



Our People Our Future

2021-2026

Rethinking, reshaping and
investing in our workforce of
tomorrow

Contents

- 2 Message from our Chief Executive
 - 3 Supporting our council vision
 - 4 Our workforce response to COVID19
 - 5 Our strategic framework
 - 6-8 Our immediate focus in 2021/22
 - 9 Our workforce strategies supporting recovery from COVID19
 - 10 Measuring our success
- Appendix 1:
Strategic outcomes and activities
- Appendix 2:
Workforce planning overview

Message from our Chief Executive

Our workforce is at the heart of everything we do and I am immensely proud of the dedication and commitment they have shown by continuing to deliver essential council services in response to the COVID19 pandemic, and in an environment where change has been constant over the last decade, due to significant financial challenges.

We will continue to face these challenges in the coming years, with some difficult decisions to be made, but now, even more than ever, this strategy will help us to respond and embrace new opportunities that arise. I recognise that the needs and expectations of our staff and communities continue to change, that's why I believe it's so important that we continue to invest in the wellbeing and development of every member of staff to respond to future challenges. **'Our People, Our Future'** is the council's 5-year people strategy, which builds on the successes of previous people and workforce plans. It's will be reviewed annually, allowing our ambitious change journey and priorities to adapt as necessary in the coming years and will be strategically aligned with the new Council Plan in 2022/23.

Our immediate 1 to 2-year focus will be on supporting staff in the response to and recovery from COVID19. Longer-term, it will support the continuation of the council's transformation plans by involving our staff in adapting the ways we work to improve workplace experience and in the delivery of more efficient, effective and modernised services. Strategic workforce planning, supported by a project management approach, will ensure we have the right staff, with the right skills, in the right place to do this. The approach to this strategy was developed in consultation with our Trade Unions and internal stakeholders and we will continue to engage with our workforce during implementation to identify development opportunities on the bespoke skills and resources that our staff need across diverse services.

I'm fully committed to investing in the development of every member of staff to ensure they have a good experience at work day-to-day, know what is expected of them, and the right value-adding skills to deliver the council's vision for Renfrewshire.

Sandra Black, Chief Executive



Supporting our council vision

Our last 12 months

2020 was a uniquely challenging year and our staff helped protect and guide the council and our communities through this public health crisis, which unfortunately, may continue for some time yet. Trade Unions and management teams have also worked tirelessly together to create a safe and healthy working environment for all.

Over the last 12 months the commitment of our staff, particularly on the front line, was clear to see and enabled the council to play its part in fighting this virus, whatever the challenge, and in doing so with care, passion and pride. Our staff demonstrated our values, showing compassion where the needs of others - especially the most vulnerable - come first - every time. They have shown public service at its very best, at a time of considerable challenge, risk and uncertainty.

The council is very aware of the toll this pandemic is having on the many aspects of staff lives - both work and personal. So many colleagues are going the extra mile - have volunteered for new roles; helped design and deliver new services; and sacrificed personal time to work extended hours - day and night. It is the dedication of our staff that has provided a lifeline to so many - keeping people safe, supporting children and young people at school, and making sure people are able to work and earn a living.

When we emerge from this time and return to some degree of normality, hopefully all our staff and communities can reclaim the aspects of everyday life that mean so much to them, such as, spending time with family and friends. In the meantime, the council is committed to supporting and ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of its most important asset, its staff, so the first priority of this strategy will be to continue to focus on this in 2021/22.

Our Council Plan

This strategy supports the vision for Renfrewshire, set out in the Council Plan 2017-2022 "[Thriving People, Connected Communities](#)" a call to action for staff, local people, business and communities to work together in achieving 5 key strategic outcomes.

The existing Council Plan was developed before COVID19, and therefore, our approach and vision must continue to adapt in response to the pandemic. The council is actively developing financial, economic and social renewal recovery plans, which will refocus our activities on recovery from the virus before a new Council Plan is launched in 2022/23. In turn, a similar approach will be adopted to the initial phase of this strategy's implementation - by focusing on **supporting staff in the "here and now" – still living and working in the midst of the pandemic.**

Our immediate priorities

Our first 1-2 years of this 5-year strategy will focus on supporting staff and services in **3 priority areas** (see pages 6-8 for details):

- ❖ **Health & wellbeing: we will** ensure staff wellbeing remains our number one priority in our response to COVID19, with a renewed focus on supporting staff attendance levels, particularly physical and mental health supports.
- ❖ **New ways of working: we will** consider new operating models and emerging technology to help deliver services in new ways post pandemic, which meet both public and staff expectations.
- ❖ **Staff communication and engagement: we will** build on the successful staff communication and engagement methods employed during the pandemic, fostering a culture that supports and empowers staff resulting in a well-informed and motivated workforce.

