingredients

It might be said that management is a way of 'getting the work done', using the resources at hand to deliver a product - it might also be loosely said that managers instruct and administer based upon procedures and rules. Leadership on the other hand might be described as a way of behaving that enthuses people to collectively align to a desired outcome - and rather than instructing and administering, leaders might **influence** and **empower**.

Whilst both management and leadership are important, at NEDDC our modus operandi is **leadership** over **management** generally. NEDDC senior management team

are passionate about coaching colleagues to want to achieve, and we strive to create an environment where this is the case - **encouraging our people to shine**.

Building relationships is key, **making time for others** and being genuinely interested in what they have to say, and offer is important - we **see** and **hear** our people. A sense of **ownership and responsibility** amongst the team is at the centre of our approach - they should be motivated to be the best that they can be, 'pulling out all the stops' to achieve success and doing this because they want to. Understanding and **communicating** our strategic direction is ongoing - keeping everyone **connected and involved** is paramount. We genuinely involve others in



shaping the vision, whether that be the creation of the Council Plan, key strategy development or service delivery...there is a significant level of involvement including all tiers of the workforce - this approach creates **buy-in** and has far greater day-to-day impact upon the organisation than instruction from the top.

Senior management know that great ideas will not only be theirs but will come from others around us too - being **open minded** is critical to our success. The ability to recognise both the opportunities and the threats is also important - internal and external **insight** provides the information which helps to inform our direction.

In creating this safe environment to express ideas and make suggestions, we cultivate an organisation that dares to **innovate and think creatively**. We make it easy and comfortable for anyone to voice their ideas.

We actively aim to bring everyone along and **enrol others in the journey**. We set out to **inspire** people to do this because they want to. This approach allows the organisation to tap into all the human energy available, to create a critical mass moving us toward positive change and progress.

Being transparent, genuine, and honest results in **authentic and credible leadership** - here at NEDDC, we believe that we are all 'a work in progress' and none of us are the finished article. This outlook allows us to learn, grow and develop and helps create a **trusting** organisational environment.

Recognition and respect help employees see that the organisation values them and their contributions to the success of their team and the organisation overall. We heavily promote an environment and approach that **acknowledges, praises, and encourages** regularly - employees who have **pride** in their work, each other and workplace believe in the organisation.

We strive to **develop our teams** through training, **mentoring, and coaching** and by building the skill sets, behaviours and attitude that are needed to ensure future success. We encourage a forward-thinking outlook and a willingness to 'shape our future' helping to ensure that everyone who works for the Council has a sense of **belonging in the workplace**.

We actively **break down functional barriers** by having a **no silo** approach to delivering the business of the Council, getting our people to see the BIGGER PICTURE of success and a recognition that we may not be able to do some things on our own but by **collaborating** with others we can.

And...we never let ourselves or our teams lose sight of our **ONE TEAM culture** - the thing that sets us apart - our USP!

Our behaviours define our culture, our culture determines our level of success...whatever the measure.

Collaborative leadership model

When it comes to officers and elected Member relations, the approach here at NEDDC is very much aligned to one of 'collaborative leadership'. Clearly the roles of elected Members and officers are different, and this is recognised here. Despite this, we understand and believe that we are in essence all here to improve

the outcomes for our district and to help improve the lives of the people within.

In undertaking the business of the Council, elected Members and officers are indispensable to one another and mutual respect between both is essential. Members provide a democratic mandate to the Council, whereas officers contribute the professional expertise and human resource required to deliver the Council Plan and the policy framework.



Elected authority from the community to set the Council's direction and make choices on its behalf.

Authority gained from acting together and ensuring that choices respect the interests and concerns of the community and of each other.

Appointed authority to act on political choices and delegated responsibilities to deliver services and use the Council's influence.



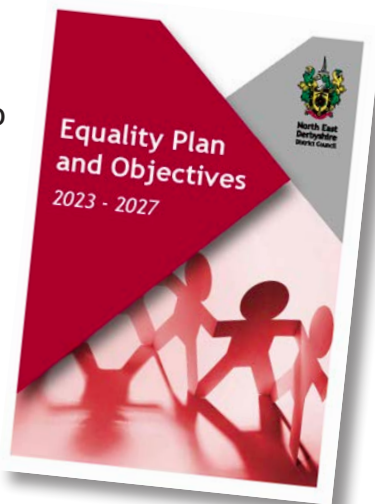
When we say, 'we are ONE TEAM', we don't therefore limit this to officers of the Council alone. The culture extends beyond the officer ranks as we purposefully strive to strike an appropriate balance - the 'sweet spot' in the middle - which is very much built upon good relationships and good communication - both of which build trust.

We believe that the adoption and development of our 'ONE TEAM' ethos, coupled with our 'collaborative leadership' approach, sets the organisation up to succeed.

We are better placed to shape the future of the communities that we serve when we do this collectively.

Equality, diversity, and inclusivity

As an organisation, we are committed to providing excellent services shaped by an understanding of the needs of different people and ensuring that how we deliver services promotes equality and challenges inequality. This is set out in our Equality Plan and Objectives 2023-2027; this plan includes the Council's specific equality



objectives for this period. These apply to all our employees and Councillors and covers all aspects of the Council's activities.

Equality in the workplace is about ensuring that every employee or job applicant has the same opportunities and is treated fairly, regardless of their individual characteristics.

Diversity, on the other hand, is about creating a culture that values differences - this might include a range of people with differences such as age, ethnicity, religion, race, and sexual orientation for example.

Inclusivity in the workplace means everyone feels valued at work. It refers to how employees are treated, how they interact - an inclusive workplace engages with everyone, it lets employees feel safe to come up with ideas, raise issues and suggestions - knowing this is actively encouraged.

