

FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND IMPROVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 MAY 2022

Report of the Director of Organisation Development and Policy

Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This is a discussion paper to update the Improvement and Scrutiny Resources Committee on the implementation of the existing Wellbeing Strategy and associated action plan and seek any comment on the draft revision of the strategy at Appendix 3 as part of the initial consultation process.

2. Information and Analysis

- 2.1 A well thought out, structured and comprehensive wellbeing strategy benefits an organisation. It helps to:

- attract new people to the organisation
- engage, motivate and retain employees
- create a healthier, more inclusive culture
- lower sickness absence
- improve performance and development
- improve productivity and success

“Creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation”

(Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2016)

Our employees spend a considerable amount of time at work so promoting and investing in employee wellbeing will have positive outcomes both for our employees and the Council. Studies have shown there is a relationship between the psychological wellbeing of employees and positive organisational outcomes, such as reduced levels of sickness absence as well as enhanced productivity and performance.

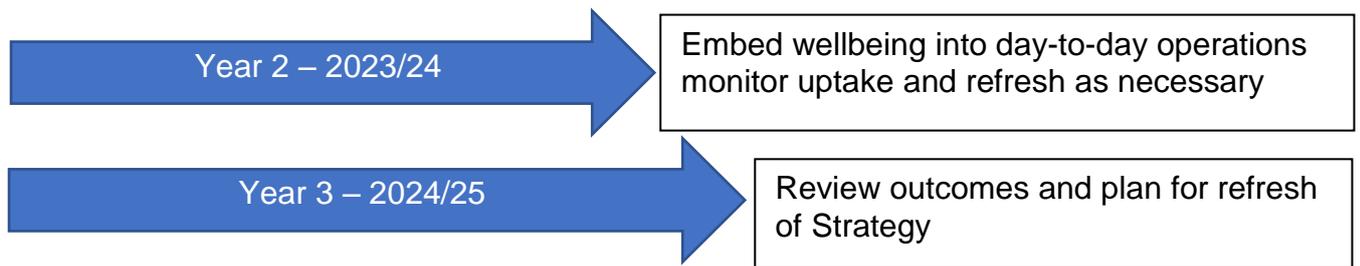
- 2.2 The initial Council Wellbeing Strategy was approved and published in June 2019 aligned to a Wellbeing and Attendance Management Project Action Plan which predated the Wellbeing Strategy. These set out a number of suggested actions and responsibilities but there was no overall ownership of the strategy or measurement of progress. As a result, wellbeing related activity was undertaken across various departments however this lacked co-ordination to ensure a council wide consistent wellbeing offer.
- 2.3 Since the publication of the initial strategy and associated action plan the pandemic coupled with a restructure of the Council's HR function has impacted on the both the strategy and its implementation. To further support employee wellbeing, the restructure of HR created a centralised Health Safety and Wellbeing function within the HR Team. This has enabled clear ownership of the strategy and central co-ordination of the evolution of the future strategy and associated action plans.
- 2.4 The COVID-19 pandemic began just as the new Health Safety and Wellbeing function was formed and continued far longer than anyone anticipated. The pandemic highlighted the importance of employee wellbeing not just within the workplace but on a national level. As a result, this refocussed the work of the Health Safety and Wellbeing team to ensure the organisation was able to continue functioning and deliver services safely and in line with COVID-19 legislation and guidance to our residents.
- 2.5 An assessment of the action plan undertaken in July 2020 identified that a number of interventions within the plan had been achieved. These included development of the Mental Health Policy and mental health first aider network. In conjunction the initial action plan was reviewed and a revised plan developed to focus holistically on health, safety and wellbeing and practical steps that could be realistically taken to achieve improvements when considering the pandemic. The revised action plan contained the actions required to deliver the aims of the Wellbeing Strategy within three core areas which complement each other and enable greater clarity and more clearly defined targets:
 - Systems

- Resources/People
- Data

A separate Sickness Absence Delivery Plan was also developed and intrinsically linked to the overall action plan to focus on delivering outcomes against the same key themes (systems, data and people). Finally, Corporate Management Team agreed to implement a Wellbeing Challenge Group at senior management level to oversee the delivery of the actions and ensure health, safety and wellbeing performance is considered at senior management meetings however due to the pandemic and resource availability this was stalled.

