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## SCOTTISH BORDERS STRATEGIC PEOPLE PLAN

Report by Director People, Performance & Change

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### SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

25 April 2024

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#### 1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report updates members on the progress of the strategic people planning process since 2016 report and the seeks Council's approval for the Strategic People Plan Review & Refresh reporting timelines to be aligned with the Operating Model, Council and Finance annual plans.**
- 1.2 The Strategic People Plan Review and Refresh document is a progress report taken from the Strategic People Plan published in 2016 and outlined the future aspirations of the Council. This report reviews what the Council had hoped to achieve "what we said" and what was achieved "what we did".
- 1.3 It is proposed that that 'Strategic People Plan' from April 2024 will now be an annual report that is aligned with the Operating Model, Council and Finance Plans to take account the changing strategic and operational landscape, previous performance and evolving priorities.

#### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that Council approves the Scottish Borders Strategic People Plan Review & Refresh report (Appendix A) and for an annual report to be submitted, in line with the Operating Model, Council and Finance annual plans from April 2024.**

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This report is to provide an update on the status of strategic people planning within the Council and outlines future reporting and outlines the significance of prioritising and investing in effective people planning strategies.
- 3.2 Strategic People Planning is a systematic process of identifying current and future workforce needs to ensure the Council has the right people with the right skills in the right positions at the right time to achieve its objectives.

Strategic People Planning is Needed:

- **Strategic Alignment:** Workforce planning ensures alignment between organisational goals and workforce capabilities, enabling the council to effectively execute its strategic objectives.
  - **Anticipating Skill Gaps:** By forecasting future skill requirements, workforce planning allows for proactive identification of skill gaps, enabling targeted recruitment, training, and development initiatives.
  - **Cost Efficiency:** Strategic workforce planning minimises resource wastage by ensuring the council has the right number of employees with the right skills, reducing recruitment costs, turnover, and unnecessary training expenses.
  - **Risk Mitigation:** Anticipating workforce shortages or surpluses helps mitigate risks associated with talent shortages, succession planning, and organisational disruptions.
  - **Employee Engagement and Retention:** Proactive workforce planning enhances employee satisfaction and retention by providing clear career pathways, development opportunities, and a supportive work environment.
- 3.3 Scottish Borders Council will need to continue to modernise its service delivery by working, managing, and leading collaboratively across organisational boundaries with our communities and partners. To support this collaboration the Council will have to develop effective behaviours, skills, actions, and styles of working through innovation, technology, and leadership to ensure that we have a workforce that can respond effectively and be flexible to meet the demands of new service delivery models as outlined in the Operating Model, and Council and Service Plans.
- 3.4 Strategic People Plan is influenced by a broad range of factors:
- **Rapid Technological Advancements:** Emerging technologies are reshaping job roles and skill requirements faster than ever before, making it challenging to anticipate future workforce needs accurately.
  - **Changing Demographics:** Shifting demographics, including an aging workforce and evolving workforce preferences, necessitate proactive planning to ensure continuity and sustainability.
  - **Competitive Labour Market:** Attracting and retaining top talent amidst a competitive labour market requires strategic workforce planning to offer competitive compensation, benefits, and career development opportunities.

## 4 IMPLICATIONS

### 4.1 Financial

The Strategic People Plan should be understood as an articulation of strategic intent by the Council. Where that intent gives rise to financial implications not already expressly budgeted for, those financial implications will need to be evaluated and planned for, as they arise, through Service, People & Succession Plans and in alignment with the operating model and Council Plan.

### 4.2 Risk and Mitigations

Effective workforce planning is indispensable for the long-term success and sustainability to meet the Council's objectives. By addressing the identified challenges and implementing the recommended strategies, this will ensure that the workforce remains resilient, agile, and equipped to meet the evolving needs and demands of the Scottish Borders communities.

Reviewing the Strategic People Plan annually and developing it into an ongoing process aligned to the Operating Model, and Council, Service and Financial Plans will allow the creation of a proactive Plan which provides not only a clear strategic framework but also enables agility and responsiveness in a rapidly changing context.

The refresh of the Strategic People Plan will be added as an additional internal control to the corporate risk 023 Staff Recruitment and Retention. It should be noted that specific strategies detailed within the Strategic People Plan will be reflected as new mitigation actions, as appropriate, to help keep this corporate risk within tolerable levels.

### 4.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is published contemporaneously with this report.

### 4.4 Sustainable Development Goals/Climate Change/Rural Proofing

The Strategic People Plan will embed values in the Council's decision-making, policy development and delivery which are complementary to the 'values' as outlined in the Council Plan.

Integrating sustainability goals, climate change mitigation, and rural proofing into workforce planning requires a comprehensive approach that considers environmental, social, and economic factors. Here are several strategies to ensure that a workforce plan aligns with these objectives:

#### **Skill Development:**

Collaborate with educational institutions to design curriculum and certification programs tailored to green job sectors and offer training and development programs to equip employees with the necessary skills.

#### **Diversity and Inclusion:**

Promote diversity and inclusion in the workforce, including gender equality and representation of marginalised communities, to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities.

#### **Remote Work and Digital Technology:**

Embrace remote work and digital technology options to reduce carbon emissions associated with commuting and office operations, while also expanding employment 'pool' and opportunities in rural areas by enabling individuals to work from home or satellite offices.

**Climate Resilience Training:**

Provide training and capacity-building programs to enhance employees' understanding of climate change impacts and resilience strategies, particularly in sectors vulnerable to climate-related risk and foster a culture of climate resilience within the workforce.

By incorporating these strategies into workforce planning processes, Scottish Borders Council can effectively contribute to sustainability goals, mitigate climate change impacts, and promote inclusive rural development while building a resilient and adaptable workforce.

**4.7 Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

**4.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration arising from this report.

**5 CONSULTATION**

5.1 The Director of Finance, the Director Corporate Governance, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, and Corporate Communications have been consulted and their comments received incorporated into this report.

**Approved by**

**Clair Hepburn**

**Director People Performance and Change**

**Author(s)**

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**Background Papers:** Scottish Borders Strategic Plan (2016-2021)

**Previous Minute Reference:** Scottish Borders Council December 2015

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print, other language translations and various computer formats.