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People Plan

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1. Synopsis

The Shropshire Council People Plan is a comprehensive roadmap for developing a high-performing, inclusive, and sustainable workforce. It is central to achieving the Council's vision for the future, supporting the workforce, and delivering the outcomes set out in the Improvement Plan and forthcoming Corporate Plan as part of the one Shropshire Plan.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 In July 2025 the LGA carried out a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) at the invitation of the Council. The peer challenge identified 10 recommendations and a number of additional opportunities for the council to address and recognise the challenging financial position of the council. The recommendations, which were all accepted, included those which recognised the need to be a Council that improves how we support and enable our workforce to deliver. The Council want every member of our team to feel valued and supported as we move forward together.

2.2 In response to this external feedback and the declaration of the Financial Emergency, the Council has taken immediate action to address the issues raised. This has included an action plan responding to the recommendations from the CPC

(reported to Cabinet on the 15 October 2025) including developing The People Plan and Improvement Plan.

2.3 This paper presents the draft People Plan (appendix 1) for consideration, feedback and approval. The plan is not a detailed delivery plan. It is designed to be a single framework and plan for the Councils workforce improvement activity, setting out the governance and support arrangements that will ensure that the council delivers the people plan, consolidating existing and new activity and actions that will enable strong foundations to enable the organisation to deliver its outcomes.

2.4 This plan recognises the dedication and resilience of our staff, and this plan is shaped with our staff's wellbeing and growth at its heart. The people plan sets out Shropshire Council's ambition to be an employer of choice—where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to excel. It is a five-year, living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated to remain relevant to the Council's evolving needs and external factors, including national agendas for change. The Plan is a key pillar of the Council's wider Improvement Plan and forthcoming Corporate Plan, ensuring that people, culture, and organisational development are at the heart of delivering excellent services to our residents and community.

2.5 The Plan is structured around five interconnected aims, each critical to the Council's transformation and future success. These aims reflect our shared hopes for a workplace where everyone can excel:

- **Culture:** Shaping and embedding a positive, inclusive culture that reflects organisational values, promotes collaboration, diversity, and innovation, and empowers staff to make a difference.
- **Leadership & Talent:** Developing leadership at all levels, ensuring the right skills, behaviours, and mindset to drive improvement and support staff.
- **Capability & Capacity:** Identifying and addressing current and future workforce needs through targeted recruitment, retention, and development strategies.
- **Performance:** Implementing a transparent performance management framework that aligns individual and team objectives with organisational goals.
- **Systems & Establishment:** Streamlining systems and processes to support effective, efficient service delivery and organisational sustainability.

2.6 The Plan outlines a series of programmes and actions, including:

- Disseminating and embedding the People Plan and Shropshire Values across the organisation, ensuring that all staff and Members adhere to these principles. These values will be fully incorporated into our competency and behaviour framework and practices, with measurable outcomes assessed against them.
- Developing a comprehensive communications and engagement plan, including regular staff engagement, Pulse survey's, CE Update's and monthly Senior

leadership Forums. Engagement and coproduction are at the heart of making the Council of the future achieve its ambitions.

- We look forward to celebrating staff and community achievements and milestones, recognising the difference staff make every day.
- Update and deliver an organisational wide Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB) Plan.
- Conducting workforce skills audits and launching targeted training, especially in digital and data skills.
- The wellbeing of our staff is a priority, and we are committed to listening and responding to what matters most to staff.
- Introducing a new performance management framework and council-wide performance dashboard, including appraisal/good conversations monitoring.
- Regularly measuring progress through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as staff satisfaction, retention, diversity, engagement, and training uptake.

2.7 The People Plan has been developed with a clear eye on the future council. The Council has previously considered how it needs to adopt new ways of working to deliver its aims while being a financially sustainable organisation. The plan has been coproduced with Senior Leadership Forum, Staff including post pulse survey staff engagement sessions and regular development conversations with Leadership Board and discussions with cabinet. The Plan builds on and has been directly developed in response to surveys, events and feedback from external reports and recommendations (page 6 provides more detail). The Plan places strong emphasis on culture change—building trust, encouraging innovation, and motivating staff to do their best. We want every member of our team to feel valued and supported as we move forward together. It commits to open communication, regular feedback, celebrating achievements, and supporting staff wellbeing and career development. The Council will foster an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to contribute to organisational values and goals.

2.8 Delivery of the Plan will be overseen by a dedicated People Change Board, reporting to the Leadership Board and Cabinet, with robust governance, risk management, and regular progress reporting. The Plan is designed to be collaborative, with ongoing engagement and feedback from staff at all levels.