- 2.6 A summary of the key wellbeing action from the plan defined in July 2020 is contained in Appendix 2.
- 2.7 In terms of the overall Wellbeing Strategy, the last 12-18 months has further identified that the Council's approach to wellbeing needs to consider additional areas of wellbeing aligned to current national issues such as financial wellbeing (i.e. cost of living challenges facing many employees) and as such it is timely to review the Wellbeing Strategy. Refreshing the Wellbeing Strategy also allows us to better align this to the People Strategy and the Council Plan. This time limits the Wellbeing Strategy to ensure it is regularly refreshed moving forward and considers developments in wellbeing initiatives and support.
- 2.8 The Wellbeing Strategy has been reviewed to ensure it reflects the wider and developing drivers of wellbeing. The draft strategy is shown in Appendix 3. It will be based on the following 5 key pillars of wellbeing:
- Physical Wellbeing
 - Emotional Wellbeing
 - Financial Wellbeing
 - Social / Moral Wellbeing
 - Digital Wellbeing
- 2.9 The supporting Action Plan detailing specific wellbeing interventions will be developed for each of the 5 wellbeing pillars during the first year of the Strategy and will be implemented up to 2025. Once developed it will be reviewed and refreshed as required based on the data collected and any identified needs of the workforce.
- 2.10 The timeline for the implementation of the strategy is as follows:





2.11 To oversee the implementation of the revised strategy and action plan the Wellbeing Challenge group will be reinstated, chaired by the Executive Director for CST and consisting of Wellbeing Champions from the Senior Management Teams of each department. We also have an existing wellbeing project group consisting of key officers involved in wellbeing related activities and working groups aligned to each of the 5 wellbeing pillars. These groups are initially looking to review all the existing wellbeing related activity the Council currently provides and to ensure there is a strategy for communicating this to our workforce as one coherent wellbeing offer. These groups will also look to identify any shortfalls in current wellbeing provision to inform the action plan.

2.12 A further development in wellbeing delivery across the council arising out of the pandemic has been the involvement in the Derbyshire System Wellbeing Group. This involves collaboration with public sector colleagues across Joined Up Care Derbyshire to deliver system wide support where possible and share best practice. In addition, we will continue to work closely with Public Health.

3. Consultation

3.1 Information from the employee engagement surveys undertaken in the last 12-18 months has informed the progression of the wellbeing strategy. Further input was sought from senior leaders in April 2022 to support how leaders and the organisation can enable employee wellbeing. In addition, following the recent employee engagement survey results, the Council will participate in the Britain's Healthiest Workplace survey to gain further insights into employee wellbeing across our workforce.

3.2 Regular discussion regarding the strategy and associated actions is held with joint trade unions through both the wellbeing workstream and updates provided quarterly via Corporate Joint Committee.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Should the Wellbeing Strategy not be refreshed and reviewed as proposed in this report, the Council may be at risk of not ensuring the strategy remains current and aligned to both employee and organisational need.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Wellbeing Strategy approved by Cabinet in June 2019.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.
7.2 Appendix 2 – Key Wellbeing Actions
7.3 Appendix 3 – Draft Wellbeing Strategy – 2022-2025

8. Recommendation(s)

That Committee:

- a) note the progress to date and the refresh of the Wellbeing Strategy and planned development of the associated action plans aligned to the 5 pillars of wellbeing.

9. Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 To ensure the wellbeing strategy remains current and the associated actions support the reduction of sickness absence levels and promote the overall wellbeing of the Council's workforce.

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Appendix 1 - Implications

Financial

- 1.1 Aside from the wellbeing strategy now being focused on financial wellbeing, any funding requirements for the deployment of the strategy will be considered in line with the development of initiatives.

Legal

- 2.1 None identified within the report.

Human Resources

- 3.1 As outlined within the report.

Information Technology

- 4.1 As outlined within the report.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 None identified within the report and this will be considered throughout the development of the actions plans aligned to the 5 pillars of wellbeing. Employee network group members also participate in the project group, and this is being considered further to ensure all groups are represented where appropriate.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The wellbeing strategy is a key enabler for deployment of the Council's People Strategy and aligns to the Council Plan.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

- 7.1 None identified within the report.

Appendix 2 – Key Wellbeing Actions

1. Sickness Targets/Sickness Metrics and Visible leadership and attendance culture

A new sickness metric has been developed and implemented this is a % time lost calculation which will express the hours per month lost to sickness absence as a % of the total working hours available. This measure will be far more accurate than the existing measure as it will not discount certain employee groups nor have an arbitrary uplift figure included.