At NEDDC, we aim to think beyond legal compliance, we take the view that equality, diversity, and inclusivity should be seen as adding value to our organisation, contributing to wellbeing and outcomes, and impacting upon us all.

Equality, diversity, and inclusivity when seen in this broader sense makes for a happier workforce, better equipped to serve a diverse range of residents and customers, improved ideas creation, and helps us to attract and retain great staff.

By creating a workplace that is welcoming to all, we position ourselves as an employer of choice.

Reward and recognition

We heavily promote an environment and approach that acknowledges, praises, and encourages consistently - when employees feel valued, they are energised, motivated and likely to go that little bit further for the organisation. When we do this our people feel ownership and a sense of pride - recognition enhances the connection to the organisation and improves the organisations chances of retaining our people for longer. By regularly and authentically doing this we move closer, as an organisation, to unlocking our people's true potential.

A simple 'thank you' is often all that is needed, showing appreciation for their hard work and effort during the day. Other times, perhaps when a particular goal is achieved, or they have gone above and beyond, more formal recognition will be more appropriate.

In such situations, of course the person will feel a sense of achievement themselves, that good feeling however can be massively amplified when others recognise the achievement also - especially recognition from peers, colleagues, and the organisation. This recognition contributes to their sense of fulfilment, making them happier, which will impact positively upon their performance, make our customers happier and much more.

When we acknowledge praise and encourage our people, they will shine ever brighter.



New ways of working

Over the past few years, the Council has had to think strategically about its services, policies and plans and the need for new ways of working. To some degree the coronavirus pandemic has fast tracked changes to the Council's usual working practices - changes that came about in a matter of weeks that may otherwise have taken years to have happened.

The Council along with all other organisations moved rapidly to a virtual and remote working environment with a reassuring demonstration of adaptability, versatility, and flexibility. Beyond the immediacy of the reaction to the pandemic, the Council recognised that the changes brought about by adversity, could become part of the 'new normal' for the Councils operating framework. To that end, in March 2021, the Council adopted its Agile Working Policy.

Whilst the current policy focusses on flexible working, flexible hours, and remote working, the potential is far greater than this. We are beginning to think differently at NEDDC - agile working shouldn't be limited to 'same work' done the 'same way' but in a 'different time and place', this should also be open to doing work differently focussing on the 'performance' and 'outcomes' with these being the drivers rather than 'time and attendance'.

The goal we are seeking at NEDDC is to create a more responsive, efficient, and effective organisation. Central to this will be our culture...simply buying new technologies and investing in new

workplaces is not enough! Engaging with our people, empowering them in a relationship of trust and responsibility are the key.

Working within guidelines but without boundaries.

Collaboration with Trade Unions

The relationship between Trade Unions and the Council are very good here at NEDDC. There is a clear recognition that whilst the employer and Trade Unions may have different perspectives on occasions, in essence we are all seeking the same broad positive objectives with our people being firmly at the centre of these.

These positive relationships help build trust amongst the workforce providing further mechanisms for dialogue through which problems and opportunities can be identified and resolved or pursued. These effective relationships can add value to workplace safety too by helping to shape workplace safety practices and reducing workplace accidents.

Trade Unions can be a good source of information on workplace procedures and practice given their involvement nationally in a whole range of workplace settings, this provides a great opportunity to identify and share with us examples of safety best practice from elsewhere for example.

Similarly, Trade Unions have the potential to bring other benchmarking benefits and a broad perspective on many workplace issues and industry knowledge that can contribute to the business decisions being made.

Trade Unions also have the potential to support many of the things that this Council holds dear and are at its core, things such as equality and inclusivity for example. Trade Unions can help actively fight discrimination and help promote fairness. This helps to ensure our workplace is an attractive one to potential employees, and further helping to improve retention rates for existing employees.

In recognising all of this...the Council meets and communicates regularly, working closely with Trade Unions in a strong relationship that is built upon a state of mutual respect.

We know that we ultimately want the same things...to provide a safe, fair, and great place to work.



Nurturing a great culture

- *words into action!*

Some of the things we do already...

- Promotion of leadership behaviours.
- Positive organisational culture branding.
- Collaborative leadership model.
- Creativity away days.
- Multi-team workshops.
- Regular team meetings and 1-2-1's.
- Open door culture.
- Back to the floor sessions.
- Meet the Leader and MD events for new starters and existing employees.
- Informal coaching and mentoring.
- Equality Plan and policies.
- Equalities training.
- Reward and recognition scheme.
- Employee celebration events.
- Long service awards.
- Job evaluation and equal pay for equal work.
- Agile working arrangements
- Living wage employer.
- Effective trade union relationships.

Some of the things we plan to do...

- Introduce a 'living the leadership behaviours' training programme.
- 'You said and together we fixed' approach.
- Succession planning model.
- Team activities model.
- Internal communications and feedback development.
- SMT roadshows.
- SMT back to the floor schedule - 'Visibility' campaign.
- Introduce a 'service area' and 'working together as One Team' showcase mechanism
- Link rewards and recognition to the desired behaviours.
- Employee (shining star) of the month.
- Long service awards review.
- Review job evaluation scheme.
- People strategy working group and annual review.



Ensuring Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing framework

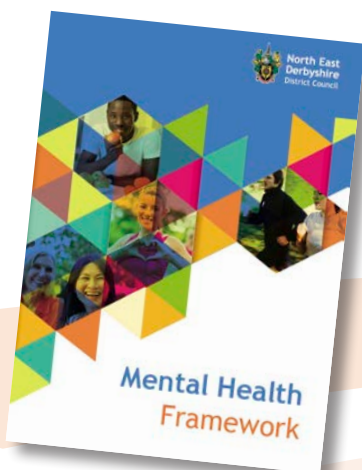
Promoting and supporting employee health and wellbeing is at the core of our organisation's people centric culture. A better working environment and better working lives are clearly recognised here as key determinants in our organisation's success. Healthy workplaces help people flourish and reach their potential benefitting the individual, the team, the organisation and ultimately the communities that we serve.

