



SOMERSET
County Council



OUR PEOPLE STRATEGY

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Welcome to our People Strategy

Somerset is a great place to live and work, with stunning scenery, iconic landmarks, easy transport links and strong welcoming communities.

It's our people, our staff, who shape and make our organisation. This Strategy has been written to support our colleagues in achieving their own ambitions and those of Somerset County Council. It follows a series of workshops in 2017 with over 700 staff, that looked at what it's like to work here, our Culture and how to create something really great.

This strategy sets out how we will work with one another as leaders in Somerset, how we will work collaboratively with our partners and how we will ensure that we have the right skills, tools, values and behaviours to improve lives across our County.

Linked to the overarching County Vision, three themes are at the heart of our People Strategy. We want our organisation to be Ambitious, Confident and Improving. This Strategy sets out how this will be achieved.

Chris Squire, Director of HR & Organisational Development

Who we are

The 4Cs are at the heart of everything we do here at Somerset County Council. It's who we are; our behaviour actions, our culture.

Our people and our 4Cs, will naturally drive and deliver the very best for our residents and communities.





A few words from our Leaders...

“It’s an exciting time to work here in Somerset. The opportunities are immense – from Europe’s largest building project Hinkley Point C being built here in West Somerset, the largest investment in our schools in generations to taking more steps towards devolution where decision-making powers held by Central Government could pass to the region benefitting local people. Our staff are our driving force, improving Somerset lives and making positive change happen. To deliver our County Vision of a thriving, productive, prosperous, stronger and more resilient Somerset, our staff are working closer than ever with our partners, other organisations and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector. I want to thank each and every one for their motivation, hard work and dedication.”

Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of Somerset County Council

“We are an ambitious Council and we have ambitious, motivated and empowered staff, not afraid to take the lead or challenge the status quo to improve Somerset lives. Our people, our staff, are our most important asset and we value and invest in them. They are what makes us Somerset County Council. They are our voice in the community and they are how others see us, hear us, think of us and they importantly deliver our vision for Somerset. That’s why it’s important we recruit the right people with the right skills for the right jobs here in Somerset and they share the same values that we do – putting the customer first, going that extra mile, collaborating with others (and collaborating well) and showing everyone care and respect.”



Pat Flaherty, Chief Executive of Somerset County Council



1

LEADERSHIP

We support leadership as a strength at all levels and all roles. Improving lives through good leadership in Somerset is central to what we do.

Why?

Great leadership in public services improves and saves lives.



How?

We will:

- Develop community leadership so that we work with our communities to inform the work we do
- Work with staff on the behaviours, values and leadership abilities needed at all levels
- Develop joint-learning and development with our partners
- Identify leadership potential at all levels of the organisation
- Continue the momentum of our culture programme, using workshops, media, culture hacks, appraisal, feedback and surveys

What will it look and feel like?

Our work on leadership will connect colleagues across organisations, so that they feel more confident and ambitious for their communities. They will be able to identify the importance of their own roles in terms of improving lives in Somerset and the contribution that they make to culture at Somerset County Council.

2

COMMUNITIES & PARTNERSHIPS

We work with public, private and voluntary sectors to raise expectations and to improve the lives of our residents.

Why?

We want every member of staff to feel that they have a part to play in improving the lives of our residents. We can secure better outcomes through working together with individuals, communities and partner organisations.



What we will do

- Continue our development with colleagues in partner organisations, linking learning with programmes that bring about better results;
- Use our volunteering policy to increase the amount of time we spend working on community projects;
- Work with our contractors to improve opportunities for young people from all backgrounds in Somerset;
- Create a network of Education Mentors across Somerset, to help develop key skills in Maths and English amongst our children in care and care leavers.

What will this look and feel like?

- Colleagues create networks and connections, working and developing with partner organisations and our communities to improve lives in Somerset.



3

INNOVATION & CHALLENGE

We are comfortable and confident in considering different ways of doing things, working with our residents and partner organisations to develop our communities.

Why?

We need to realise the opportunities presented by technology and different ways of working, encouraging one another to be innovative, creative and adaptable, so that we work effectively and collaboratively across Somerset and the South West.



What we will do

- Continue to work on technology and process, with Technology Champions influencing and guiding how we work
- Work on the behavioural change we need to make the best use of improved digital technology
- Encourage staff to share their ideas to improve services, adopting an approach using 'culture hacks'
- Implement a 'Reverse-Mentoring' scheme, where leaders are mentored by more recent recruits and challenged on why things are done in certain ways
- Celebrate great work (whether it succeeds or not)

What will this look and feel like?