A sickness absence delivery plan was deployed which focused on the following areas, helping to upskill managers across the council:

An eLearning module on Sickness Absence for all for line managers was launched via Derbyshire Learning Online (DLO) on 1st December 2020 and managers were asked to complete by the end of January 2021 and then on an annual basis.

Also, from 1st December 2020, managers are no longer limited to 12 primary sickness absence codes when inputting absence on Workplace. There is now a range of specific mandatory absence reasons (secondary codes) to choose from to make the inputting more accurate. This enables the Council to better understand sickness causes and as a result target suitable interventions.

Manager guidance in relation to Workplace was updated simultaneously to stress the importance of recording sickness absence on the first day of absence and where applicable, as a block of absence rather than single day episodes. This ensures we are able to look at an employee's record and work out the correct pay for the absence as well as generating accurate data for the Council on case duration and sickness absence trends.

In March 2021, further guidance was issued to managers to enable them to produce their own sickness absence reports from Business Warehouse (BW). Manager Absence Trigger Report Guidance enable managers to drill down into specific teams to support more local action to take place.

Over the last twelve months, service specific sickness data has been presented at extended leadership team meetings which provides the opportunity for further discussion and evidence-based decision making in terms of the required targeted intervention and support. HR Business Partners meet regularly with management teams to understand the data and work through plans to manage any emerging trends.

In addition, the Advice and Support team remain focused on locally supporting management teams in the provision of individual case management for absence related cases aligned to the sickness absence stratification data.. Aligned to this, the Attendance Management and Ill-Health Capability Procedure has been updated in consultation with the joint trade unions.

This will be accompanied by further skills learning training for line managers in order to help them manage sickness absence successfully and is due to be launched in Spring 2022.

Using the new sickness calculations and reporting codes reporting codes new sickness dashboards have been developed which allow us to identify the highest impacting teams based on their sickness absence rate being greater than the cumulative average for the organisation. Work is underway to provide further data analysis for these teams, considering the wider workforce profile, i.e. agency spend, additional hours, vacancy rates. This is to ensure the broader context of what is impacting on these areas is better understood so appropriate interventions can be examined.

2. Improved engagement and communication regarding employee wellbeing

Regular engagement surveys of the workforce are now undertaken and results of these shared with managers to discuss with their teams and develop local actions to support their teams wellbeing.

Through the Wellbeing Project group regular targeted wellbeing communications are circulated targeted to national campaigns (eg mental health awareness week) highlighting these issues and the support around them currently available to our workforce. In addition to this regular communication reinforces our ongoing wellbeing support to the workforce.

3. Mental Health Policy

A draft Mental Health Policy was produced but this was never approved as focus shifted to the pandemic response. This will now be reviewed and progressed. Mental Health First Aiders have been trained and are in place and these formed a vital part of our support to employees throughout the pandemic.

4. Employee Assistance Programme

Two significant wellbeing interventions to support employee wellbeing and mental health during the pandemic in conjunction with the System Wellbeing

Group previously mentioned. These were the Thrive smartphone App and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provide the workforce and in the case of the EAP their immediate family with instant 24/7 access to support.

5. High Quality Occupational Health Services

A review of Occupational Health Services was undertaken prior to the restructure of HR although this was not a robust review. Occupational Health now sits within the Health Safety and Wellbeing function and a more comprehensive review is currently being undertaken. The responses received during the information gathering stage from employees and Managers have been resoundingly positive and the aim of the review is to ensure we have a comprehensive and developing Occupational Health offer which is far more closely aligned to the refreshed wellbeing strategy and action plan.

Appendix 3

Draft Derbyshire County Council: Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025

Message from Emma Alexander, Managing Director

Welcome to Derbyshire County Council's (DCC) workforce Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2025.

Our employees are our most vital asset and are instrumental in allowing the Council to meet our stated ambition of working together with our partners and communities to be an enterprising council, delivering value for money and enabling local people and places to thrive.

The wellbeing of our employees is therefore far more than just a moral obligation or a statement that is made in a plan. The wellbeing of our people is intrinsic to our Council and People Strategy ensuring we have a healthy, content and resilient workforce. This is essential in ensuring we deliver the absolute best service we can to the people of Derbyshire across the wide variety of services the Council provides. As outlined in the Council's People Strategy we will enable and ensure the wellbeing and safety of our people.

“We will ensure we have safe and enabling environments, which support the wellbeing, motivation and retention of our people. We will integrate wellbeing into our day-to-day activities to promote a positive environment where employees are engaged, energised and supported to perform and achieve to their full potential for the benefit of themselves and the organisation.”