2.9 The People Plan is fully aligned with the Council's Improvement Plan, also being presented at Cabinet (03-12-2025) for consideration. Together, these documents provide a clear direction for the Council's modernisation, improvement, financial sustainability, and delivery of better outcomes for Shropshire's residents. The People Plan ensures that the workforce is equipped, motivated, and supported to deliver on these ambitions.

2.10 The Shropshire Council People Plan is a comprehensive roadmap for developing a high-performing, inclusive, and sustainable workforce. It is central to achieving the

Council's vision for the future, supporting staff to do their very best, and delivering the outcomes set out in the Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Review, comment on, and recommend to full Council the approval of the draft People Plan (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 Agree the governance arrangements, the aims and values, set out in the Plan.
- 3.3 Agree the capacity and resources necessary to support the delivery of organisational change and development, as outlined in this plan, are aligned with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to ensure effective and sustainable implementation

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

We understand that change can be unsettling, and we will support our staff through every step.

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Response</i>
Capacity and pace of delivery - Failure to deliver the improvement plan in a timely and effective manner due to capacity constraints	☐ A comprehensive a robust view of the resourcing requirements to deliver the plan, with reprioritisation and allocation taking place. ☐ Clear and consistent leadership setting out the direction, pace, outcomes and expectations of the change required. ☐ Governance and delivery arrangements that remove siloed working ☐ Accountability and responsibility clearly articulated and demonstrated, including through progress and impact reporting
Resourcing the plan - Inability to reallocate and invest in functions to support the delivery of the plan will lead to difficulties in delivering the People Plan	The delivery approach for the People Plan will set out the strategic framework which workforce activity will be delivered within, bringing together the Improvement Plan and the Sustainability Strategy, with the MTFS. A new Corporate Plan is being developed, and this will take the priorities of the council, alongside the People Plan, improvement plan and the financial strategy.

	Specifying and negotiating with MHCLG the amount and use of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to deliver financial stability through the Improvement Plan, supported by the People Plan and financial sustainability in the medium to longer term
Understanding and perception of change - Inability to maintain stakeholder confidence leading to reduced support for the people plan	Clear and timely internal and external communications and engagement that describes the process the Council is going through with open and honest descriptions of current progress while setting out the rationale for change and where the council is aiming to be in the future.
Managing interdependencies across the plan - Failure to manage interdependencies across the people plan leading to disruption, duplication or failure in delivering the people plan.	☐ The need for direct communications between Senior Accountable Officer, SAOs responsible for the programmes of action has been identified early. ☐ Interdependencies between the programmes have been identified and shared within the action plans, for example performance monitoring and training cut across delivery of several priorities and plans. ☐ Changes in the performance or scope of change programmes will be communicated via the proposed governance structure. ☐ Clear leadership will set out the aims and priorities of the change required. ☐ Strengthened Organisational Development Functions and Programme Management Office (PMO)

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands and a financial emergency was declared by Cabinet on 10 September 2025. The overall financial position of the Council is set out in the monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. While we must make difficult decisions, we remain committed to open communication and supporting our staff through these changes. Significant management action has been instigated at all levels of the Council reducing spend to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports to Members provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers and/or Portfolio Holders review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. All non-essential spend will be stopped and all essential spend challenged. These actions may involve (this is not exhaustive):

- scaling down initiatives,
- changing the scope of activities,
- delaying implementation of agreed plans, or
- extending delivery timescales.

5.2. The initial costs associated with the development of the People Change Board and the creation of a People Plan have been met internally.

5.3. The calculation and confirmation of the resources required to implement the People Plan and what is required to realise financial sustainability into the future is taking place. Delivering the plan will require the council to reprioritise resources to achieve the necessary change and include identifying where investment will be needed. This will need to be reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 Whilst this report and the Plan do not present options and recommendations that directly impact on climate change, the decisions that need to be taken and the actions that will need to take place to deliver financial sustainability and the priorities and outcomes of the council are likely to have impacts.

Opportunities to decarbonise the provision of services and increase energy efficiency of council assets may require some capital investment but will realise financial benefits e.g. through reducing energy usage, or through the generation of energy on council assets that either bring costs down or can generate income.

Climate change appraisals will need to be undertaken as appropriate for each project and approach that is developed to ensure that opportunities are identified and pursued, and that any 'invest to save' opportunities are investigated and fully evidenced to ensure that these can be taken into account in decision making.