We recognise that by investing in our people's health and wellbeing, this will lead to increased resilience, better employee engagement, reduced sickness absence, higher performance, and increased productivity...moreover though, we do this because we should. This is why our initiatives and efforts in this regard aren't seen as 'standalone' or 'bolted-on' to our everyday business...the health and wellbeing of our people is seen as our everyday business - our endeavours in this regard are integrated throughout the organisation, embedded in our culture and in our leadership.

Wellbeing is important to health and health is important to wellbeing.

Mental health

Mental health problems are common in society generally and it is estimated that nationally at least



one in six workers experience common mental health problems, including anxiety and depression. Many employees might not feel comfortable talking about it, and whilst this situation is improving with a great deal more openness about the topic generally, mental health can still be seen as a taboo subject by some and choose to keep it to themselves.

There are many reasons why someone's mental health could be poor at any time including home and personal life; career and work-related issues; emotional reasons; finance and money related challenges; physical health and social factors - all of these could be either long term or short-term situations. Struggling to cope with everyday life does not look or feel the same for everyone.

There are countless statistics relating to the cost to employers from lost work days, cost to the NHS and cost to the economy. However, most important to our organisation is the human cost to our employees, and the potential for poor mental health having an impact on the lives of individuals and those around them. This can manifest itself in a variety of ways both at work and at home and could impact upon a person's ability to manage other elements of their personal life.

By managing the physical, operational, and cultural environment to support the mental health and wellbeing of employees first, the benefits to the Council will follow. The Council have therefore developed a 'Mental Health Framework' that sets out the organisation's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of its people. It supports efforts to improve employee mental health and wellbeing both at work and in home life.

Positive mental health is crucial - it profoundly influences every aspect of our lives.

Occupational health

Taken at its highest level, there is a great deal of evidence that confirms that being in work is generally better for a person's health and wellbeing than being out of work. If individuals move from being in work to out of work, over time their risk of mortality increases and conversely if they move back into work, it reduces.

The purpose of Occupational Health is to help maintain the wellbeing of our employees, preventing and removing ill-health and developing solutions to keep staff with health issues at work. An Occupational Health service provides professional advice and recommendations for the Council to take into consideration when working together with employees to support them at work.

They also carry out pre-employment assessments and statutory health surveillance - for example when workers may be exposed to hazardous substances or noise.

At NEDDC we very much value high quality Occupational Health services as part of our healthy workplace culture and believe that a systematic approach to this can contribute to our organisational success.

Good quality employment is the most effective way to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

Employee benefits

The local government landscape and marketplace has changed significantly in recent years. Recruitment is very difficult nowadays across the public sector and in a recent LGA survey it was found that 9 out of 10 Local Authorities are struggling to recruit and retain. Gone are the days where there were many applicants for any advertised job and where the salary alone was the deal breaker.

These days, along with helping to attract and retain people, employee benefits are also seen as a motivational tool and with salary often seen as a whole package that might better fit with an individual's circumstances or add real value to the existing and would-be employee's lives.

NEDDC also hold the view that the right employee benefits package can contribute to an improved state of wellbeing, help encourage achievement and strengthen the values of the organisation. Coupled with these benefits, the Council recognise the importance of its organisational culture, one that very much values its people. We work hard to exhibit our ONE TEAM culture shaping activity, casting ourselves as a strategic recruiter helping to ensure we remain an employer of choice.

The benefits of working at North East Derbyshire District Council are many and varied and wider than salary alone.

Ensuring Wellbeing - *words into action!*

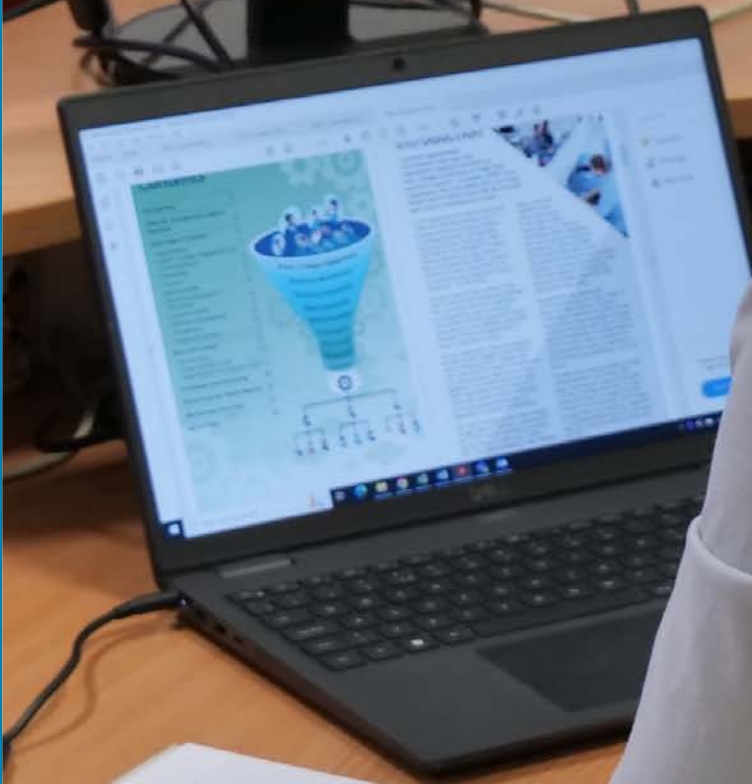
Some of the things we do already...

