

WORKFORCE STRATEGY

2025 – 2027



Introduction

To achieve our Corporate Plan 2023-2027, we must create an **inclusive and ambitious** Slough Borough Council where we deliver the best services for the people of Slough. To do this well, we recognise we must invest in the people who deliver those services. Putting it simply - without **great staff** we are unable to deliver **great services**.

We want a workforce that reflects Slough's diversity and attracts local talent and care experienced people, so that our staff understand the lived experience of the communities we serve. More than 50% of our staff currently reside in our borough and by employing local, we recognise we will contribute to a more prosperous and inclusive local community.

When our staff join the council, we ensure they understand the importance of having corporate parental responsibility for the children and young people of Slough who are in the care of the Local Authority. What this means is that for any child who is brought into care within our borough, we have a duty to ensure that child achieves their full potential.

We have used the findings of the People Poll (2024) and LGA equalities Peer review to understand our staff voice. The People Poll survey and the interviews during the above peer review gave staff the opportunity to express, in their own words, those things that concerned them the most and what they felt was missing. Our staff have said they want:

 <p>Leaders who communicate and engage with staff and set the direction of travel for the future</p>	 <p>A safe and inclusive working environment, where staff feel listened to and appreciated for their efforts</p>	 <p>A voice; equal opportunity to be included in decision making</p>
 <p>Greater collaboration between teams and services</p>	 <p>Recognition for contributions being made</p>	 <p>Equity of opportunity; where staff feel they are learning new skills and developing the skills they have, to support progression</p>

Utilising these insights, we are supportive of this strategy which we champion as a tool to guide us to support, challenge and motivate our people to succeed and we will create the conditions for everyone in Slough Borough Council to thrive.

We will keep this as a live document that will continually grow over the next 2 years. We know that the combination of getting the basics right, alongside developing our leaders, creating a healthy and inclusive place to work can achieve great things.

We are excited about the future ahead.

Will Tuckley Managing Director Commissioner

Dexter Smith Leader of the Council

Our Values

The Council has established values that support our service areas to work as 'one Slough Borough Council'. The values were agreed with our staff in 2017 through all staff sessions and then finalised by *Our People Forum*.

They appear on our lanyards as well as our End of Year Review forms, but it is our intention that any action in relation to this workforce strategy ensures they stay alive, are continuously celebrated.



Creating the conditions for High Performance

This Workforce Strategy focuses on four People Priorities which support us to respond to the employee voice and ensure we create the conditions for a high performing culture where our people thrive. Creating the conditions for this, falls to all parts of the organisation and all levels, leaders, managers and staff all have their part to play.

1. Getting the basics right

We are committed to ensuring our staff have access to the information, tools and support they need to ensure they can do their jobs, whether that be data, software or PPE. By being focused in this way we can help remove barriers, design and deliver efficient processes.

2. Building trust and empowering our people

We expect all leaders and line managers to build trust and transparency. This includes adopting a coaching style and setting a clear sense of direction. We are committed to supporting our people even when mistakes are made, by openly acknowledging and learning from them, and always avoiding laying blame. Through our staff networks and communication tools, we will listen to the insight of our people, ensuring every voice has a place.

3. Fostering a healthy and inclusive environment in which to work

We will provide the appropriate resources to support managers to build their teams and creating a sense of belonging. We will provide resources to all staff to support their wellbeing and ensure we champion diversity by building an inclusive working environment.