Our workforce response to COVID19

The skills, performance, commitment and values of our workforce have never been more evident than in the response to COVID19.

An emergency response

In March 2020, our staff quickly adapted and responded to the challenge that COVID19 presented. Essential services adapted and continued throughout lockdown with an incredible compassionate response from staff demonstrating a true commitment to our communities.

Approximately **75%** of our workforce are on the frontline and have continued to provide essential services daily including: home care, waste, facilities management, teaching and early years – these are only some to mention; with **25%** of staff working from home.

A team was quickly set up to take calls from staff and managers reporting symptoms of COVID19 and guidance issued for staff on being compliant with safe practices, both in the workplace, and when out and about in their communities.

There was an immediate need to focus efforts on supporting staff to work in different ways - using new equipment, processes and new technology. Importantly, we provided staff with the most up to date government information on restrictions, preventing transmission of this virus by keeping our workplaces, services and communities safe.

New ways of working – during COVID19

As restrictions on home and working life were implemented throughout the pandemic – relaxed and re-introduced - we have entered a prolonged phase of staff living and working in new ways and responding to COVID19 positively in a collective effort to minimise transmission of the virus through their actions.

Frontline services have adapted the ways in which they work, with council workplaces and schools subject to careful risk assessments and robust health and safety measures in place to allow vital services to continue. With staff working at home remaining the case for the

foreseeable future, staff and managers have been supported to help colleagues struggling with the lack of face to face contact – which for some is very challenging. Our focus to date has been to support staff, no matter where they are working, or what they do.

Supporting our workforce

Our priority has been, and will always be, the wellbeing of our staff which also has the knock-on effect of protecting local people and communities. Supports provided in response to COVID19 include:

- ❖ **Trade Unions:** commitment and support in engaging with management and staff to create safe and healthy workplaces.
- ❖ **Risk assessments and guidance:** detailed risk assessments are in place for all our services and safe working guides to support staff, no matter what their role or work location.
- ❖ **COVID19 data and monitoring:** analysis of data, cases and clusters of COVID19 in our workforce, with careful monitoring and early intervention when required.
- ❖ **Supporting attendance:** protecting the clinically vulnerable in our workforce and allowing staff to work where possible in adapted or redeployed roles.
- ❖ **Staff communication and engagement:** encouraging staff to take time to look out for people and their own health and wellbeing e.g. taking annual leave, getting exercise, taking time to keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.
- ❖ **Mental health:** access to professional supports, guidance developed and signposting for managers and staff to recognise signs of mental health supports needs for colleagues.
- ❖ **Guidance and training:** on working in and managing virtual/remote teams - using video conferencing effectively and adapting existing training to a virtual format – making it accessible.
- ❖ **Access to equipment:** staff working at home have access to office equipment and ICT kit to improve their experience at home, with DSE assessments to ensure their home environment is safe.

Our strategic framework

‘Our People Our Future’ is different to previous strategies as it integrates our organisational development vision and our workforce planning activities into 3 strategic outcomes, **which will be delivered over the lifecycle of this strategy.** **Appendix 1** provides details of each area of activity in the framework below.



We remain in a state of “emergency response” to COVID19 and therefore the initial phase of this strategy’s implementation will focus on supporting staff in the “here and now” responding to and recovering from the pandemic.

Our immediate 3 priority areas in 2021/22 are detailed below.

Our immediate focus in 2021/22

Health and wellbeing

The health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce remains the top priority for the council, supporting staff living and working under COVID19 restrictions. The major focus over the last 12 months has been on protecting our staff and communities by ensuring safe working practices were in place to prevent the spread of the virus. Over the next 12 months, we will place a much wider focus on health, wellbeing and attendance levels of staff beyond COVID19 measures, by progressing activities to support and improve the physical and mental health of our workforce.

Immediate areas of activity:

- ❖ **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-22:** we will review the impact of the current strategy against the pandemic response to inform the development of a new strategy in 2022.
- ❖ **Review of Occupational Health and Employee Assistance provision:** we will immediately ensure that the services provided by these contracts support staff in the “**here and now**” exploring new accessible methods of support using our learning through the pandemic.
- ❖ **Organisational wellness:** we will carry out an organisational health check that will assess the wellbeing of our workforce, both frontline and homeworking on mental health, physical health and lifestyle including, nutrition, exercise, quality sleep, self-checks/actions, alcohol consumption, loneliness and isolation supports. We will appoint a new dedicated Wellbeing Officer to build on the health check results and lead an intensified drive of wellbeing activities across all services.
- ❖ **Increased psychological & musculoskeletal support:** we will target known hotspots areas within services and provide more bespoke support where it is needed most, focusing on frontline and homeworkers.
- ❖ **Mental health – promoting self-care:** we will launch new training and awareness across all staff groups, covering topics including: the causes and impact of stress and self-care “in the moment” and longer-term personal resilience techniques. We will introduce a staff Mental Health Forum and promote the work of Mental Health First Aiders to improve opportunities for staff to talk freely and openly about mental health and seek support.
- ❖ **Improving attendance:** we will evaluate our supporting attendance end-to-end processes to support improvements in attendance levels. We will review how we use and analyse data to ensure targeted interventions improve attendance by robust scrutiny. We will review and implement a change in our policy and training, using learning from the past to strengthen expectations, accountability and champions new ways of thinking, where everyone understands the impact their attendance has on the council’s performance to create a positive shift in culture.

Our immediate focus in 2021/22

New ways of working - post pandemic

As COVID19 restrictions are removed, the ways in which we work are unlikely to return to how we worked before the pandemic. New ways of working were implemented urgently in response to the lockdown restrictions and have worked well over a prolonged period and therefore staff expectations on how, when and where they work are likely to have changed. The future ways in which we work will form part of a much wider programme of work for the council, commencing in the summer of 2021, and will consider as an immediate priority supporting the transition as restrictions are eased and moving forward beyond the initial return opportunities to think differently about how the Council will operate longer term, including how we use workplaces, office spaces, equipment, technology and the benefits for our workforce.

Immediate areas of activity:

- ❖ **Digital Strategy:** we will implement the priorities agreed in the council's Digital Strategy to equip staff to work smarter, understanding where to invest in skills and training, reducing digital barriers/exclusion. We will promote digital leaders as role models to lead by example and change the appetite for digital working. We will introduce Digital Champions to provide peer support and build digital confidence across the workforce.
- ❖ **Our future working models:** we will engage with services, staff and Trade Unions to explore the opportunities new ways of working post-pandemic including the benefits hybrid working may bring, learning from our experiences so far. We will consider supporting technology, estates and facilities costs, employee work-life balance, inclusion and employment contracts.
- ❖ **Working culture:** we will support managers and staff with training on embedding a new working culture - how to adapt, work and manage differently in a post pandemic workplace.
- ❖ **Employee lifecycle:** we will review each stage of the employee lifecycle starting with recruitment and induction to exiting the council, ensuring necessary changes in policy and practice are made to accommodate new ways of working.
- ❖ **Employability:** we will work closely with economic development colleagues to promote the council's social and economic priorities by embedding employability programmes into service workforce plans, our policies and processes supporting routes into employment creating a more inclusive workforce.

Our immediate focus in 2021/22

Staff communication and engagement

The council has invested significantly in providing weekly, clear and accessible communications to staff throughout the COVID19 pandemic. Staff have welcomed these updates and we will continue to build on this success and explore new ways of fostering a culture that empowers a well-informed and engaged workforce. Positive relationships and engagement with our Trade Unions has been essential in maintaining a safe and health working environment.

Immediate areas of activity:

- ❖ **Embedding Our Values:** we will continue to acknowledge the commitment and values staff have shown throughout the pandemic and build on this journey of creating a positive and healthy workplace culture. We will train our leaders in role modelling our values and bringing these to life for staff in their services; and train staff on our values, what is expected of all staff and to challenge behaviour that is out of step with our values. We will embed our values across our employee lifecycle with Recruitment and Induction processes being a priority.
- ❖ **Staff communications:** we will build on positively received staff communications by continuing to provide up-to-date information on Covid-19, safety, wellbeing and new working conditions as they are agreed. We will review current approaches and explore new technologies to improve our communications with staff, so that managers are supported with the right tools to communicate council messages differently and effectively to frontline and remote teams.
- ❖ **Staff engagement:** we will review our current approaches to staff engagement and explore opportunities for forums to be established, that improve staff voice, where staff can discuss and feedback their views and ideas on the priorities of this strategy and how they think they should be implemented.
- ❖ **Manager training:** we will provide managers with training and guidance to support and empower them in providing clear, accessible and appropriate communications to their teams, adapting messages to suit different staff groups, whilst being aware of staff with numeracy or literacy support needs.
- ❖ **Organisational health check:** we will carry out a staff health check by summer 2021 to build on last year's survey results, to assess how the workforce are feeling now a year into COVID19 and to inform any further necessary supports required.

Our workforce strategies supporting recovery from COVID19

Delivering the priorities of this strategy alongside other key council strategies and programmes will support recovery from COVID19 and longer-term transformation plans.