We have a large workforce, spread across a vast geographical area delivering a wide range of roles and services both directly to the public and to support those that do. We are also in the process of changing the way we work as an organisation which focuses on delivering excellent outcomes rather than concentrating on where we deliver services from. This level of diversity means that there isn't a one size fits all solution to ensuring and enabling employee wellbeing. A range of standalone initiatives will not be enough; our approach to workplace wellbeing will be holistic and inclusive, embedded in our culture and will influence how we make decisions. Workplace wellbeing will sit at the heart of everything we do.

We recognise that wellbeing isn't just something you can put in place overnight and that it isn't something that begins at the start of the working day and ends when the working day is finished. We want our employees not just to be happy, safe and well at work but also in their life away from work, the two are not mutually exclusive and one affects the other.

We therefore wish to put in place the right wellbeing support to allow our employees to benefit from making the right choices to enhance their wellbeing in all areas of their lives.

In order to maximise the wellbeing offer to our employees we commit to working in partnership with our other public sector partners within the Joined Up Care Derbyshire system to develop system wide approaches where possible with fair and equitable access to a range of wellbeing interventions and services.

What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is increasingly talked about not just within the workplace but across the national landscape. But what actually is wellbeing, and what does it mean for employees of Derbyshire County Council?

Wellbeing is defined in the oxford English Dictionary as “the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.”

A government definition states, **“Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well and comprises an individual’s experience of their life; and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values”**.

Wellbeing in its widest sense therefore comprises a combination of good physical health, a positive emotional state and a sense of security and contribution. It is not solely about concentrating on sickness absence figures for example but is about developing a culture within the organisation which promotes the physical, mental, moral, and social and financial wellbeing of our employees and where our organisational values, initiatives, standards and practices promote this.

By identifying key factors which could affect wellbeing both in the present and the future and putting in place appropriate actions that are designed to prevent those problems from arising in the first place, ensures we are addressing wellbeing holistically.

The National Picture

(from HSE summary Statistics 2020/21)

- In 2020/21 1.7 million workers suffered from work related ill health (new or long standing).
- In 2020/21 stress, depression or anxiety accounted for 50% of all work-related ill health cases. 822 000 workers suffered from work related stress depression or anxiety in this period with 451,000 of these being new cases.
- The average level of employee sickness absence in 2020 was 5.8 days per employee per year, or 1.8% of working time lost with minor illness being the main reason for sickness absence in 2020. This is the lowest rate recorded however factors such as the furlough scheme, social distancing shielding and home working are thought to have had an impact in reducing this figure.
- Only 37% of organisations make efforts to promote financial wellbeing to a large or moderate extent.
- Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions were responsible for 28% of new and long-standing cases of ill health, 470,000 workers of which 162,000 were new cases.
- Over 84% of respondents to the 2021 CIPD Health and Wellbeing at Work survey have observed 'presenteeism' in their organisation, over the past 12 months, and 70% have observed some form of leaveism.

The Derbyshire Picture

As part of our recent employee surveys in July 2020 and December 2020, we have asked colleagues how they are feeling with this question being repeated in the survey which is currently live. Our surveys indicate that as of July 2020 the significant

majority of those who responded were feeling positive or very positive about their mental health, this figure had decreased slightly in the December 2020 survey but still remains a significant majority of respondents..

The latest picture within our workforce shows that between April 2021 and January 2022: Emotional Wellbeing issues are most common reason for sickness absence during this period

This is followed by Other Musculo, Skeletal Disorders and Back and Neck problems with Covid-19 also remaining prevalent .

In terms of Accidents/ Incidents in 2020/2021. The main causes of reportable accidents were Slips trips and falls and Manual Handling.

Our Strategy

This strategy sets out our high-level approach to ensuring the wellbeing of our employees and how this is intrinsic to the delivery of our Council Plan and People Strategy. It identifies the key wellbeing pillars that we will focus on and sets out our vision in relation to delivering a wellbeing culture within the Council. It is the steering document for delivering practical results that meet its aims and objectives.

Our Vision

We will ensure we have safe and enabling environments, which support the wellbeing, motivation and retention of our people. We will integrate wellbeing into our day-to-day activities to promote a positive environment where employees are engaged, energised and supported to perform and achieve to their full potential for the benefit of themselves and the organisation.” We will create a resilient workforce maximising our service delivery for the residents of Derbyshire.

