

Lancaster City Council People Plan 2026 – 2028

Overview and vision

We know that our people are committed to making a difference for the residents and communities within our district, and we're incredibly proud of what we achieve on a daily basis. We are anchored by our values of Pride, Ownership, Working Together and Ambition, and have a strong sense of belonging as Lancaster City Council.

We would not be as successful a council as we are without our people and their commitment. The whole purpose of this strategy is to support our workforce to thrive. It is therefore a live document that will continuously evolve and must be owned by everyone to ensure its success.

We are aware that change is on the horizon in the near future and we will continue to work together with the passion we all share, delivering our best work, and being ready to shape future council services.

In light of this, our focus over the next two years will be on:

- Supporting people to develop the skills, confidence and opportunities they need to progress and perform well
- Creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, included, valued and supported to be able to work at their best
- Ensuring our work and decisions are driven by evidence and data
- Helping people to feel informed, equipped and supported as the council adapts and changes

We will continue to ensure that Our Values are embedded across each focus area, so that all of our people related policies, development programmes, frameworks and practices clearly reflect and reinforce them.

Progress since the last strategy

Our People Plan 2023-26 was themed into the following outcome focussed categories following extensive consultation with our people:

- We are an employer of choice
- We are one team
- We are serious about learning and development
- We are future focussed
- We lead with courage and compassion

Key achievements have included:

- Introduction of a Recruitment Strategy, including empowering managers to manage their own recruitment through a new Applicant Tracking System
- Induction and onboarding overhauled, including the reintroduction of a refreshed corporate induction
- Introduction of a benefits platform, including staff discount schemes and a car scheme to lease electric and plug-in hybrid cars
- Exit interviews redesigned
- Continued commitment to Real Living Wage
- Wellbeing Strategy, including introduction of an employee assistance programme, counselling, team wellbeing plans, wellbeing passports and Mental Health First Aiders
- Employee Engagement Strategy, including staff survey, manager network, employee voice forum, improved internal communications, annual staff event (Connecting Colleagues)
- Inclusion Strategy to support existing active staff networks
- Introduction of a performance conversation framework, including the Annual Conversation
- Learning and Development Strategy, including protected learning time, elearning review and update, Compliance Training Policy, empowering managers through the creation of service training budgets
- Volunteering Policy introduced
- Enabled manager initiative to create a self service area for managers to access help, guidance and templates for HR issues, including the introduction of an AI 'chatbot'
- Values co-created and launched, along with a supporting behavioural framework
- Investors in People Established Silver award
- HR policy review
- Comprehensive workforce metrics created with supporting reports and analysis for leadership
- Delivery of ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) qualifications at Levels 3 and 5 for managers
- Lancaster People Manager Essentials programme, including manager workshops, manager network, elearning, coaching offer
- Aspiring managers development: District Council Network programme, Tri-Sector Challenge, Lancaster and Morecambe aspiring manager development programme

What has informed the development of this strategy

The only way to develop a strategy that delivers what our people need to perform at their best in delivering our Council Plan is to ask them what they need. This strategy has therefore been informed by the outcomes of the Staff Survey and focus groups that took place in 2025, advice from our work with Investors In People (this also involved engagement with our people), our workforce data, our workforce planning, our staff networks, our People Forum employee voice group, our managers, our Trade Unions and our Leadership Team.

What we know from this work is we have strengths and weaknesses as an organisation. We will aim to build on what we already do well, and improve the areas where people feel they could be better.

Where we are doing well:

- People feeling like they do useful work
- People having autonomy in how they deliver their work
- Team spirit: support from colleagues

Where we need to improve:

- Supporting people to develop their skills and advance their careers
- Pay and benefits
- Creating an environment where people feel that they have a voice

What are we going to do?

Theme 1: Thriving Through Change

- Helping our people to feel informed, equipped and supported as the organisation adapts and changes

What this is about

Change is a constant in the modern world, and it is no different at Lancaster City Council. Whether it is adapting to the changing needs of our communities, introducing new technologies to support our work, or transforming our entire organisation, we aim to enable our people to get to where we want to be with compassion, purpose and clarity.

