

# Relighting Our Council



**Out of darkness, cometh light...**our city motto has never been more relevant.  
We've been hit-hard by the pandemic, but we will reset, recover and relight.

The pandemic has hit our city hard, and the council working alongside its partners developed a recovery plan after extensive engagement to 'Relight Our City', setting out the overarching priorities for recovery.

However our learning from delivering services during the pandemic and recovery activity has also meant we need to review how we operate as a council. In order to deliver our ambitions for the city, the council needs to ensure it has a workforce enabled to deliver for the future, maximising the use of our assets, digital and other technologies.



This strategy has been developed through regular, continued engagement with key stakeholders, to consider how we 'relight our council' including:

- **Relighting our city engagement** – over 2500 people
- **2 life in lock down surveys** – 1270 (May 2020) and 763 (November 2020) respondents
- **Equalities forums** – ongoing conversation with our 4 staff equality forums
- **Operational Managers Network workshops** – over 120 participants
- **Health and wellbeing workshops** – over 200 participants and 50 questionnaires
- **Our Council Scrutiny Panel** – November 2020 and October 2021
- **Management survey** – April – May 2021
- **Leadership survey** – September 2021
- **Feedback from our city partners**
- **Ongoing trade union engagement**

## What is driving our approach



“ We are first and foremost a public service organisation.

Everything we do will be based on delivering the very best possible services for our city.

”

## Benefits

Through developing new models of working, we will improve productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of our council, to ensure value for money in how we deliver services in our city.

Effective use of digital technologies supports modern, agile ways of working that will enable us to design and deliver services that best meet the needs of our residents, businesses and communities.

Working in a more progressive, agile and flexible way will also support the delivery of our climate change commitment, reducing our carbon footprint from work related travel, saving time and money.

The new ways of working can also improve staff health and wellbeing, supporting an improved work-life balance and the recruitment and retention of employees with the skills and experience required to deliver high quality services for our city.

## Principles

Throughout 2021, we co-produced the principles of how we will 'Relight Our Council' with employees:

- As a public services organisation, everything we do is - and will continue to be - focused on delivering Relighting Our City, improving outcomes and providing high quality services for the City of Wolverhampton.
- As we have throughout the pandemic, we will continue to be led by public health guidance with the health, safety and wellbeing of our city and workforce the priority.
- Evolution not revolution – this is about an ongoing approach of responding and adapting how we operate as a council, to take forward the things we have learnt in the pandemic, and will continue to learn and respond.
- Our approach is focussed on maintaining flexibility and agility, trust and accountability, positivity and productivity to best serve our city.

## How we will work...

### We will...

Continue to develop our culture as a council

Work differently going forward

Be collaborative and empower our workforce have trust and accountability, and be focussed on outcomes

Continue our focus on health and wellbeing as an ongoing core value and corporate priority

Reconsider all council job types and roles against 3 categories: those that work in a fixed location, those that work in the field, and those that are flexible in where they can physically work

Not return to pre-Covid full time office working for 'flexible' roles – our assumption is that the majority of their work will not be physically in the office

Continue to invest in digital technology and address digital inclusion

Review what building we use and how we use them, with the Civic Centre our organisational headquarters

Change our physical office spaces – having flexible team locations and improved spaces for collaboration, that meet the needs of all our workforce

Continue to develop our carbon reduction plans in the round

Continue to learn, adapt and co-produce on our approach, be thoughtful in what we do and how we do it

### In order to...

Take our learning from the pandemic forward, responding to what our employees have told us, and retain productivity and positivity

Bring people, processes, connectivity and technology, time and place together to find the most appropriate and effective ways of working to carry out a particular task

Have a loyal, motivated and productive workforce that delivers for our city

Have a happy and healthy workforce that delivers for our city

Ensure our approach and values are inclusive, appreciating that there are different types of roles in our organisation and one size doesn't fit all

Trust our managers to make decisions to ensure outcomes are delivered and staff are supported

Continue to transform how we work and maximise efficiencies and improve outcomes for our city

Have the right asset portfolio to deliver our new operating model, saving money and improving efficiency

Ensure that the offices and accommodation needs of all roles and the tasks and functions that they undertake are met

Meet our carbon reduction commitment, factoring in how we will be working differently

Best meet the needs of local people and our workforce

## Work Styles

The City of Wolverhampton Council has a wide range of roles and responsibilities and delivers services through a variety of operations and different job roles.

To support the development of our new working approach, we have assigned all job roles to one of three 'work styles':



### Fixed

Signifies role is based at a fixed location.



### Flexible

Signifies role is flexible on location throughout a working week, based on business need.



### Field

Signifies role is predominantly based out in the community and has a minimum requirement for 'touch down' space.

The scope for flexible working both between and within these categories is dependent upon the role, the requirements for the service and team to best meet outcomes for local people, and the circumstances and requirements of staff. We know that 'one size doesn't fit all'; and will empower managers to determine how best to meet business need. Every employee will have a 'wellbeing conversation' to discuss with their manager what this means for them and their job role, including any reasonable adjustments that are required.