- Mental health framework.
- Mental health working group - officers and elected Members.
- Employee assistance programme.
- Supporting employees at work training.
- Managing sickness absence policy.
- Occupational health service.
- Employee support plans incorporating best practice from organisations such as Mind and ACAS.
- Counselling and physiotherapy.
- Free eye tests.
- Workplace stress risk assessments.
- Health & wellbeing framework - reviewed annually.
- Mental health first aid training.
- Flexible and agile working policies.
- Social events such as walking groups, yoga, nutrition workshops.
- Cycle to work scheme.
- Vivup and Kaarp benefits.
- Managers toolkits.
- Wellbeing information boards.
- Health & wellbeing bulletin every two months.
- Payment of professional fees.
- Access to local government pension scheme.
- Up to 35 days annual leave.
- Sickness pay scheme.
- Living wage employer.
- Pre-retirement Courses.
- Access to Westfield Health scheme.
- Wellbeing workshops.
- Discounted access to leisure facilities.
- Free onsite parking.

Some of the things we plan to do...

- Mental health framework and working group review.
- Quarterly mental health update on extranet.
- Mental health events throughout the year.
- Implement a 'buddy-up' scheme.
- Further promote health referral through our leisure facilities.
- Introduce a 'study-buddy' scheme.
- Volunteering days programme.
- Extension of social activity calendar.
- Exploration of 'green' lease car scheme.

Always improving



Workforce planning

It's good to know where you want to 'go' or 'get to' organisationally. Having set out our goals and business needs, it is important that we know about our workforce and what might need to change to help us achieve those goals - as we know, our employees are the ones that will get us to where we want to go.

The point of workforce planning is to maintain proper staffing levels so that critical competencies are fulfilled, succession is well-managed, costs optimised, agility is achieved, and resiliency is retained. These objectives are achievable when the supply and demand of employees and skills are identified and forecasted accurately and in a timely manner. Through workforce planning, we are attempting to incorporate adjustments for 'known' workforce changes such as retiring employees, an ageing workforce, and skills gaps for example.

Along with the numbers of people, there is the need for these being the right people with the right skills. The organisation will not develop without the right level of training and development taking place. The world moves much more quickly these days, the workforce must be constantly trained and re-trained as part of the workforce planning process.

Fail to plan, plan to fail.

Recruitment and retention

Perhaps traditionally, the recruitment process and getting people into posts has often been reactive - a post becomes vacant, and we recruit. Perhaps also traditionally, the labour market has been more robust with each vacancy advertisement attracting any number of likely candidates. The world is a very different place these days with organisations seemingly competing evermore for the same decreasing pool of people.

Like most things though, the greatest rewards often take the greatest effort to attain. Our goal here is not just about having people in posts, it's about having the 'right' people in posts, people who have a sense of loyalty and pride in what they do and what they are achieving or might wish to achieve - it's about the creation of an environment where people can be and want to be successful as part of our organisation and the delivery of services that we provide to our communities.

When we think of recruitment, we include the entire process from the beginning of the 'search' or 'growing our own' starting point, to the persons integration into the organisation that marks the beginning of the employee experience for the person. This is why at NEDDC, this is not simply recognised as a HR function, this responsibility is firmly aligned with the leadership and in the culture of the organisation and these being a fundamental part of the recruitment journey. The ONE TEAM culture, inclusive environment, reputation, meaningful work, opportunity and even branding and promotion, are all important factors that contribute to a successful recruitment.

As we've heard, recruitment can be difficult these days, but it can also be a costly endeavour that we don't want to get wrong. Due to the time, money and effort that is put into a recruitment process, we must get this right so that we aren't replacing our new colleague in a few months' time or failing to attract anyone at all...and in the meantime this could all be having a negative impact on our service delivery as we operate with gaps in our structure.

It's about the creation of an environment where people can be and want to be successful.

Induction and appraisal

We know that recruitment can be difficult and costly, we also know that an effective or indeed an ineffective induction programme can make the difference between a new employee successfully integrating or leaving very quickly. We must get this right and see it as more than a 'hoop' to be jumped through.

During the induction, our new employee will learn about who's who, specific policies, technical information, undertake pre-starter training and many other practical things included in our induction checklist. It is important though, that the induction is recognised as the new employees welcome to the organisation. It's an opportunity to establish relationships with colleagues, an opportunity to engage with our purpose, our vision and overall direction, a time to demonstrate our culture and enthuse them during that formative stage of a new employee's employment with the Council.

Our culture is far more aligned these days to one that focuses on continuous engagement and feedback, regular contact and check-ins, and ongoing development. However, like the induction, the appraisal process is also recognised as key here at NEDDC. And, whilst we certainly don't rely upon this process to learn more about our employees, discover their strengths and areas where they need support, improve their performances, and identify opportunities - they do offer a dedicated time and space to ensure this takes place.

These play an important role in helping keep our employees engaged and motivated to do well. They allow us to formalise our praise and positive feedback whilst collectively recognising areas for improvement too and how this might be supported by the organisation. They can help determine training need or aspiration and allow for conversation in a structured environment without distraction on a 1-2-1 basis.

These shouldn't be seen as 'hoops to jump through' - these are opportunities to build relationships, motivate, enthuse, and ensure success.

Talent pipeline, personal development, and training

In essence our talent pipeline is a multi-stream mechanism within which a cohort of candidates are engaged, supported, and developed with the intention of filling future roles that might open within the

organisation or elsewhere. The mechanism is both inward and outward facing, providing new opportunities, and attracting new people to the organisation whilst creating development pathways for those already employed by the Council who might currently have un-tapped potential or who might simply be looking for a change in direction without having to leave to do so.

In building the talent pipeline, we are not only dealing with the ‘here and now’, but we are also considering our needs for the next 12 or 24 months and beyond - succession planning, future proofing, scanning the horizon and planning for the years ahead - we are sowing the seeds now for the rewards to be harvested later.

Alongside the Talent Pipeline, the Council has an extensive workforce development programme which has been designed to ensure our employees receive both the necessary core corporate training whilst offering employees broader training opportunities and continuing education and learning programmes with the intention of maximising their job role success and career pathway opportunities along with a contribution to continual organisational improvement.

Coaching and mentoring

Whilst there are key differences between these two activities, both are recognised as very powerful and personal ways to help people. Accepting that there are differences between the two, generally both are about helping others grow, develop, and reaching their full potential. They can improve employee engagement; help build confidence and help share knowledge and experience...all of which can improve



organisational performance.

Coaching and mentoring can also help employees move towards that next chapter in their career, providing insight and ‘real-life’ experience helping to prepare those who at some point, will be making that next step in terms of career progression or indeed those who have recently made that step. They can also be used as effective support tools, helping to boost individual and team competencies and morale.

Along with dedicated coaching and mentor training, through our Organisational Development team, we plan to introduce a ‘coaching and mentoring’ programme for either ‘would-be’ recipients to request for themselves or for managers to put forward nominations on behalf of others, to receive

this level of support. It is envisaged that ultimately, the organisation will have numerous coaches and mentors with a regular flow of recipients benefitting and progressing at any one time - 'fast-tracking' knowledge sharing and personal development on a large scale - building it into the corporate consciousness so that it becomes part of our every day, for more and more people.

This is about supporting people and encouraging them to reach their full potential.

Performance and delivery management and improvement

Helping our people perform well, and creating an environment for our people to succeed is central to our leadership behaviours. Our people need to understand where we are going, what's expected of them and must be led in a way so that they are motivated, have the right skills, resources and support they need to succeed, and are accountable for their work.

Whether it's an individual, teams or organisational performance and delivery management, our approach centres on two-way communication and regular, open, and supportive feedback on progress towards objectives. This will often be backed up by a formal process including recording objectives, periodic reviews and improvement plans where performance and delivery could be improved...but the focus will always be discussion and ongoing, open dialogue built on trust.

Organisationally, we are far better placed these days in establishing the relationship between individual and team delivery, and the pursuit of successful delivery of the Council Plan - the business plan of the Council, our purpose!

This is very much built on the desire for the plan being a living and breathing document, a dynamic plan, one that changes and flexes with the world around us.

The performance and delivery management mechanisms developed alongside the plan, enable a 'common information picture' and updates against the plan to be seen and recognised right from the 'front-line' to the formal reporting processes shared with our elected Members and the communities that we serve. This represents a significant step forward in the organisational delivery of our objectives helping ensure that all stakeholders are connected to our delivery outcomes and progress.

The next step in this evolution will be covered in our new and emerging Improvement Strategy, this will focus upon delivery assurance and continual improvement and the 'relentless' pursuit of these. The strategy will bring forward an approach that will further enhance our 'real-time' understanding of our delivery successes, barriers faced and identification and implementation of improvement opportunities, enabling us to better navigate the 'overall delivery journey' of the Council Plan - watch this space!

The focus will always be discussion and ongoing, open dialogue built on trust.

Always Improving - words into action!

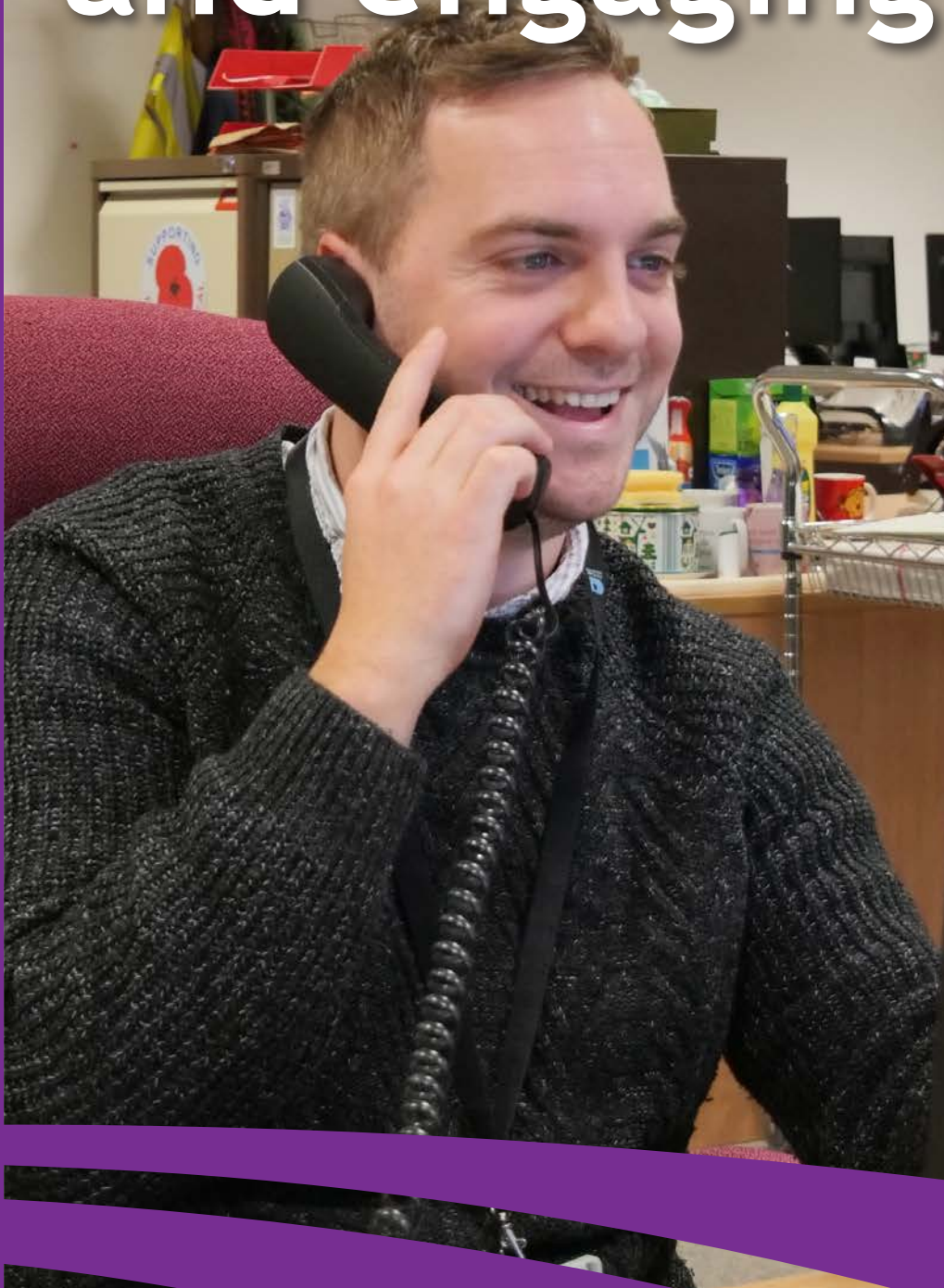
Some of the things we do already...