What we will do

- Ensure we are change ready
- Support our managers to understand how to lead through change
- Provide our people with the understanding of how to be resilient through change
- Support the Local Government Reorganisation preparatory work, including ensuring that all workforce information such as job descriptions and data are up to date
- Workforce planning to fully understand our current workforce, including identifying business critical roles and single points of failure
- Transition planning, including supporting the development of a culture that reflects our values in a future new council
- Working in partnership with colleagues in neighbouring local authorities to support the transition to a new authority
- Ensure legislative changes from the amended Employment Rights Act are embedded

What our people will be saying

- I am well supported by my line manager
- I have everything I need to do my job well
- I am clear of what is expected of me in my role
- I can contribute to improvements in my work area
- I feel that the leadership team set clear vision and direction
- I feel the Council supports my wellbeing

Success indicators

- Staff survey improvements on themes relating to leadership and vision
- Number of change related concerns raised
- Evaluation of development programmes
- Completion of workforce plans
- Positive Investors In People feedback and reassessment

Theme 2: Belonging, Engagement and Wellbeing

- Creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, included, valued and supported to be able to work at their best

What this is about

We aim to create an environment where our people feel involved in, connected to, and supported in their work. Where people feel purposeful about the work they do and they feel they have a voice, alongside having positive work experiences, we deliver our best work for our communities.

What we will do

- Refresh our Wellbeing Strategy
- Relaunch our employee voice forum (formerly Staff Ambassadors, now People Forum)
- Continue to deliver our Employee Engagement Strategy
- Update and relaunch our Wellbeing Passport
- Continue to support our staff networks
- Deliver our Inclusion Strategy

What our people will be saying

- I feel a sense of belonging at the council
- I feel that I have a voice in the organisation
- I feel the Council supports my wellbeing
- I feel that our values guide the way we work
- My manager recognises when I have done a good job

Success indicators

- Staff survey improvements on themes relating to belonging, wellbeing support and recognition
- Reduction in absence related to stress
- Participation in wellbeing initiatives and uptake of support resources
- Investors in People reassessment progress
- Diversity metrics
- Engagement metrics

Theme 3: Growing Our Talent

- Supporting people to develop the skills, confidence and opportunities they need to progress and perform well

What this is about

Our people have identified skills and career development as a key area that needs to be improved. We aim to develop our learning offer and support so that people feel they are being invested in to do their jobs well both now and in the future, particularly in the context of Local Government Reorganisation. This includes supporting our people to understand and develop transferable skills.

What we will do

- Support our people to be ready to perform well in a newly formed authority
- Succession planning
- Career conversations to be introduced
- Further development of Lancaster People Manager Essentials workshops
- Upgrade of our existing learning management system for intelligent skills development
- Team/service development discussions as part of the Annual Conversation cycle to develop skills and knowledge
- Continue to work with local education providers to grow early-career talent pipelines
- Digital skills development

What our people will be saying

- I am well supported by my line manager
- I have everything I need to do my job well
- My job offers good opportunities for skills development
- My job offers good prospects for career advancement

Success indicators

- Investors in People reassessment progress
- Staff survey improvements on themes relating to skills and development
- Evaluation of development programmes
- Learning management system metrics – update of development activities, including apprenticeship courses
- Succession plans in place
- Career Conversation participation rates
- Annual Conversation participation rates

Theme 4: Decisions Driven By Insight

- Using high quality data and evidence to inform strategic people management such as workforce planning and succession planning, improving the experience of working at Lancaster City Council

What this is about

We aim to make a real difference to our people delivering services to our communities, and will determine and prioritise what we do by using real evidence and data, including workforce data, and insights from our people through the use of surveys, staff networks and other forums.

What we will do

- Further development of our data dashboards to inform workforce decisions and risks
- Understand and use the data from our new Applicant Tracking System to enable intelligent recruitment
- Understand and use the data from our new Learning Management System to track compliance and understand learning and development needs
- Strengthen feedback loops so our people can see “you said, we did”
- Improve data and IT literacy for evidence based decision making

What our people will be saying

- I believe that the leadership team set clear vision and direction
- I do useful work for the council
- I have everything I need to do my job well

Success indicators

- Investors in People reassessment progress
- Staff survey improvements across all themes
- Data/IT literacy development programme uptake and evaluation
- Improved key people management metrics, eg time to hire
- Evidence based recommendations visibly shaping HR and organisational decisions