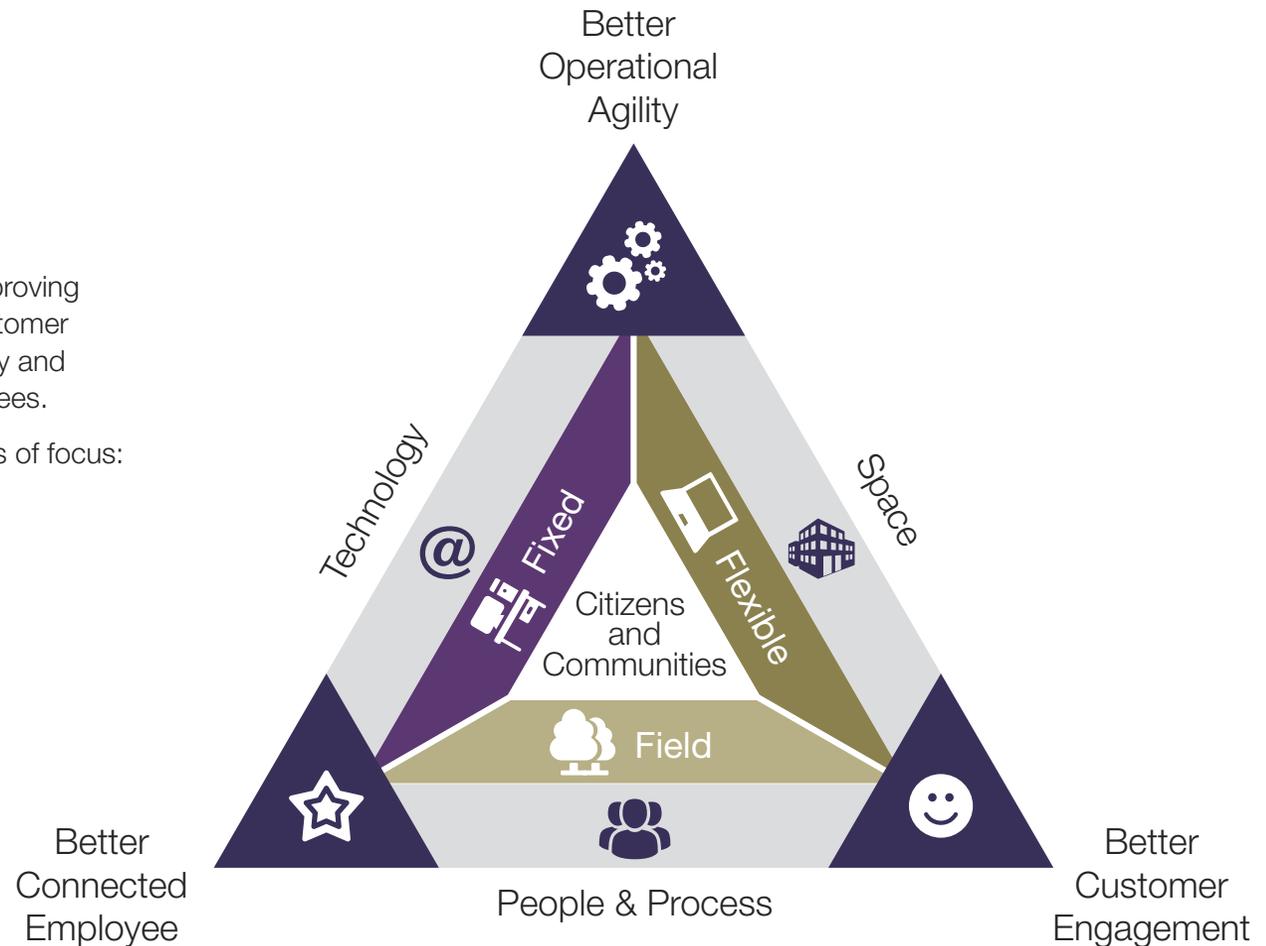
We will continue to use our framework of workstyles to develop our new approach to work, ensuring ongoing engagement and co-production with all employees and other key stakeholders.

## Relighting Our Council Model

Our new working model focusses on improving outcomes for our city through better customer engagement, improving operational agility and improving the connectivity of our employees.

To deliver this, the following are key areas of focus:

- People and change
- Workspaces and assets
- Digital and technology
- Climate change
- Equalities, fairness and inclusion



## People and Culture



Our passionate and hardworking workforce is our greatest asset, and our new approach to the way we work will ensure that people have the flexibility and agility in order to be productive, healthy and ultimately deliver the best outcomes for our city.

We want to retain and attract the best talent, support all of our workforce to develop and grow and develop our organisational culture to one that is inclusive, positive and collaborative.