7. Background

7.1. The People Plan sets out how Shropshire Council develop a high-performing, inclusive, and sustainable workforce. Delivering the people plan will provide assurance to residents, Members, staff, and partners that the council is improving how it operates and performs.

7.2 The People Plan is not a detailed delivery plan. It acts as an overarching framework for the council's workforce improvement activity, which is aligned to five aims. The aims and initial priority programmes of action in the plan sit beneath these five aims and provide the basis of our plan for the next 5 years but also summarised activity and priority programmes of action within the next 12 months aligned to the improvement plan. Although the aims and programmes are set out in a table (see below), there is no hierarchy or sequencing behind where they are located, as they should be seen as interdependent elements of the Plan. They provide a basis for governance and performance reporting. The programmes vary in size, scale and complexity, and not all have been fully developed.

Shropshire Council People Plan: Aims and Programmes

Aim	Related Priority Programmes/Activities
Culture	1. One purpose, underpinned by our values 2. Engagement and communication 3. Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion 4. Valuing and supporting new and existing staff
Leadership & Talent	5. Leadership, visibility, communications and competency framework 6. Leadership and management programme
Capability & Capacity	7. Coaching and mentoring 8. Strategic workforce planning 9. Workforce skills audit
Performance	10. Performance management 11. Apprenticeship strategy
Systems & Establishment	12. Transformation aligned to our aims and priorities 13. Data Insights

7.3 The aims in the plan will provide this timeframe and should form the basis of the council's continuous improvement. The approaches to how they are delivered will need to adjust to changing requirements and the environment the council is operating in.

7.4 In addition to responding to different sources of external feedback including from the CPC, the improvement plan consolidates the different people focused activity of the council into a single plan.

7.5 The following table shares the overall structure of the people plan and provides brief descriptions of what each section covers.

Section	Purpose
Foreword	Foreword by the Interim Chief Executive Developing an effective people plan is one of the most important things to do for the success and growth of our Council, alongside financial stability; the two go hand in hand we need both to make the Council Sustainable in the future
1. Introduction	To give an overview of the purpose and development of the plan and the structure of the plan. It also describes the organisational values and behaviours which drive our culture
2. Our Future Council	To describe how we have developed the plan and how it has aligned to our future Council and one organisational plan

3. Our People Plan Aims and Priorities	This section details our five key aims for the plan and the key priority activity to support these
4. Making sure we deliver	This gives assurance around the governance for delivery recognising this is a live document
Appendix 1: Improvement activity – priority programme summaries	Provides a summary of the activity and actions for each of the improvement aims and priorities including key milestones and the accountable and responsible officers
Appendix 2: Risks	Provides a list of the key risks to delivery of the Plan aligned to the improvement plan
Appendix 3: Key Performance Indicators	Lists the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and measures we will use to demonstrate progress towards the overall aims, also aligned to the improvement plan

7.6 The plan sets out our values for the organisation Our values enable us to work as One Organisation, One Plan and One Place. Underpinning our plan is our commitment to the organisations core values which drive our culture. We'll bring these values into everything we do. This means building strong by good relationships, working together, with respect, creating opportunities, seeking understanding and developing a Can-Do Culture with high standards.

7.7 Changing our culture will take time and everyone's effort. It's not just one goal—it's about all our plan working together to enable Shropshire to flourish. The following image shows our values for our workforce – to be Proud and the behaviours that support these values.

Shropshire Values: PROUD

Our Values: What guides our actions, behaviours and decisions



7.8 Enabling the delivery of the People Plan is a key consideration for the council. This will require some current areas of work to be reduced or paused whilst others are accelerated and introduced. This will mean that resources, both financial and employee, will need to be reprioritised and refocused, and that agreement from Government for the council to access funding via Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) will be required to bridge any current gaps and help close future funding gaps related to the Council being able to deliver the change at pace that needed to become financially sustainable organisation able to deliver its responsibilities, priorities and outcomes for residents and staff.

8. Conclusions

8.1. The People Plan provides the overarching and coherent framework of the council's workforce improvement work for the next five years, highlighting key actions for year one.

8.2. This plan sets out Shropshire Council's ambition to be an employer of choice—where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to excel. It is a five-year, living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated to remain relevant to the Council's evolving needs. The Plan is a key pillar of the Council's wider Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan, ensuring that people, culture, and organisational development are at the heart of delivering excellent services to our residents and community

Appendices [Please list the titles of Appendices]

Appendix 1: The People Plan