4. Building a positive and transformative culture

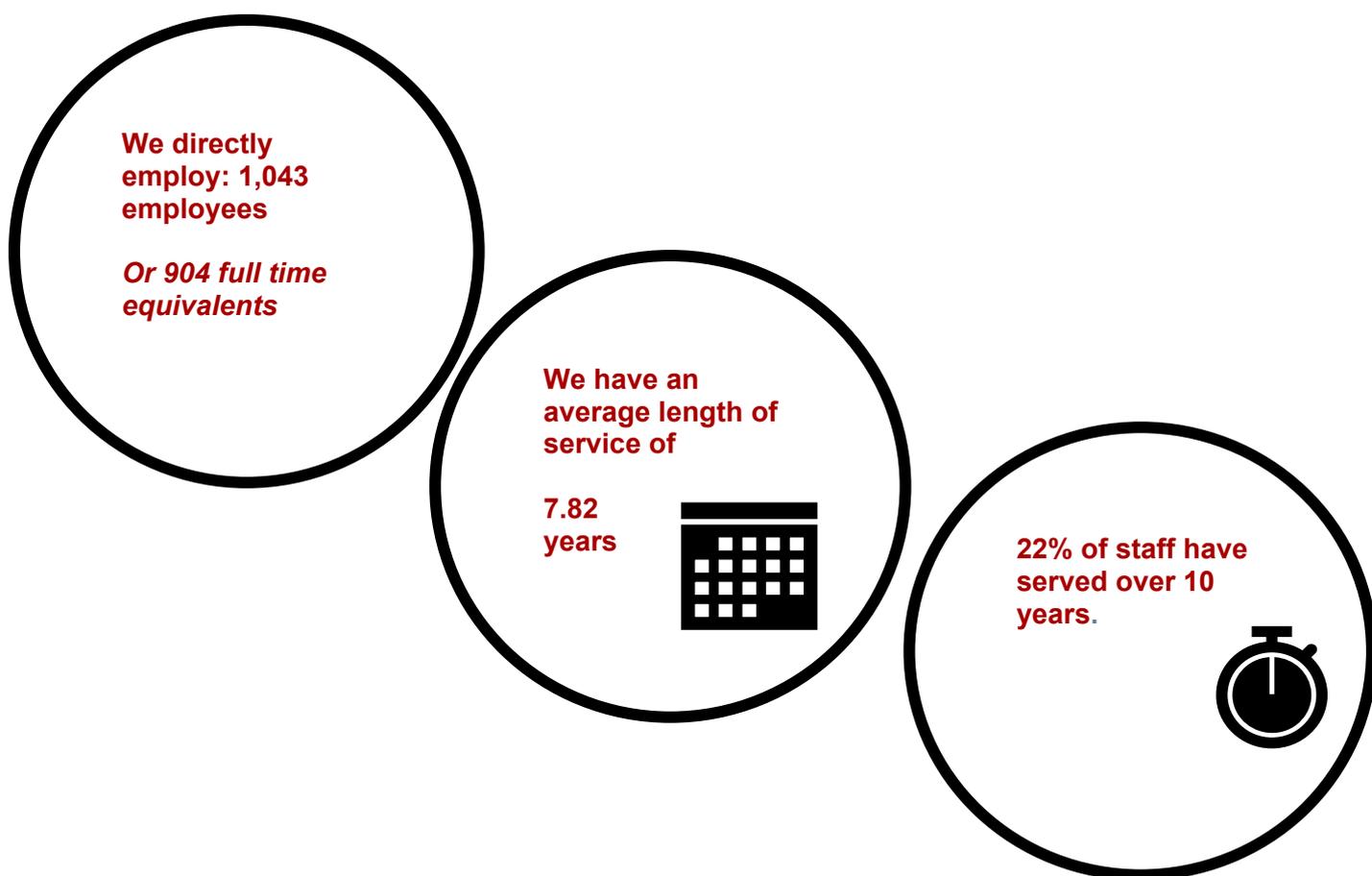
We strive to create a high performing culture that creates the best outcomes for our residents. We will attract, retain and develop our people by creating the conditions for them to thrive.

Our Culture and journey to date

Our employee surveys highlight the importance of acknowledging the pace of change the Council has seen over recent years. Change to

staffing and managerial leadership has impacted the culture of the organisation; as a result, this has previously been described as chaotic. Action the Council has taken considering advice and direction from Commissioners, has brought greater stability. Since 2023, we have seen a re-energised Corporate Leadership Team who are committed to working with our people to create an improved working environment, where our high performance ensures our residents receive the very best of services.

We recognise that the strength of our workforce lies in its diversity. Our current workforce is made up of the following: *(as at, April 2025)*



Other key workforce metrics are listed below:

Demographic Area	Category	% of Workforce
Sex	Female	60.5%
	Male	39.5%
Age	35 – 65 years	79.0%
	Over 65 years	5.0%
Ethnicity	White British	31.2%
	Asian or Asian British	21.7%
	Black or Black British	7.2%
	Mixed or Other Ethnicity	1.8%
	Preferred not to say	7.5%
	Not Declared	30.6%
Disability Status	Declared a Disability	6.0%
	Declared no Disability	8.9%
	Preferred not to say	64.5%
	Not Declared	20.6%

We seek to invest in and celebrate our employees and have already achieved the following:

Developing all our team leaders and line managers



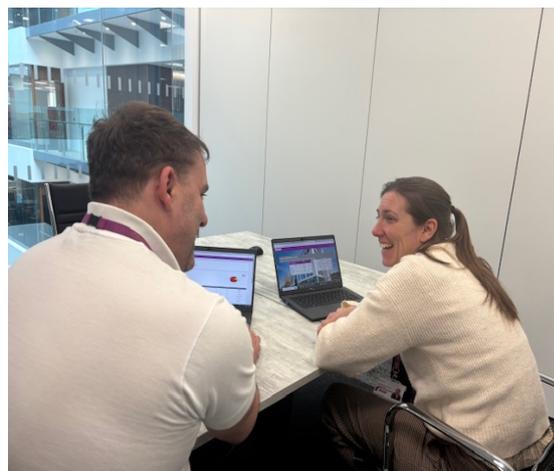
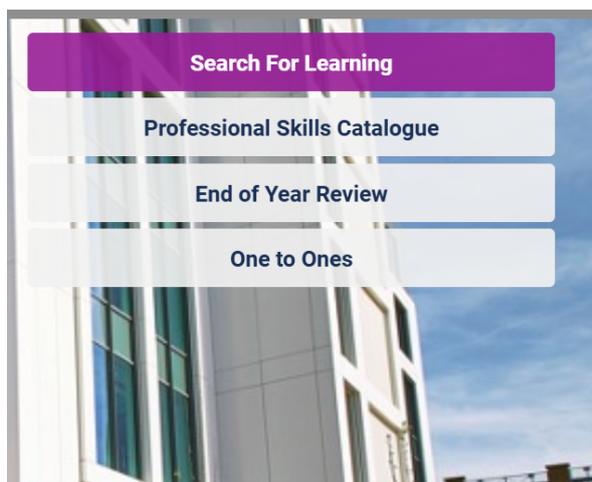
We have worked with our employee networks and *Our People Forum*, to recognise where we needed to invest in our managers. We heard that our managers have often led their teams through various cycles of change. Therefore, we partnered with Bucks Academy to design and develop a bespoke Line Managers Essential course, supporting our managers to understand how they manage change and the impact this has on others. Feedback has described the training as ‘stimulating’, ‘energising’ and ‘informative’.

Creating a space for a meaningful dialogue



Our people survey in 2023 and 2024 recognised that our staff wanted additional opportunities to have meaningful and regular performance meetings (1:1s) with their line managers. There was a desire to move away from paper-based discussions to something more wellbeing,

performance and learning focused. In 2024, we invested in our learning platform; Cornerstone and revised the way we record 1:1s; to include ensuring we open every discussion with a question about wellbeing. We now celebrate how our employee's performance contributes to our corporate plan.



Growing our own



Danielle Samuel is one of our outstanding apprentices, recently completing her Data Technician Level 3 Apprenticeship! Danielle joined us in 2019 and has used the last year to hone her skills. Danielle shared:

“The apprenticeship has helped me to develop my data analytics skills and enabled the development of my teams’ reporting capabilities with the introduction of interactive Power BI dashboards. Though it was challenging at time, it was rewarding when I was able to see the direct link between my learning and value add to the organisation”.

Phil Dobson is another one of our outstanding apprentices. He joined SBC aged 16 in 2004. Completing his level 3 Business and Administration apprenticeship, was instrumental in developing his skills in office management, effective communication, and organisational strategies. The practical training and hands-on experience gained not only boosted his confidence but also prepared him for real-world challenges. Phil said:



“The benefits of this experience have been profound, shaping my career and personal growth. The knowledge and skills I acquired laid a strong foundation for my professional development. Today, I am proud to serve as the Apprenticeship Lead at SBC, where I can mentor and guide new apprentices, helping them navigate their own paths to success”.

Our apprenticeships illustrate the value that undertaking on-the-job learning brings particularly when the relevant support is available, including networking, and knowledge sharing across the organisation.

However, we recognise this is just the beginning and we are committed to continuously evolving our culture to one where every employee feels they can contribute their ideas, feel valued and supported to deliver an efficient, and dynamic, organisation, fit for purpose.

Our Workforce Strategy is underpinned by actions that will deliver our four People Priorities, as set out in the next section. These have a 2-year time span and identify the improvements we expect to see as a result. We will keep this a live strategy, continuously reviewing our actions to ensure we listen and respond to the employee voice and create the conditions for our people to thrive.

Our Actions

Getting the *basics right*



We will focus on ensuring we have access to timely and accurate data to support our Directorates to discuss their people priorities in an evidence-based way.

This includes improving our tools to support managers to implement policies, workforce plan and self-serve.