- Workforce and succession planning.
- Annual workforce profiling.
- Skills gap analysis.
- Recruitment and retention policy.
- E-recruit platform.
- Service area recruitment packs.
- Careers fairs, school and higher education links.
- Talent pipeline strategy.
- Talent pipeline co-ordinator.
- Talent pipeline web pages.
- Promotion of leadership behaviours.
- Learning and development policy.
- Corporate training programme.
- Continuing professional development support.
- Service specific training programme.
- Online and hard-copy induction programme.
- Appraisal programme.
- Work-trackers at all levels.
- VOSTO Council Plan delivery management.
- Formal coaching and mentoring through apprenticeships.
- Informal coaching and mentoring.
- Positive organisational culture.
- Reward and recognition scheme.
- Employee celebration events.
- Performance management framework.
- Competency framework.
- Exit monitoring process.

Some of the things we plan to do...

- Service Manager 'Essentials' programme.
- Workforce planning included in annual service plan review.
- Workforce profile data added to management dashboard.
- Develop skills and capability matrix - present and future need.
- Bi-annual employee 'deeper dive' surveys.
- Recruitment process and resources review.
- Induction process and resources review.
- Creation of onboarding videos for service areas.
- Improve links with education.
- Digital training platform roll-out.
- Formal coaching and mentoring training for SMT and service managers.
- Coaching and mentoring referral or request programme for all employees.
- 'Walk a mile' - job swap scheme.
- Celebrating our successes review.
- Employee (shining star) of the month.
- 'You said and together we fixed' approach.
- Appraisal scheme review - align more to desired behaviours.
- Further develop our 'Data-hub' - supporting data-led service provision.
- Further embed VOSTO Council Plan delivery management.
- Roll-out 'Propeller' programme.
- Roll-out 'Tell us once' - exit monitoring, informing, and learning process.

Effectively communicating and engaging



Communication and engagement are powerful tools that can have an enormous impact on the success of any organisation. Effective communication will improve employee engagement, which helps build trust and respect, these go on to enable understanding, ownership, and buy-in, all of which helps to enhance individual and organisational performance.

We recognise that our people represent our single most significant investment and asset, and as we have heard already in this document, they are the ones who will get us to where we need to be - the ones who will ultimately determine our success or failure, it would be ludicrous therefore to not keep them 'plugged in' and enrolled on the journey. Keeping everyone connected and involved is paramount - this why communication and engagement is a cornerstone of our People Strategy.

When thinking of communication and engagement in the workplace, some might limit their thinking to employee surveys or an email to all for example, and whilst these have a place and offer value, here at NEDDC communication and engagement is promoted and encouraged at a much more fundamental level - it starts with the day-to-day communication and engagement, the one to one, the informal chat...the personal connection. Building relationships is a key

leadership behaviour within our ONE TEAM ethos, we strongly advocate and promote making time for others and being genuinely interested in what they have to say and offer.

For communication to be effective, it must be bidirectional - not simply top down only.

To be engaging it needs to be regular and inclusive, sometimes one-to-one, and wherever possible involve the entire organisation. Our belief is that genuine employee communication and engagement is a two-way street that includes personal interaction, sharing the big picture, and giving and accepting feedback.

Communication and engagement includes all services and all staff - whether office based or front line, out in the district collecting waste or lifeguarding a swimming pool, everyone is valued here and is included. Everyone should be connected, able to see what is being said and feel empowered to share their views and be part of it.

Therefore, in addition to the fundamental day-to-day approach, we have various mediums, channels, and mechanisms designed to engage a wider audience, sometimes a specific audience, or for a specific reason and as a way of offering our people choices in how they engage.

We genuinely see and hear our people and strive to keep everyone connected and involved.

Employee liaison group

The purpose of this group is to provide a further platform to strengthen relationships, bolster communications, assist with engagement and provide opportunities for staff to have a voice. The group includes staff representation from across all service areas of the Council, the Leader of the Council and MD.

Views of staff are represented at the group meeting with proactive and meaningful debate promoted, solutions and innovative ideas presented, or new ways of working discussed too. Attendees receive 'real-time' updates from the Leader and MD on things of a corporate nature, updates from service area representatives and 'two-way' dialogue that is shared by all attendees with their service areas and peer groups, across a whole range of topics, in a further attempt to keep everyone connected.