Implementing the Strategy

To be meaningful this strategy will reflect the key wellbeing issues currently facing the Council but also anticipate future areas of wellbeing concern. It will become an integral part of our culture where employee wellbeing is actively promoted to realise the benefits to our employees and thus the organisation and our service users. Whilst the strategy outlines our key areas of focus and our overall ambitions it will shape our overall offer to employees. It will be reviewed annually by the Wellbeing Challenge Group to make sure that it is still current and valid and that outcomes implemented to deliver the aims of the strategy are effective.

We will engage with wider stakeholders such as Trade Unions through the Wellbeing Workstream, employee network groups and other public sector organisations through the Wellbeing Systems group.

In order for our approach to be successful, this strategy assumes that everyone within the organisation will take personal responsibility for their own wellbeing and a collaborative responsibility for colleagues to embed a wellbeing culture within the organisation.

Our Wellbeing Aims

Aligned to our People Strategy, we will:

- Create a safe and healthy work environment which fosters a culture of positive wellbeing, whereby the wellbeing of our people is seen as integral to everything we do.
- Improve general wellbeing for our diverse workforce and ensure that wellbeing is seen as everyone's responsibility across DCC.
- Embed wellbeing as a central part of our strategic priorities for our leaders and councillors across all functions within DCC and ensure that all are aware of our statutory obligations.

- recognise the role wellbeing plays in the bigger picture including improving productivity, ways of working and talent attraction, development and retention, in becoming an employer of choice
- Provide impactful wellbeing support based on the needs of our people, using a collaborative approach.

Wellbeing Pillars

Physical Wellbeing

- Support people to take care of themselves and make positive steps around health in areas such as sleep, nutrition, physical activity, smoking, alcohol, and drinking enough water.
- Create an environment where people feel empowered and are educated about their physical wellbeing.
- Establish programmes for specific clinical conditions/areas of need.
- Improve our working environment and ways of working to ensure the health and safety of our employees when delivering their roles.
- Actively promote a safety culture where managers and employees take personal responsibility for their and colleagues health and safety.

Emotional Wellbeing (neurodiversity, mental health)

- Create a culture of open discussion and mutual trust around stress and mental health.
- Supporting individuals to better manage their psychological wellbeing and develop personal resilience.
- Provide better access to support, advice and signposting.
- Recognise the challenges faced by neurodiverse employees and actively promote a culture where neurodiverse employees are supported

Financial Wellbeing

- Support individuals to become more aware of their finances.
- Reduce financial stress by helping people to better manage their finances and become more financially secure. This will include areas such as managing debt, budgeting, saving, pensions, investments and living within our means.
- Promote employment practices that avoid low pay, insecure contracts, unfair pay gaps and ensure job security while meeting organisational requirements.
- Ensure reward and benefits' policies allow opportunities to support employees at all stages of their lives.

Moral/Social wellbeing (belonging purpose and values)

- Improve the relationships we have with each other across the organisation.
- Build healthy, collaborative, nurturing and supportive relationships, which includes good leadership, to foster a genuine one council approach and sense of belonging within the Council.
- Encourage community engagement to improve a sense of belonging and create strong links within the people of Derbyshire.
- Champion and promote inclusion, supporting the Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Adopt working practices that promote work/life and family balance and encourage environmental protection

Digital wellbeing

- Aligned to the Council's digital strategy we will ensure we are using Digital Workspace in a healthy way When we're looking after our digital health it means we feel in control of the Digital Workspace in our lives, and it helps us do our jobs. But we don't feel overwhelmed by it and we can switch off from work outside of hours.
- We will create a workplace culture where technology and software is there to improve how we work, places work-life balance at the heart of it (especially when working from home where it's harder to switch off) and ensures that everyone has the digital tools they need to do their jobs.

- We will make sure your employees have been properly trained on the technology they need to use to work every day. With hybrid working, the boundary between home and work can become blurred. We will put in place appropriate guidance and systems to promote good wellbeing practices.
- There are also ways the Digital Workspace can help with wellbeing, whether that's mindfulness apps or online exercise classes. We will investigate how the Digital Workspace can be utilised to support employee wellbeing.

What Will We Do?

We will focus our wellbeing offer based on the above 5 pillars of wellbeing and within each of these areas we will consider the following 3 elements: Data, Systems and People. We will put in place an action plan with outcomes focussed within these areas using data to inform and drive what we do, to focus our approaches on the right areas and demonstrate the value of wellbeing to the organisation and individuals.