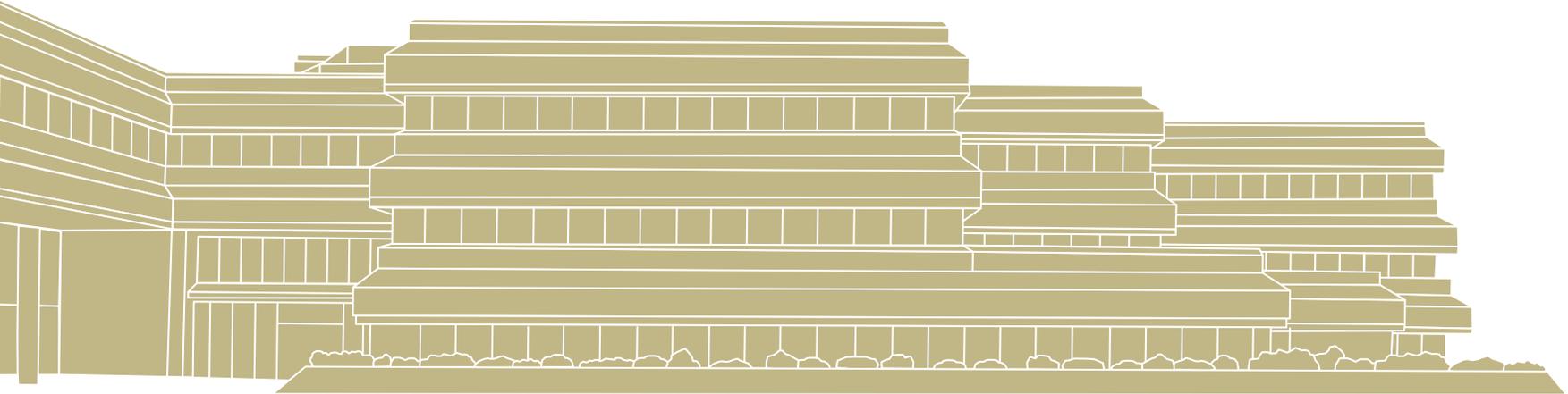
This will be driven through our 'Our People' strategy, co-produced with our employees and with ongoing engagement with Trade Unions. Work has included the development of our whole organisation health and wellbeing pledges, a new approach to leadership and management and equality, diversity and inclusion action plans.

# Workspaces

Our workspaces and building assets will continue to be reviewed and redesigned in line with our future requirements.

Our workspaces will be safe, inclusive and accessible and ensure that all workstyles have the space they need to deliver the best outcomes for local people. Modern office spaces will require flexibility to provide traditional desk spaces alongside quiet, confidential and collaborative spaces.

Changes to buildings will be rolled out in a phased programme across the assets estate, based on feedback from services and driven through the 'Our Assets' programme. Work has started at Civic Centre to trial new ways of working using our spaces, moving away from designated desks for every team, focussed on the activity and outcome required. This has included the development of a new resource booking system for staff to access individual desks, team desks and collaboration spaces.



## Digital and technology

Technology has been essential to the delivery of services in new and different ways during the pandemic, and we want to build on this learning to maximise how we use digital and other technologies to deliver better outcomes.

This involves ensuring all staff have the right kit, tools, systems and policies to work in more agile ways, and ensuring there is support for face to face activity as required. This includes the provision of hybrid meeting kit in offices, and ongoing digital transformation of services to improve efficiency and effectiveness whilst maintaining information security and safety. A new Digital Wolves strategy is in development and will further drive forward the approach.



## Climate change



The council has made a commitment to be net carbon zero as a council by 2028, which will require bold decisions and significant change to achieve this important pledge for future generations.

We know that from our 'life in lockdown' surveys with employees, 26 tonnes of carbon a week were saved from staff not commuting into work, and there is an opportunity to realise ongoing reductions in our carbon emissions through our new approach to the way we work.

As part of relighting our council, a new sustainable travel policy for staff is in development to agree a new sustainable travel hierarchy and review our procedures for mileage claims and parking. Travel is only one aspect of how we can reduce our carbon emissions as a council – and the climate change working group are developing approaches to deliver our climate change commitment including staff toolkits to support use of green energy.

## Equalities, Fairness and Inclusion

One of the core values of our organisation is that we are fair and inclusive. Ongoing engagement with our four staff equalities forums has been critical in developing our approach, and the Age and Disability Forum have been instrumental in developing and testing the resource booking system to ensure that it meets the needs of all employees and any reasonable adjustments that are required. Our approach to relighting our council will continue to ensure that equalities, fairness and inclusion are central to how we develop our organisational operating model.



## Implementation and Review



This document sets out our high level approach to ‘Relighting Our Council’ and developing a new organisation operating model that is flexible and agile.

As part of the Our People portal, there are specific ‘Relighting Our Council’ resources, providing staff with additional guidance, tools, training and FAQs.

A key part of our approach is ongoing learning and review – if things do not work, we will change them. Ongoing engagement with staff through workshops, management and leadership teams and our equalities groups will continue to inform the development of our approach.

In order to ensure that benefits are realised, there will be an ongoing review of performance as part of the council’s performance management framework. Every Head of Service will continue to monitor operational performance for their services to ensure that first and foremost, we are meeting the needs of our city. Our approach to performance management will also include quarterly reports to Cabinet, bringing together performance, budget and risk. In addition to service performance metrics, there will be ongoing performance management of key indicators such as sickness absence, recruitment/retention and customer services.

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL