

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Director of Legal and Governance; Chief Executive
Relevant Executive Member:	Executive Member for Finance and Governance; The Mayor
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	22 May 2024
Title:	Cultural Transformation of the Council
Report for:	Information
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	No
Why:	Report is for information only
Subject to call in?:	Not applicable
Why:	Report is for information only

Proposed decision(s)
That the Executive receives and notes the progress of the Council’s cultural transformation.

Executive summary
The report is to update Executive as to the progress of the Council’s cultural transformation.

1. Purpose

1.1 To outline and recognise the work that the Council has done to progress its cultural transformation.

1.2 To describe the council's strategic approach to partnership working.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Executive receives and notes the progress of the Council's cultural transformation and the Council's approach as a leader of place.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 No decisions recommended.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 The council has a statutory duty to deliver Best Value in all that it does. Effective approaches to culture and partnerships and community engagement are two of the theme's government have identified as contributing towards an authority evidencing its compliance with the Best Value Duty. This report sets out the steps the council has taken and plans to take in relation to those two themes.

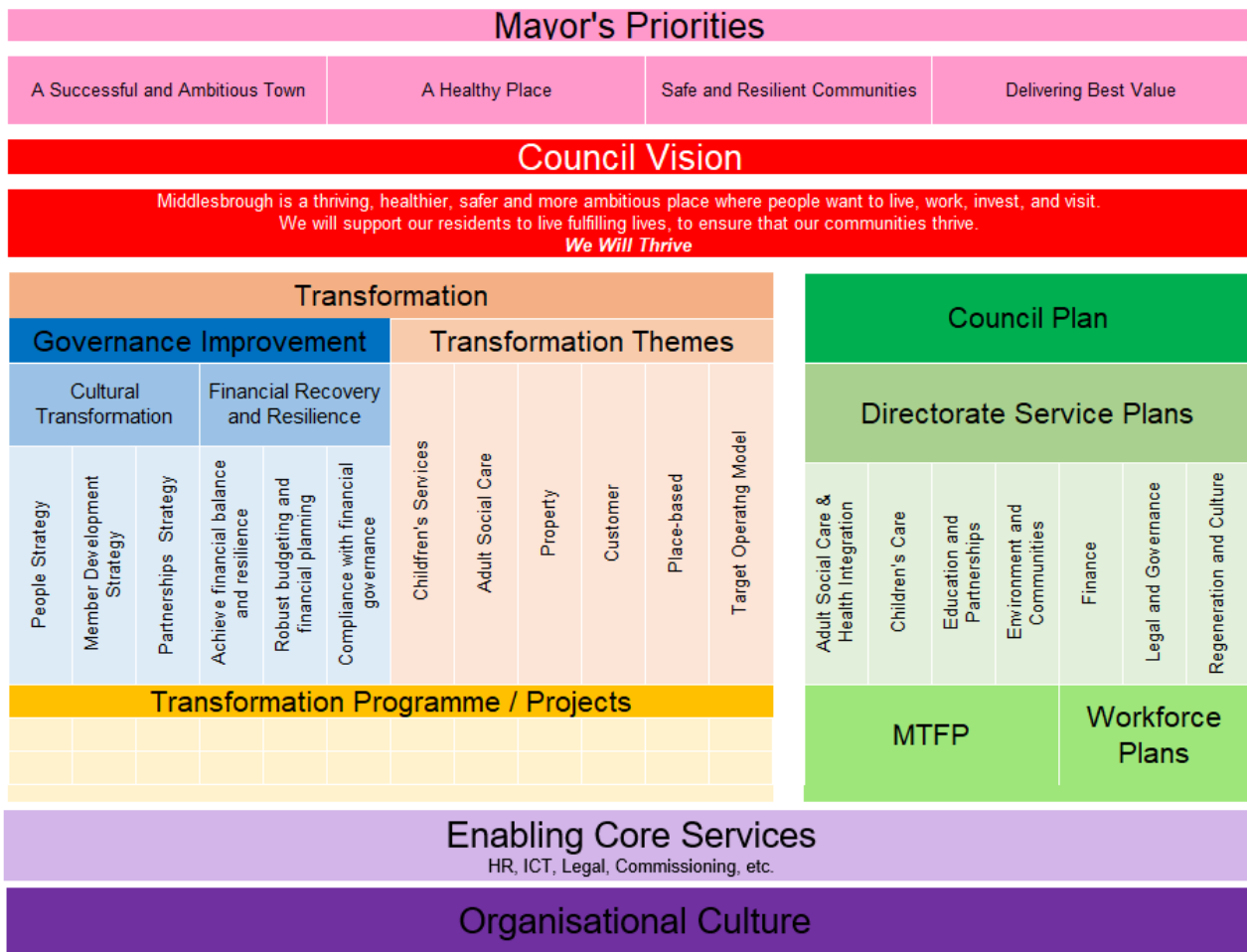


4.2 The culture of Middlesbrough council is determined by its shared values, ethics and beliefs, how decisions are made, as well as how elected members and officers behave, interact and carry out their roles. A strong organisational culture is a characteristic of a well-functioning council.

4.3 That the council is subject to a Best Value Notice, and statutory recommendations imposed by its external auditor, is much publicised. Progress against the action plan to support and describe the council’s improvement journey is regularly reported to the council’s audit committee and to full Council.

4.4 Cultural improvement is a key pillar of the council’s improvement journey and features in the improvement plan and is to be delivered via the People Strategy, the Member Development Strategy and the Partnership Strategy underpinned by the Transformation Programme as detailed in the diagram below.

4.5 A further report on Partnerships will be presented following this report and regular reports on transformation will be presented as part of the transformation journey.



4.6 The vision of the People Strategy is to be an employer of choice for the best people to deliver improved outcomes for the community we serve.

4.7 There are six key themes identified within the People Strategy to achieve our vision:

- Recruitment and Retention
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Performance and Recognition
- Culture and Communication
- Learning and Development
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing

4.8 Prior to the launch of the People Strategy, we have laid foundations to enable successful delivery, creating the right environment, recruiting to key posts and securing partner providers through the procurement process.

4.9 The People Strategy was launched in April 2024, briefing sessions took place with over 300 managers and global communications was sent to all staff.

4.10 The following actions have been implemented so far in relation to the six key themes:

Recruitment & Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services Recruitment events • Recruitment Workshops in all Community Hubs – May/June • Review of new system following Manager feedback
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period Positive Workplace initiative launched • Inclusive Language guide launched • Work Experience programme for underrepresented groups in development – collective Member/Officer initiative
Performance & Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Appraisal scheme rolled out and underway - Deadline 30/06/24 • HR Briefings, we covered – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ how the new People Strategy and staff objectives align to the Council Plan ➢ the refreshed Corporate Development offer and HR support mechanisms ➢ the importance of utilising the Manager and Staff Values Frameworks
Culture & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Briefings, DMT Business Partner briefings, full staff comms circulated • Related resources added to all access points (PM/SP/LMS/Bridge) • New Rich Feedback course successfully piloted and rolled out • Comprehensive Staff Survey launched
Learning & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshed Values based Development programme launched • Senior Leadership Development Programme created • Review of Mandatory learning/Induction programme underway • Insights Discovery & Leadership Effectiveness programme relaunched
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miss Menopause development programme launched • Reviewed and refreshed mandatory Health & Safety training modules • Retrained and relaunched Mental Health First Aiders programme

- 4.11 The People Strategy is appended to this report, for information.
- 4.12 The Member Development Strategy was developed in 2023 to set out and support member development and learning, including the induction of a new administration in May 2023 and the ongoing learning and development of members. At the end of each induction session members were encouraged to complete an evaluation form and the feedback received was that the sessions had been positively received. The Strategy has been developed in collaboration with members of the Constitution and Member Development Committee and was presented to full Council on 29 November 2023.
- 4.13 To support ongoing delivery of the Strategy, a member training course information booklet was created and shared with all members in November 2023, this was used to gather expressions of interest in order to plan future training delivery. In addition to this all members were given the opportunity to have a 1-1 meeting to create a Personal Development Plan if required.
- 4.14 Members now have a dedicated Member Dashboard on our Learning Management System, Middlesbrough Learns. This provides access to a range of information, eLearning courses, and Values based development programmes. Members were also given the opportunity to complete our new Corporate Governance Development Programme alongside officers.
- 4.15 Member development is not a one-off exercise but is an ongoing approach to support our members to carry out their roles effectively. The member training course information booklet will be further shared at six monthly intervals to enable us to capture any emerging issues or changes in responsibilities such as new chairs appointed at the AGM. Following each training course, both internal and external, an evaluation form is shared, and any responses are kept and actioned where appropriate.
- 4.16 Within the Member Development Strategy, we will measure success by achieving the following three targets at the end of the Municipal Year;
- 100% Members complete all mandatory training
 - 60% of Members attend wider skills courses
 - 70% of Member express overall satisfaction with the development programme
- 4.17 The department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities issued a statutory guide for best value authorities on 8th May 2024 and it is clear that the People Strategy and Member Development Strategy align to support what are identified as 'Characteristics of a well-functioning authority'.
- 4.18 As part of the cultural transformation journey the People Strategy our aim is to have a diverse workforce who are proud to work for Middlesbrough council. Our leaders, officers and members will lead by example with everyone demonstrating the right behaviours to foster and support cultural improvement.
- 4.19 Within the People Strategy we will measure monitor and report progress via;

- **Higher rate of candidate attraction** – baselined in April 2024 and measured through our recruitment system.
- **Successful recruitment** – measured through the reduction in roles that must be re-advertised – baselined from 23/24 with information from our recruitment system.
- **Reduction in turnover** – measured against 23/24 data.
- **Reduced sickness absence** – measured against 23/24 data.
- **More diverse workforce** – baselined at April 24.
- **Positive employee engagement rates** – measured through employee survey
- **Staff satisfaction rates** – measured through employee survey.
- **Reduction in standards complaints** – measured against 23/24 complaints.

4.16 We also plan to capture feedback through the quarterly HR clinics and hold regular focus groups to assess ongoing impact with of the strategy in practice.

5 Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

5.1 The report provides an update to Executive; no decision is required and so no alternatives require consideration.

6. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

6.1 *Financial (including procurement and Social Value)*

6.1.1 There are no direct financial implications of this report.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities issued statutory guidance for best value local authorities on 8th May 2024.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 N/A the report is for information only.

6.4 Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion

6.4.1 N/A

6.5 Climate Change / Environmental

6.5.1 N/A.

6.6 Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers

6.6.1 N/A

6.7 Data Protection

6.7.1 N/A

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Implementation of the People Strategy	Nicola Finnegan Head of Human Resources	Ongoing, 1 st Annual Review 31 st March 2025.

Appendices

1	People Strategy
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	Best value standards and intervention draft guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)	8 th May 2024

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