

Shaping Our Future

Introduction

This paper is intended to support discussion on the progress and future of the Shaping our Future initiative. Initially launched in 2020, Shaping our Future is the term used to describe the North Herts Council approach to Organisational Development (OD) and although aspects of OD were already in place a more co-ordinated approach was suggested as part of our peer review report in 2020.

What is Shaping Our Future?

Like all other Authorities, North Herts Council faces significant challenges and opportunities, which require it to change and adapt in order to continue to achieve the Council's priorities.

We are seeking to develop an organisation which demonstrates:

- A high quality, diverse, inclusive and resilient workforce, meeting the needs of our community;
- A healthy, creative and productive organisation;
- A vibrant culture that embodies our values and behaviours.

These are effectively the aims of Shaping our Future.

Shaping Our Future is not a totally new initiative, the Council is already doing a wide range of things, both structured and more organic, which contribute towards the development of our organisation. This includes (but is not limited to):

- staff and leadership development
- work on equality, diversity and inclusion
- moving towards a more commercial culture
- digital transformation

A steering group that includes both Officers and Members is in place. Its overall role is to create a forum that generates ideas, provides feedback and supports and scrutinises the Shaping our Future action plan. The programme is led by Ian Couper (Service Director: Resources) supported by the Human Resources Team.

The steering group is also developing alternative ways of getting ideas and feedback. This includes using the Staff Consultation Forum and the Inclusion Group.

The Importance of Organisational Values

Shaping our Future is underpinned by the organisations values which should be at the heart of everything we do and support the change we are seeking to achieve.

We originally had six values with six matching behaviours to explain what each meant in practice. The steering group concluded that this was an over complicated way of communicating the values. As a result, the values have been distilled down to 5 single words, which can be expanded with more detail as required.

Our Values are:

- Listening
- Together
- Learning
- Adaptable
- Inclusive

In full:

- We listen to and consider the views of each other, our partners and our customers
- We work together and support each other to deliver the best we can
- We learn from others and are open to change
- We are adaptable in finding solutions for each other, our partners and our customers
- We are inclusive and value diversity

The Values will be a reference point for many things we do such as recruitment, training, performance management and leadership. These will once again be displayed prominently around the District Council Offices, the Intranet and the Councils webpage (where relevant, e.g. recruitment pages).

The Importance of the Action Plan

Shaping our Future is an umbrella concept, what is important are the actions we take to move towards the aims. To this end an action plan has been produced which forms the basis of review and discussions at the steering group.

The action plan is an evolving document. Several of the actions currently sit with Learning and Employee Engagement, as well as HR more broadly. It is the intention that over the coming months the plan is expanded to include other actions that contribute to Shaping our Future.

Future considerations and areas for Discussion

- Communicating both Shaping our Future and our Values in an accessible way
- Broadening the action plan to include a wider range of relevant actions
- Encouraging a more diverse range of views about the future of the organisation