Keeping everyone connected and involved is key.

Service Managers forum

This forum is a place for the Service Manager tier to come together and share thoughts, progress, and challenges with their peers from across the organisation. The forum is recognised as a sort of 'sibling' to the Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings held regularly at the Council. These are very much recognised as key to our organisational success and another valuable 'connection' in the wider communication and engagement network.



This group receives/provides updates directly to and from SMT, helping to ensure bi-directional communication throughout the organisation. Amongst other things, they receive learning and development as a group, consider progress against the Council Plan and other key workstreams, receive updates and changes to employment practice from HR and receive updates and feed into corporate communication messages and campaigns whilst showcasing to each other their service area successes. Perhaps most importantly though, the group provides an opportunity to share learning and experiences and provide support and help to each other helping to solve problems or tackle common or similar issues.

Whilst this group is in place specifically for Service Managers, the group themselves welcome 'would-be' Service Managers of the future along as part of their development and learning journey - all very much aligned with our 'grow our own' corporate mindset and the ambition set out in our Talent Pipeline Strategy.

A valuable 'connection' in the wider internal communication network.

Internal working groups

At NEDDC, we create working groups for a variety of reasons and purposes, pulling together staff, and sometimes elected Members too, to achieve a specific goal.

Those who make up the groups will sometimes have specific skills or expertise whilst others will be a critical friend or simply represent their own area or tier of the Council and may even be a potential end user too.

The belief here at the Council is that this approach will generate different perspectives, shared responsibility, a balance of strengths, open channels of communication, increased participation, improved motivation and 'buy-in'. One of our key organisational and leadership behaviours is to involve others in the shaping of what and how we do things. We firmly believe that this approach has far greater day-to-day impact upon the organisation than instruction from the top.

Enrolling others in the journey creates 'buy-in'.

Bulletins and updates

The importance of staff bulletins and updates cannot be underestimated. We aim for ours to be educational as well as entertaining - we don't want to bore our readers. Visualisation, infographics, and other entertaining features are key to ours. We purposely focus upon our employees and weight it heavily in their favour, we want these to be valued and interesting rather than corporate blurb that becomes metaphorical wallpaper.

Our well-crafted bulletins and updates aim to inform everyone across a range of topics including what's new, new starters and leavers, corporate messages and updates, training, personal and team celebration, sprinkled with an element of fun and humour...all delivered with a consistent brand and identity and in a regular and timely manner.

Along with the corporate bulletins and updates, at NEDDC we believe its valuable to have regular updates from the Leader and MD - the 'tone from the top', so to speak, is key when nurturing a positive organisational culture. These are often more specific and a little more personal, providing a connection and insight into the organisation's leadership and their personal perspectives on things.

Overall, the aim of these bulletins and updates is to generate interest and help staff feel more engaged and better informed after reading it, further helping to motivate, encourage and include.

A well-informed and connected workforce encourages collaboration, removes silos, and supports a positive culture.

Team meetings

When organised well, a team meeting is one of the greatest tools in the workplace toolbox. They can enable closer collaboration, help with ideas generation and sharing, engender the sense of 'team', create space for feedback, align, and focus the team on individual, team, and corporate goals, and facilitate a great level of communication within the team. Conversely - when organised poorly or undervalued and seen as a 'hoop to jump through', such meetings will be filled with disengaged people who can't wait for it to end.



Of course, there are many reasons for a team meeting to be called - these might be regular scheduled meetings, a one-time meeting, a retrospective de-brief, or wrap-up meeting...but all share similar benefits. To get the best from team meetings, here at NEDDC we very much drive home the message of their importance and help to ensure they have purpose, are timely and frequent, have a similar format and key agenda items to allow for wider common information sharing and consistency.

Making time for others and being genuinely interested in what they have to say, and offer is important.

Consultation and feedback

This whole strategy is heavily geared towards the importance of speaking with and hearing from our people - organisationally we believe greatly in this. We are not alone in this belief...there is strong evidence of the benefits organisations with effective and meaningful staff information and consultation arrangements enjoy.

Whether it is dealing with change or change programmes, helping to build trust from an informed workforce who are listened to, seeking a sounding board to inform direction and decisions, generating ideas from the workforce...most of these represent benefits to both the organisation and its people. Effective consultation and feedback lead to a model of partnership and collaboration, a

positive organisational culture built upon trust and people who are valued, ultimately leading to greater job satisfaction and quality of work, better recruitment and retention rates and a more united organisation.

We strive to ensure that everyone here has a sense of belonging in the workplace.

Employee survey

Our Employee Survey is perhaps the single most obvious mechanism when we think of employee consultation and feedback. We value this highly as a confidential way to measure how engaged, motivated, and satisfied our people are - this provides the organisation with specific insights into everything that is working well, what we might need to do to improve and how positive our overall staff experience is.

Engaged employees who feel a sense of belonging in the workplace are less likely to leave for a job elsewhere. By conducting these surveys, we intend to demonstrate that we genuinely care about their experiences and value their perspective on things. When our people see that we are making a genuine effort to hear what they say and then act on this, we hope to develop a sense of loyalty towards the organisation. Our latest Employee Survey conducted at the end of 2023 demonstrates this well as the results have directly influenced the development of this very strategy and associated action plan.

In undertaking the surveys, we very much hope to better understand our people and make the necessary meaningful changes that may be required. We undertake these in the belief that in doing so we can increase satisfaction levels, create happier employees, improve employee well-being levels, build trust and empathy, and improve retention rates.

Our people are the ones that will get us to where we want to go ...we must listen.