Action: We'll DELIVER	Outcome: We'll ACHIEVE	Measures of SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanse of data held on Agresso and create bitesize learning for all managers on how to maintain data. Q2-Q4 • Creation of Directorate dashboards cascaded to managers to drive workforce-based conversations. Q1 • Publish staff survey results and action plans for all CLT areas on our intranet. Q1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in manager confidence on maintaining accurate 'position data' for their teams on Agresso. • Utilising better Agresso data, trends identified through Directorate dashboards to support workforce planning and investment in career pathways for our people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position data on Agresso 95% accurate at month end • Managers' report they are better able to self-serve so that they can effectively support joiners and leavers. <i>(via Annual staff survey)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update our HR policies with accompanying tools/guidance to better support managers to confidently lead their teams Q2 • Improved HR partnering, utilising organisational development tools to support organisational change ensuring we consider impact on our people Q2 • Investment in line manager training on how to discuss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in employee relations cases regarding poor line management • Managers' report they are accessing the appropriate tools and expertise to build high performing teams. • Improved engagement and staff motivation within teams when change is being implemented. • Improved understanding of options for staff and managers when considering the need for reasonable adjustments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% reduction in grievances in relation to poor line management • Staff morale improved when reporting on how they perceive organisational change <i>(via Annual staff survey: increasing by 10% for questions in relation to change)</i> • Staff report an improved experience when discussing wellbeing and request for reasonable adjustments <i>(via bi-annual pulse check)</i>

reasonable adjustments throughout the employee life cycle Q2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide managers with the right tools to support effective workforce planning and talent management. Q3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better workforce planning with Directorates, ensuring we understand our talent and better utilise our apprenticeship offer Managers are provided with a better understanding of the skills within their teams. Our people are all offered a career pathway when joining a team which supports their development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of apprenticeships by 50% (25 in March 2024) 95% completion of skills capture element of annual appraisal tool by all staff 95% completion of all staff completing the generic skills pathways, with staff reporting its benefits for enhanced collaboration within their directorates

Empowering Our People



We will focus on ensuring our people have the tools and space to hold meaningful 1:1s and annual appraisals, encouraging regular dialogue about how everyone’s work contributes to the delivery of our council’s recovery.

This includes identifying career pathways for all staff to access and ensuring we build a talent pipeline for the future.

There will be an emphasis on ensuring we offer a comprehensive line manager development offer to ensure our managers can build and lead resilient and high performing teams.

Action: We’ll DELIVER	Outcome: We’ll ACHIEVE	Measures of SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated and digital 1:1 and annual appraisal form; replacing all requirements for paper forms Q1 Introduction of a talent management and 360-degree feedback tool for annual appraisals Q3-Q4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our people being able to access tools to hold frequent and meaningful 1:1s and year end reviews; ensuring there is a stronger focus on corporate contributions, skills capture and development. Year-end appraisals include a discussion about talent leading to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% of staff have an annual appraisal each year 95% of staff have a 1:1 at least once a month with their line manager 95% of staff complete their skills capture Implementation of a minimum of 5 secondments across

	<p>the formation of succession planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through meaningful 121s we will be stronger at identifying possibilities for transferring skills, ideas and solutions across the council through the introduction of secondments. 	<p>the Council each year.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and delivery of a Line Managers Essential programme: supporting managers across the business to identify how they lead themselves and lead others. Q2-Q4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased line manager confidence resulting in less case work and employment tribunals. • Managers' report positive impact from leadership and line managers essential programmes. • Reduced breakdown of organisational silos recognised through cross collaboration projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of all line managers trained by March 2026. • Staff report an 10% positive increase in the questions in relation to their line manager (<i>via Annual staff survey</i>)

Fostering a **healthy and inclusive** environment in which we work



We will focus on collaborating with our people to deliver initiatives designed to increase employee engagement. This includes a renewed focus on supporting active travel to work, diversity and inclusion throughout the employee lifecycle, establishing a 'speak up' culture through the introduction of fair treatment ambassadors and ACAS accredited mediators.

Action: We'll DELIVER	Outcome: We'll ACHIEVE	Measures of SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase employee engagement with our staff by collaborating on key people related initiatives. Q1 • Establish a staff survey page on the intranet: measure and track progress of actions. Q1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recognised and valued as a key stakeholder • Staff report that they understand the survey results and have seen positive action taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% year on year improvement in staff survey results in relation to 'net promoter score' and staff feeling valued.

	<p>because of the staff survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff report transparency and ownership of staff survey actions by the Council Leadership Team 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to celebrate and value staff diversity Q2 • Training for all staff to diversity and inclusion: to include Unconscious bias. Q2-Q3 • Revised approach to how we recruit; launching agreed competencies for all roles. Q2-Q3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in our staff reporting that the culture is becoming inclusive. • We will work towards increased representation at senior level and achieving our Equality objective of having a workforce that reflects the make-up of our community • All staff matching their knowledge with a practical understanding of diversity and inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% completion of diversity declaration on Agresso • 10% increase in diverse representation level at Tiers 1-3. • Better monitoring of diversity statistics throughout our recruitment cycle • 95% of all staff completing a comprehensive diversity and inclusion training offer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish mental health first aider programs and training across the organisation to better support the health of our staff. Q3 • Develop mediatorship offer in the organisation to support staff in resolving disputes at a team level Q3 • Support development of a 'wellbeing day' where staff may have access to wellbeing and mental health support in conjunction with Public Health Q2-Q4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of and engagement in Employee Assistance Platform support tools (Medigold) • Trained volunteer mediators available for all staff to access. • Opportunities for staff to better understand the benefits of wellbeing and mental health care in their working life; to include encourage staff who belong to the local community to access active travel to work options such as cycle to work scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% year on year reduction in staff absences in relation to work related stress and anxiety.

Build a positive and transformative culture



We will ensure our staff feel like they belong from the moment they join the council. This includes a revised onboarding and induction experience which includes an on boarders' survey after each employees first 100 days in post. We will continue to enhance our apprenticeship offer and increase our apprenticeships across the Directorates, alongside partnering our local schools to offer work experience and support for school leavers who are also children formerly in our care.

We are committed to working openly with our staff to

shape a positive organisational culture. Together we will review our staff recognition scheme, enhance our training offer, and introduce initiatives that bring us together as one council, such as celebrating diversity, wellbeing and encouraging community-based volunteering.

Action: We'll DELIVER	Outcome: We'll ACHIEVE	Measures of SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced the onboarding process to allow staff to access key materials ahead of joining. Q2 Offer a buddy system in place for new starters for the first 3 months. Q1 Design and deliver an Onboarding survey, for all new starters to support continuous improvement. Q1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New starters report positive and welcoming onboarding experience. New starters have a plan for their first few days/weeks with meetings arranged as needed and key introductions made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10% increase in staff recommending SBC as an employer of choice (from the annual staff survey) 95% of staff report their onboarding and induction experience to be positive (from the on-boarders survey)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure HR partners work with Directorates to ensure they workforce plan effectively to ensure they recruit a variety of employees into the business Raise awareness of work experience and apprentice success stories. Q2-Q4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of apprentices across the organisation. Increase in successful internal mobility. Increase of graduates joining us via the Local Government Association scheme. Establish a regular work experience offer for our local school leavers including those children formerly in our care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual increase of apprenticeships by 10% each year Minimum of two LGA graduates each year 5 work experience cohorts each year who report the experience was positive Minimum of two care leavers each year

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Mandatory Training offer is relevant and easy to access/complete. Q2-Q4 • Design and deliver career pathways so staff interested in developing their career understand how. Q2-Q3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in mandatory training completion rates. • All Directorates have bespoke training offers for all their staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of staff complete their mandatory training each year • 10% annual increase in staff reporting they have increased learning, and development offers to support them to thrive (<i>via the annual staff survey</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive culture which supports our workforce to value the importance of our SBC behaviours and relationships. Q2-Q4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased staff involvement in specific culture improvement activities, supporting their understanding that culture is everyone's to own • Review and deliver a revamped staff recognition scheme that fits with staff want – increased options for recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% annual increase in staff reporting the council has a clear vision (<i>via the annual staff survey</i>) • 10% annual increase in staff reporting they feel valued and recognised (<i>via the annual staff survey</i>)

Slough Borough Council's HR Team working in partnership with you:

Our offer to you:

We are committed to supporting every member of staff to excel in their role, build their career and achieve their potential. We will support the delivery and implementation of this plan and offer the following:

- Recognising excellence: our HRBPs will work with your service areas to recognise our staff and raise awareness of our unsung heroes.
- Develop and support effective and capable leaders through ensuring managers are held to account on holding 1:1s, reviewing Talent and succession planning, so we grow our own.
- We are active in reporting our HR metrics with a diversity lens to ensure we build a diverse and inclusive council.

Our ask of you

- Make time to complete your mandatory training.
- Complete your generic career pathway.
- Make time to utilise our other learning and development offers.
- Complete your diversity data on Agresso (even if you would like to tick 'prefer not to say')
- Get involved with *Our People Forum* to collaborate with us on co-creating and embedding a high performing culture.

Together, we can ensure, Slough Borough Council is a great place to work for *everyone*