- Colleagues feel excited about technology which improves our work and the potential benefits this brings our residents. Staff are able to challenge how things are done, with senior leaders open to new thinking. We celebrate our work throughout the year, sharing great practice and learning from each other.



4

TALENT

We recruit, develop and retain talented colleagues who want to improve lives in Somerset.

Why?

By having staff with the right skills, values and behaviours, we will have the workforce with the confidence and ambition to improve lives in Somerset.



What will we do?

- Recruit to posts based on values and potential, in addition to technical and professional requirements
- Using our Young People's Strategy, increase opportunities for those aged under 25 in Somerset
- Work with our education providers, to develop degree-level education in Somerset
- Develop recruitment plans, based on staff potential aspiration and organisational need
- Create a system for secondment and 'experience' across Somerset County Council
- Encourage the management of talent across and outside Somerset
- Foster, encourage and recognise the development of skills and talent in the community, to help promote personal independence for everyone
- Work with our communities to reach out to under-represented groups of employees

What will this look and feel like?

We will look to appoint and develop staff based on their potential and values that are focused on improving our communities. Somerset County Council is seen as an innovative organisation where people want to develop their careers.

“ I am lucky to be working in the team I am. I feel we are able to do a very good job within the resources we have. ”

“ My managers listen to me and value me. ”

“ I love working for SCC and find all the managers very supportive. ”

“ I feel SCC help me with my personal wellbeing by being very flexible, I can start and finish at times that suit me and work around my family. ”



“ I think the County Council has embraced providing wellbeing and mindfulness strategies for their employees. Those are one of the benefits of working for SCC. Thank you. ”



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HEALTH & HAPPINESS

Work at Somerset County Council and live well, longer. Helping one another to make good choices that encourage health and happiness.

Why?

By working with our staff on health and wellbeing and by helping one another with our choices, the workplace becomes a happier, healthier environment. This in turn will help to influence and improve the wellbeing of our communities.



What will we do?

- Foster a working environment that promotes the wellbeing of staff
- Develop facilities that encourage staff to adopt different ways of commuting to work and being active during the working day
- Champion safety in the workplace and when travelling, linked to health and safety priorities and our road safety strategy
- Continue working with and developing our Working Well Champions and Mental Health Ambassadors, to champion health and happiness across all our locations
 - Refresh and revitalise colleagues' ability to spend more time working from home or other locations, to help with the balance between work and personal life
 - To develop Somerset County Council as a good place to work: continue to enhance our benefits offer to staff
 - Look to change our occupational health model, to focus on prevention and wellbeing
 - Make sure that our staff policies and guidance can respond to the different 'stages of life', recognising that needs and pressures can differ based on individual need and circumstance

What will this look and feel like?

The working environment is flexible, adaptable and responsive, helping colleagues and teams to work in partnership with one another and across organisations. Individuals feel supported and know where to turn or who to ask when they need help.

“ Thank you for the completed work. It really makes a difference to me and the local community. Job well done! ”

“ Thank you so much for all your input and support in truly transforming a young man's life. ”

“ Thank you very much for being so helpful and very understanding in helping make my life easier to get around my house. There should be more people like yourself. Thanks again. ”

“ Thank you for everything you have done for me. You saved me from so much, I will be forever grateful and will never forget you! Thank you for always being there for me and believing in me when no one else, not even myself, did. ”

“ “I can't thank you enough for fighting my mum's corner, and not letting it go until we had the right outcome.” ”



6

CULTURE

Our values and behaviours look and feel positive, both to colleagues and to the population that we serve, and are based on Customer Focus, Collaboration, Can Do Attitude and Care and Respect (the 4Cs)

Why?

The culture and sub-cultures at Somerset County Council have a direct impact on the services that we both deliver and commission and therefore on outcomes for our residents. Put simply, a healthy organisational culture will result in improved outcomes whilst unhealthy, stale or toxic cultures will not.



We will:

- Focus on the County Vision and what this means for staff
- Continue to work with colleagues to explore what great culture looks like and the impact it has on improving Somerset lives
- Develop the ways we communicate with one another. Use the advantages technology brings to increase our reach and accessibility
- Build a network of 'Culture Clubs' across the authority to act as 'guardians' of the People Strategy and our values
- Enhance positive employment relations and partnership working
- Look at how we get feedback from colleagues and how this is worked on, openly and transparently

What this will look and feel like?

- People 'get' the impact of culture and how it can improve services. Colleagues understand their own role in setting great culture and how to challenge when things aren't right.



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