Back to the floor and an open-door approach

When trying to establish a sense of ‘what is’, often the easiest person to convince is yourself, but what information do you rely upon to reach this conclusion? Well-worn phrases such as ‘hearing it from the horse’s mouth’ and ‘walking a mile in their shoes’ are well worn for good reason...there is nothing quite so certain as seeing things and hearing things on the ground or at the sharp end.

It is easy to become removed from the ‘shop floor’ when taking up senior positions spending most of your time in the office or in meetings. The culture at NEDDC however, recognises that by dedicating time to get ‘back to the floor’ we can demonstrate that we are interested in the day-to-day challenges of our people, finding better

ways of working, learning more about the business, and reaching out to remote sites who might otherwise feel like the poor relation of the organisation.

By getting back to the floor, we are far more likely to have a more relaxed and insightful conversation with our staff where they are doing what they know, than in the more formal setting of a meeting room or office. We are of course more visible to everyone, not just the ones we liaise with more regularly.

In a similar vein, having an open-door approach is very much recognised as standard within the senior management team at NEDDC. Such an approach is one that values feedback and providing support and serves to demonstrate our people can approach management/leadership with their concerns, feedback, and ideas...this is actively encouraged. Taking such an approach we ultimately aim to promote a workplace culture of collaboration, of people who are valued, trusted, and encouraged to achieve and develop, a belief in the power of team and the recognition of the contribution we all make in delivering organisational success.

This helps build trust and respect, understanding and ownership, all of which enhances organisational performance.

Effectively communicating and engaging - *words into action!*

Some of the things we do already...

- Employee liaison group - quarterly.
- Joint consultative group - quarterly with trade unions.
- Senior management team meetings minutes - every 2 weeks.
- Service managers forum - every 2 months.
- Internal working groups - as and when required.
- ONE team bulletin - every 2 weeks.
- Leaders briefing - video every 6 weeks.
- MD update - written briefing every 6 weeks.
- Regular team meetings and 1-2-1's - every 4 to 6 weeks.
- Whatsapp groups within some service areas.
- Staff consultation and feedback.
- Employee survey - at least every two years.
- Positive organisational culture branding.
- Creativity away days.
- Multi-team workshops.
- Back to the floor sessions.
- Meet the Leader and MD events.
- Employee celebration events.
- Essential communication messaging.

Some of the things we plan to do...

- 'You said and together we fixed' approach.
- Informal schedule of themed meetings and workshops with trade unions.
- Internal communications development to improve overall organisational awareness.
- Develop ONE team bulletin to be more interactive with ability to respond and comment.
- 'Learning Lens' publication roll-out.
- SMT roadshows with Q&A's.
- SMT back to the floor schedule - 'Visibility' campaign.
- Service area showcase.
- Create more opportunities for employees to feedback.
- Employee survey 'deeper dive' - bi-annually - 'trust your gut, speak-up' campaign.
- Further development of digital 'chat space' and teams' channels.
- Employee (shining star) of the month.
- Long service awards review.

Meeting each other's expectations

The success of this strategy relies upon us all adopting the beliefs, behaviours, and key organisational ingredients contained within. It relies upon a belief in leadership at all levels and strong, positive relationships being formed and nurtured.

As with all relationships, including those between an organisation and its people, expectations are involved - it is important to make sure that we are all clear on what these are and being committed to ensuring that these are being met and will continue to be met consistently.

Employee Expectations

- A great workplace culture
- Transparent and inclusive leadership
- Work will be motivating, meaningful, and satisfying
- Safe, healthy, and inclusive environment
- Equal opportunity for all employees
- A flexible work environment where possible
- Fair rewards and benefits for all employees
- High quality training
- Opportunities for personal and career development
- Good communication and feedback
- Employee engagement and involvement

The Organisations Expectations

- Contribution to a great workplace culture
- Honesty and trustworthiness
- High standard of integrity, conduct, and professionalism
- Determination and enthusiasm
- Appropriate behaviour and to not bring the Council's reputation into disrepute
- Treat each other with respect and courtesy
- Take all reasonable steps to achieve regular attendance
- Be punctual, dressed appropriately and fit to carry out the duties of the job role
- Take care of yours and others health and safety
- Be committed to always delivering your role working within the Council's policies and procedures

A belief in the power of team and the recognition of the contribution we all make in delivering organisational success.

A final word...

Having now read this document fully, hopefully it is clear to the reader that here at North East Derbyshire District Council we seek to continually improve as an organisation in the knowledge that our success in this endeavour is completely dependent upon the people within.

As a council we are committed to evolving and making changes which will allow all our people to further flourish, develop and to ensure that all colleagues feel like they belong. As individuals, we understand that we all play a part in our Council's success - as a team, as ONE TEAM, we know that we can achieve our full organisational potential.

This strategy will be supported and driven by detailed plans including timelines, resources and performance measures which will be refreshed annually. Our people strategy working group, including representatives from all levels of the organisation along with the Services Scrutiny Committee, will carefully monitor progress and evaluate the impact of our endeavours to ensure that the strategy continues to provide the right solutions and outcomes for our people and our organisation as a whole.

Thank you for taking the time to read - we hope you enjoyed it.

Equalities Statement

North East Derbyshire District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and when delivering the services it provides to all sections of the community.

The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between all groups in society.

Access for All statement

You can request this document or information in another format such as large print or language or contact us by:

- Phone: [01246 231111](tel:01246231111)
- Email: connectne@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk
- Text: [07800 00 24 25](tel:07800002425)
- BSL Video [Call](#): a FREE, three way video call with us and a BSL interpreter.
- Call with [Relay UK](#) via textphone or app on [0800 500 888](tel:0800500888). FREE phone service for anyone who has difficulty hearing or speaking.
- Visiting our [offices](#) at Wingerworth:
2013 Mill Lane, [S42 6NG](#).

