

**High Peak Borough Council &
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

Organisational Development Strategy 2022

Introduction

Since coming together as an alliance of two district councils in 2008, High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands Council have delivered savings of over £12 million for local taxpayers alongside improvements to public services.

This success has been underpinned by a single workforce working across the two council areas. During this time, the Councils have consolidated a large proportion of front facing services across both authorities, removing significant duplication.

During the COVID pandemic, our dedicated and hardworking workforce has not only continued to deliver services effectively but also has in innovative and in ever changing ways. It is therefore now important to continue to create a truly agile and adaptable workforce that is no longer confined to a fixed location and helps us to make the best use of our most valuable assets and resources.

This Organisational Development Strategy sets out a clear plan of approach to workforce development, building on the already excellent work and good practice already in place. Alongside the Digital Strategy and the Access to Services Strategy, this strategy lays out how, High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands, will work to:

- Ensure that our workforce that is engaged, adaptable, flexible and has both the skills and mindset to meet these changing needs and demands and ensure we continue to deliver high quality, modern and effective services
- Provide a great place to work, enabling us to retain our talent and provide the means for staff to consider their own health and wellbeing.
- Maximise the opportunities we take to transform service delivery for our residents, businesses, visitors and partners
- Ensure our services are proactive, seamlessly linking our customers to the right employees with expertise to make a difference, both now and into the future

High Peak Borough Council / Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Strategic Alliance

High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council formed a strategic alliance in December 2007. The alliance was formed around the recognition that, despite being in different counties, the two council areas have similar characteristics.

The strategic alliance has been developed around the principle of the Councils retaining their own individual identities but seeks to take advantage of the significant benefits of working together to deliver services to residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

The Councils agreed a Concordat which sets out the general aims of the strategic alliance as:

- Increase the levels of customer satisfaction through the improvement of services;
- Produce realistic cash savings in order to deliver improved service and limit council tax increases;
- Strengthen and share skills, expertise and learning, in order to delivery better services;
- Preserve and enhance the special and distinctive characteristics within each local authority area; and
- Increase our influence locally, regionally, and nationally in order to secure a “better deal” for all our communities.

For more than ten years the Councils have had a shared Chief Executive and management team with a single workforce delivering services across the two areas. The workforce comprises some 400 employees with extensive and varied skills. In addition the Councils have developed robust commissioning and procurement arrangements for delivery of a number of their key services.

Vision and Aims of the Councils

The vision, aims and priorities for High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands are set out in the two Councils’ Corporate Plans. These strategic plans have been shaped by the political ambition of the Councils

The vision and aims for each Council are as follows:

	High Peak	Staffordshire Moorlands
Vision	Working together to protect and invest in the High Peak with the Council on your side	Achieving Excellence in the delivery of high quality services that meet the needs and aspirations of our communities
Aim 1	Supporting our communities to create a healthier, safer, cleaner High Peak	Help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work
Aim 2	A responsive, smart, financially resilient and forward thinking council	Use resources effectively and provide value for money
Aim 3	Protect and create jobs by supporting economic growth, development and regeneration	Help create a strong economy by supporting further regeneration of towns and villages
Aim 4	Protect and improve the environment including responding to the climate emergency	Protect and improve the environment and respond to the climate emergency

The priorities in each of the Corporate Plans are integrated into our Performance Framework which ensures implementation of our priorities through operational service plans and individual objectives for each member of our workforce.

The ambitions set out in the Corporate Plans provide the framework for the delivery of services across the alliance. They are therefore embedded in each and every strategy including the Organisational Development Strategy which is set out within this document.

Our Organisations

There are a number of elements to the Councils' service delivery arrangements.

Councillors provide the democratic leadership of the councils. They:

- Represent members of the public
- Provide leadership and direction to the Council
- Scrutinise service delivery.

No. of councillors:

<i>High Peak</i>		<i>Staffordshire Moorlands</i>	
Executive	5	Executive	6
Non-executive	38	No-executive	50

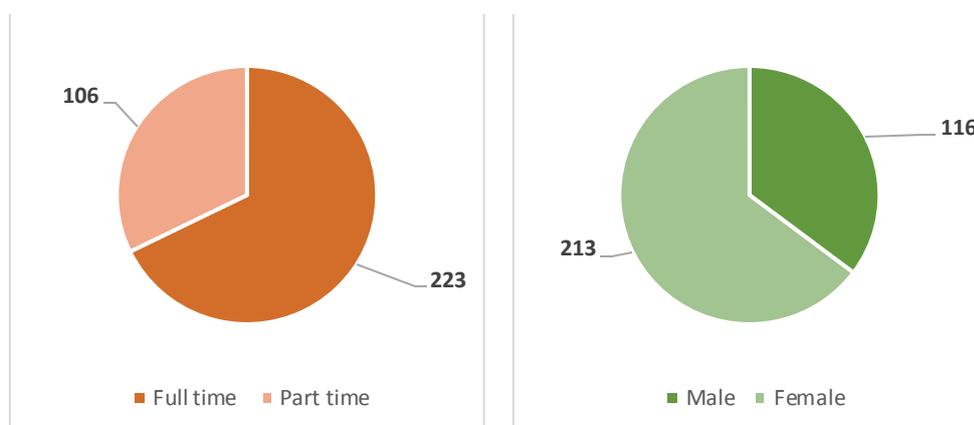
A shared *workforce* which operates across the two Councils. They:

- Implement the policies agreed by councillors;
- Organise and deliver services
- Provide unbiased, professional advice and support to councillors.

The Councils' workforce is managed by:

Alliance Leadership Team (ALT) – Chief Executive and 3 Executive Directors; and
Alliance Management Team – ALT and 14 Heads of Service

The Councils' workforce comprises 329 staff made up as follows:



The age profile of the Councils' workforce is as follows:

Age Range	Male	Female	Total	
			No.	%
<20	1	1	2	0.6
20-29	11	12	23	7
30-39	18	28	46	13.9
40-49	30	59	89	27
50-59	39	88	127	38.7
60+	17	25	42	12.8
Total	116	213	329	

The Councils' have developed flexible working policies and procedures to enable the workforce to be as efficient as possible, and ensure that services are tailored to customer and service needs.

In 2016 the Councils launched 'CHOICE' its organisational values:

VALUE		ATTRIBUTES
	Customer Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a difference • Being easy to contact and accessible • Representing the Councils in the best light by being polite and professional • Making customers' experience a good one • Taking pride in serving communities • Showing empathy
	Honest and Open Communicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to listen • Giving and accepting constructive feedback • Respecting others' viewpoints • Sharing information with the right people at the right time and in the right way • Avoiding jargon
	One Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making time for colleagues • Influencing others by being positive, enthusiastic, helpful and engaged • Collaborating to get results • Staying safe and keeping your colleagues safe at work • Supporting the business need for change • Helping colleagues through periods of uncertainty • Being flexible
	Innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing ideas • Challenging the status quo • Being brave and not fearing failure • Embracing change • Seeking out and championing new ways to improve service delivery
	Can do Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking ownership for finding solutions • Staying focused on performance • Taking every opportunity to learn, develop and share good practice • Pitching in and going the extra mile
	Every Penny Counts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and helping to maximise income generation opportunities • Getting it right first time • Thinking like a business and adopting a commercial focus • Comparing performance to the best and learn how to improve • Making the best use of time

These values are embedded in the way in which staff fulfil their duties across the alliance

In addition to direct delivery of services by our workforce the Councils have a number of their key services delivered through commissioned third-party arrangements. The key services that are delivered through commissioned arrangements are:

- Waste collection, street cleaning, grounds maintenance and fleet management services - delivered through Alliance Environmental Services (AES) - a joint venture partnership with Ansa - a subsidiary of Cheshire East Council
- Leisure management – delivered through a partnership contact with external provider Parkwood Leisure
- Operational ICT – delivered through a partnership contact with external provider NEC
- Property facilities management and housing repairs – the Councils are in the process of establishing a joint venture partnership with Norse Group – a subsidiary of Norfolk County Council

Challenges

The Councils are currently experiencing a time of unprecedented change. The environment in which the Councils operate continues to evolve with changing societal behaviours, resident needs, customer expectations and technological advances. We now live in a fast paced, digitally reliant, 24/7 society which has changed the way in which our residents live and work and how and when they want and need to access our services and support.

The experience of the current pandemic also has changed the way people work, accelerating moves towards flexibility, responsiveness and agile / remote working.

In order to respond to these challenges, the Councils need to continue their transformation, exploring new ways to make services more intelligent and more relevant to the lives of the people who rely on them. In order to recognise this, the Councils have also developed new Digital and Access to Services strategies which will be implemented alongside this plan.

In common with lots of organisations, the Councils' have an older workforce and that action needs to be taken to ensure that every opportunity for sharing knowledge and expertise is undertaken through learning and skills transfer, ensuring all staff are developing and growing in their technological competence. Flexible retirement, succession planning and flexible working opportunities have an increasing importance in order that that knowledge and expertise is not lost to the organisations.

Employee costs make up a significant proportion of the Councils' spending. This becomes even more important in the light of the expected post pandemic economic shocks. It therefore remains a possibility that further budget reductions may impact on employees unless productivity can be increased by leveraging the full potential of the workforce allied to the maximum potential for technological advance.

Both Councils have declared a climate emergency and are in the process of developing their Climate Change Action Plans. Climate change action needs to be embedded into the day-to-day operations of the Councils to provide for the necessary reductions in carbon footprints.

Opportunities

The Councils have a relatively new leadership and management team which provides for additional capacity and a more inclusive approach to decision making. Since implementation of the new structure there has been greater collaboration between services. The new leadership and management team has committed to refreshing the communications and feedback processes to encourage better dialogue between management and staff and understanding of the Councils' narrative and provide a focus for delivery of priorities.

The workforce has adapted successfully to working differently during the pandemic. At its peak some 86% of staff were working from home with the vast majority satisfied with this arrangement. Consequently there is overwhelming support for working from home in some form in the future. A recent staff survey showed that some 96% of staff would like to work from home in the future which will result in less travel, greater flexibility, better work life balance and less distractions.

The experience during the pandemic has highlighted the important role that the voluntary and community sector play in the delivery of services to our communities. The Councils have been developing the relationship with these sectors to improve the way in which services are shaped and delivered.

The response to the pandemic has also strengthened the relationships with the Councils' key strategic partners. Building on this success, both Councils are working with the County, District and Borough Councils in Staffordshire and Derbyshire on enhanced two-tier working arrangements that will align service delivery and potentially will respond to the Government's levelling up agenda resulting in the potential devolution of powers and funding through county deals.

The formation of the Councils' teckal company involved the transfer of the delivery of waste collection, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and fleet management services. The Councils manage the commissioning of services from AES through a Commissioning Board. AES has been successful since its implementation and has realised significant financial savings, performance improvements, high levels of customer satisfaction, and development of the company's workforce. There is the opportunity to use the successful development and implementation of AES to provide a 'blueprint' for the development of similar arrangements for the provision of other Council services.

The Councils face significant challenges in realising the potential of this new agenda. However, through the strategic alliance, the Councils have a strong track record of partnership working and Trade Union representation and is well-placed to take advantage of these effective external partner and internal employee relationships. Partners and

employees are committed to putting actions in place that will improve outcomes for the people of High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands.

Purpose of the Organisational Development Strategy

Organisational Development (OD) can be defined as as ‘a planned and systematic approach to enabling sustained organisational performance through the involvement of its people’. The underlying purpose of this development is so that the Councils can improve their performance and achieve their objectives. At its core is the drive to improve the functioning of individuals, teams and the entire organisation. It is a long term, on-going process which the Councils must continually address if they are to be effective.

Development will take many forms and focus on different aspects of although some fundamental principles will always be present:

- Maximising the value gained from resources;
- Focusing on strategy, objectives and core purpose;
- Applying behavioural science knowledge and practice, such as leadership, group dynamics and work design; and
- Planned, ongoing, systematic change that aims to embed continual improvement.