New ways of working and transformation

As COVID19 restrictions are removed and we move into a recovery phase, our operating models will be different to how we operated before the pandemic. We will engage staff, Trade Unions and services in considering how we will work, learning from recent experiences and using digital technology to support the delivery of improved services and staff experience at work. Models will not only consider where staff work, but when they work, and a flexible and innovative approach to this will be fostered and promoted.

“**Right for Renfrewshire**” will continue to be implemented, the council’s long-term transformational change programme, which will provide leaner, modernised and sustainable services in response to the changing needs and expectations of communities. Right for Renfrewshire, however, will not impact every part of every service, other transformation programmes in services will also ensure we respond pro-actively to new opportunities that will modernise services. Our staff will be critical in the delivery of sustainable services and we will empower staff and use their existing knowledge in service design.

Workforce planning

As Right for Renfrewshire and the transformation of services continues to progress, a renewed approach to workforce planning will be future focused on the necessary change in the shape and size of the workforce. Managers will be trained in workforce planning skills and tools to ensure it is embedded during service reviews and service planning day-to-day, aligned to financial savings and integrated into service improvement plans.

Our workforce planning outcomes and what we will do over the 5-year lifecycle of this strategy are detailed at **Appendix 2**.

Digital Strategy

The council’s [Digital Strategy](#), is closely aligned with this people strategy, and will build digital confidence across our workforce by transforming the skills, knowledge and capabilities of our staff in using technology effectively.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy

Our [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-22](#) will be reviewed in 2021/22 to transform our approach in protecting and supporting the health and wellbeing of staff – with key learning from the pandemic response and recovery periods. There will be a deeper dive into the reasons for absence and much more focused activity in supporting physical and mental health, to prevent absence and improve attendance levels.

Communications and Engagement Strategy

‘Our People, Our Future’, will align closely with council’s the **Internal Communications and Engagement Strategy** objectives to encourage staff to embrace our values and vision for the workforce by working together within a supportive and positive environment. We will engage with managers and staff on improving communication skills, methods and strengthen employee voice.

Our Values

We are **fair**...We are **helpful**...We are great **collaborators**...We value **learning**.

[Our Values](#) were developed through staff engagement in summer 2019 by asking staff what is important to them. Specific feedback included, improving how we manage and deploy resources; giving more staff empowerment; simplifying processes; improving access to systems and technology; and better communication with staff. This informed our vision and outcomes for our workforce, which are integrated throughout in this strategy. Embedding Our Values day-to-day in decisions and interactions will create a positive and healthy organisational culture.

Measuring our success

We will deliver the priorities of this strategy and measure our success using strong leadership, robust governance, appropriate resources and risk mitigation. Our flexible approach will strengthen resilience by allowing services to adjust focus as necessary and monitor and review progress, addressing any emerging organisational priorities which arise.

Leadership / Governance

- This strategy will be established as a key workstream in the next phase of Right for Renfrewshire.
- **Senior management teams will:**
 - Be ambassadors for this strategy across their service and champion our people vision.
 - Own activities that are integrated into Service Delivery Plans and updates will be provided to CMT and Council Board as part of the agreed reporting cycle.
 - Incorporate the outcomes into their service risk management plans and arrange for regular internal audit/health checks over the lifecycle of this strategy.
 - Ensure adequate resources are allocated to deliver outcome priorities.
 - HR & OD will take a strategic overview progress report to CMT and Council Board.
 - HR & OD will engage regularly with Trade Unions to provide progress updates on implementation.

Resources

- **Services will:**
 - Allocate sufficient resources to deliver their service and corporate priorities under the 3 strategic outcomes of this strategy.
 - Develop a local action plan in line with the priorities – **pages 6-8**.
- **HR & OD will:**
 - Take corporate responsibility for the delivery of this strategy and overall corporate oversight of progress, working with services to provide regular updates to CMT/Council.
 - Reconfigure its current resources to provide specialist advice in developing local plans, solutions and bespoke activities that support corporate and service priorities.
 - Support services to explore opportunities for potential funding streams or shared resources.
 - Engage regularly with Trade Unions to provide progress updates on implementation.

Risk

- Risks associated with the delivery of corporate and service priorities will be detailed in service registers. Risks will also be detailed in the corporate risk register.
- **Senior management teams will ensure:**
 - Risks are clearly understood and reviewed on an annual basis.
 - They fully support and promote risk management within their areas of responsibility.
 - Staff are equipped and supported to manage risk well and those involved in the delivery of this strategy should have basic risk management training.
 - Risks are managed by taking account of budget planning processes and service improvement plans through to risk registers.