This Strategy therefore sets out a framework to ensure that the Councils’ workforce and relationship with partners is aligned to the delivery of the outcomes set out within the Corporate Plans. It is also focussed on ensuring that the Councils are equipped to meet the challenges of service delivery in the future.

It provides the strategic context to ensure that the Councils have people with the right skills in the right place at the right time to deliver quality services to the people of High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands within the challenging financial context. It sets out the framework for the Councils to meet the challenges and on-going change that faces the public sector generally.

The Councils aspire to become employers of choice. This will require a creative and innovative approach, building on the already excellent work and good practice that is already embedded.

The Strategy has been developed in consultation with services across the Council and with our Trade Union colleagues and takes account of the feedback provided.

OD Strategy

Foundations:

- A culture of empathy across both authorities, understanding user need when designing services
- A holistic prioritisation across the organisation
- Effective procurement and contract management practices
- Inclusivity, equality and diversity
- A local focus, developing real community-based partnerships
- Continuously improving our services based on evidence and collaboration

Vision:

Ensure that the Councils' aims, objectives and priorities are met through the recruitment, development of a well led highly skilled and motivated workforce, and effective service commissioning arrangements, that reflect local context and provide excellent services to customers in a responsive way

Four Aims:

Building strong leadership and management

Sustaining and improving a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce

Improving customer focus

Driving transformational change, innovation and improving value for money

Building strong leadership and management

Our managers and leaders across the Councils provide a critical role in the Councils achieving their strategic priorities and supporting the effective changes in the provision of the services that are delivered.

Effective leadership and management development is key to creating a flexible and agile culture where employees feel empowered and trusted to do their jobs. Collaboration and networking enables leaders and managers to work more closely together, understanding the wider environment and the impact our services have on local people.

Our managers will have the skills, abilities and confidence to commission, manage and promote the expected standard of performance.

Our commitments to achieve this are:

- ***Reviewing governance / scrutiny and councillor development***
- ***Establishing and developing a new leadership team***
- ***Improving the interface with elected members***
- ***Management development***
- ***Strengthening commissioning and procurement skills***

Sustaining and improving a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce

The Councils are extremely proud of the employees we have working across our communities and recognise the skills and knowledge that these employees have built up over the years. It is essential to continue to enhance those valuable skills and experiences regularly with a view to retaining the talent already within the organisation.

Investment in the continual support, coaching, training and development of the existing workforce is fundamental to service delivery that continues to strive for excellence. Critical to this are detailed training plans for each role, recognising and developing our talent and offering progression, all of which are underpinned by the Councils' policies and procedures supported by effective management.

Our workforce will be trained, qualified and experienced, to deliver quality services which meet current and anticipated service needs.

Our commitments to achieve this are:

- ***Refreshed appraisal scheme and an employee charter***
- ***Review of equalities and diversity***
- ***Skills gap assessment***
- ***Structured training plans that link into corporate priorities***
- ***Apprenticeships and graduate recruitment***
- ***Talent management and development***
- ***Cultural change – commercial focus / wider competencies review***
- ***Agile working – including remote / home working***
- ***Review of policy and procedures***
- ***Pay and conditions review – incremental progression issue***

Improving customer focus

In our Access to Services Strategy the Councils have committed to 'Ensure our services are readily and easily available to residents in the appropriate channels and provided 'right first time'. Traditionally the focus of the Councils has been to show how services will be provided to local residents, there has now been a shift towards the Councils opening up to customers and allowing them to engage with services in ways that suit their needs and requirements .

We want our customers to feel valued by their Council, trust us and have excellent customer experiences in their dealings with us whatever channel they choose. In order to do this it is essential that our workforce continues to adapt to developing the delivery of services in order to maintain the highest levels of customer satisfaction.

We will create a culture where we become even more responsive to our residents and customers

Our commitments to achieve this are:

- ***Refreshing the interface with customers to respond to the channel shift that has been experienced – including identifying and responding to digital exclusion***
- ***Communications skills – effective development of social media channels***
- ***Implementing the community leadership schemes***

Driving transformational change, innovation and improving value for money

In order to deliver the overall aims of the strategic alliance, the Councils have implemented a process of transformation, constantly exploring new ways to deliver services that offer value for money to the people who rely on them. Our Digital Strategy commits us to improving the way we use data to see where our services are working, and where we need to do things differently to deliver better outcomes for our residents, communities and businesses.

This transformation will include investment in a ‘digital first’ approach across the Councils in recognition that our customers want a more immediate, personalised service and expect to be able to contact us 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This will help us to streamline and simplify our services, enabling us to manage demand effectively and releasing capacity for those with more complex needs.

We are also continuing to develop our approach to locality working which will see us working collaboratively with partners to combine resources in the local areas based around shared priorities, delivering the right services at the right time in order to achieve positive outcomes and improved levels of service for the community.

In order to ensure that we can continue to support our communities and residents in this changing environment it is imperative that we have a workforce that is engaged, adaptable, flexible and has both the skills and mindset to meet these changing needs and demands and ensure we continue to deliver high quality, modern and effective services.

We will create more capacity through improving our productivity

Our commitments to achieve this are:

- ***Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic***
- ***Responding to the climate change and digital agendas***
- ***Getting more output from our workforce through smarter working***
- ***Encouraging innovation***
- ***Supporting the wider transformation programme***

Strategy Implementation

We will communicate this Strategy and how it can support service areas through Alliance Management Team (AMT) meetings. This will give the opportunity to discuss how it will apply to the service area and what interventions we will look to use to develop our people. The approach will be flexible and bespoke to each service area as we know that a one size fits all approach is not appropriate.

The OD Strategy will be embedded in the service planning process. Heads of Service will be required to consider the contents of the strategy in the development of their operational service plans and staff appraisals.

The Head of OD and Transformation will be responsible for delivering specific priorities identified in this Strategy and will do so through updating the relevant policies and procedures.

There will be an annual review process which will assess the implementation of the strategy. This will be supported by Heads of Service as part of their service plan reviews.

The performance indicators contained within the Councils' Performance Framework will provide data on the health of the organisation will inform discussions and whether action plans need to be amended during the year. The key indicators are:

- Staff turnover
- Staff sickness
- Success of Recruitment campaigns
- Staff with Performance Development Reviews and Plans in place
- Outcomes from Staff Surveys

The primary purpose of the Organisational Development Strategy is to ensure that the Council's priorities are achieved. It should be seen as a live document which constantly evolves as the Council's priorities change and the workforce develops over time.

Action Plan

Year 1

Building strong leadership and management	Review of governance and scrutiny arrangements	Leadership development programme	Improved staff / member interface	Management development programme	Review commissioning / procurement skills requirements		
Sustaining and improving a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce	Skills audit and gap assessment	Review of equalities and diversity arrangements	Agreement of an employee charter	Review of staff appraisal scheme	Review and refresh apprenticeship and graduate recruitment arrangements	Implementation of agile working arrangements	Pay and conditions review including new staff pay grade
Improving customer focus	Review of customer access and digital inclusion requirements	Communications skills review	Review of community leadership schemes				
Driving transformational change, innovation and improving value for money	Development of COVID-19 recovery plans	Assessment of climate change and digital implications for workforce	Refreshed staff ideas scheme	Refreshed service design methodology			

Year 2

Building strong leadership and management	Refreshed councillor development approach and plans	Implement commissioning / procurement development programme			
Sustaining and improving a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce	Refreshed Training and Development Approach and Plans	Revised staff appraisal scheme	Implementation of talent management and development approach	Revised workforce competencies framework	Review and revision of policy and procedures
Improving customer focus	Implement refreshed community leadership schemes				
Driving transformational change, innovation and improving value for money	Agree programme of service reviews	Implement phase 1 of service reviews			

Year 3

Building strong leadership and management	Review leadership and management development programmes
Sustaining and improving a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce	Skills audit and gap assessment
Improving customer focus	
Driving transformational change, innovation and improving value for money	Implement phase 2 of service reviews