We will adopt systems to support the organisation and its employees to deliver health safety and wellbeing throughout the Council.

We will put people at the heart of the strategy, giving leaders and managers the skills and confidence to understand the links between wellbeing and effective service delivery.

We will ensure our employees have a clear understanding of their roles and the expectations of them and that they fully understand the wellbeing offer and the benefits of wellbeing not only at work but in their day to day lives. We will deliver a wellbeing culture throughout the Council.

We will ensure that we have a holistic approach to all our Wellbeing interventions that ensure we have in place proactive, active, and reactive solutions.

Proactive interventions are those which are preventative in nature. They are designed to promote wellbeing amongst staff not currently experiencing any adverse wellbeing situations.

Active interventions are those designed to help manage identified wellbeing issues before they become debilitating for staff and promote recovery/transition to a state of positive wellbeing.

Reactive wellbeing measures are those that are put in place to manage an acute wellbeing situation, prevent it from becoming worse and aid employees to begin to recover to a position where active interventions to promote recovery can be utilised.

We aim to be an organisation which focusses heavily on the proactive and active measures and where reactive measures although available are rarely required as prevention is better than cure.

Key Areas for Deliverable Actions

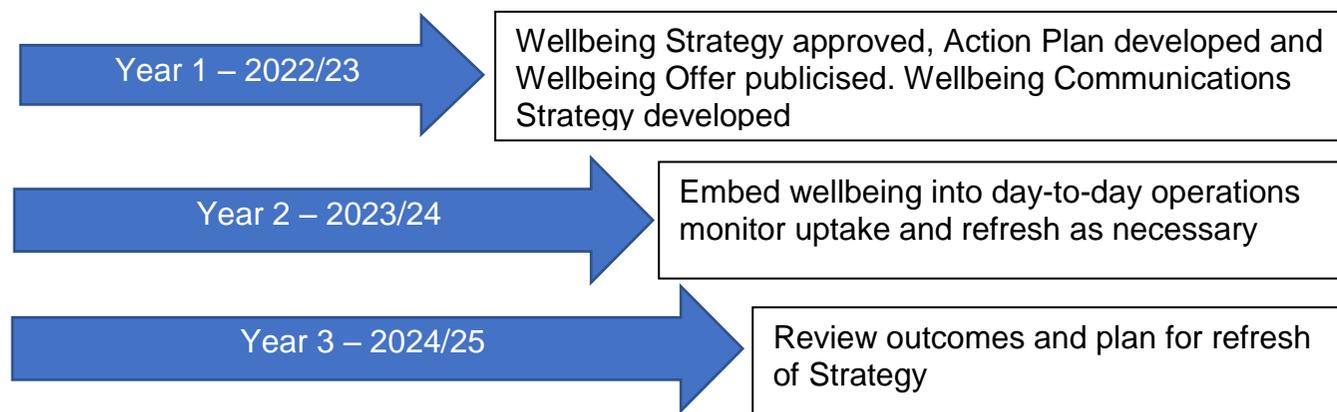
- Stress and mental health
- Demographics and associated links e.g.
 - Aging workforce
 - Menopause
 - Muscular skeletal.
- The Healthy lifestyle weight management, smoking cessation, exercise, relaxation, mindfulness.
- Flexible working/Modern Ways of Working.
- Communication.
- Attraction.
- Financial resilience and support.
- Working conditions e.g. facilities, violence and aggression.
- Work life balance.
- Resilience
- Collaboration/consultation
- Visibility of HSW messaging – safety culture.
- Workforce Engagement.
- Leadership and People Development.
- Psychological health

Our Action Plan

The supporting Action Plan detailing specific wellbeing interventions will be developed for each of the 5 wellbeing pillars during the first year of the Strategy and will be implemented up to 2025. Once developed it will be reviewed and refreshed as required based on the data collected and any identified needs of the workforce.

We will develop a communications strategy that continues to promote the wellbeing offer and regularly monitor the uptake of this offer.

The timeline for the implementation of the strategy is as follows:



What Success looks like

Success can be determined in many ways, some of which are straightforward and obvious to measure, some of which are more difficult to quantify but are equally important in the overall development of a wellbeing culture and healthier workforce.

We will instigate a range of wellbeing metrics to ascertain the success of our wellbeing programme. We will focus not only on reactive measures such as Incident and sickness rates, access to OH services, exit questionnaire outcomes and employee survey responses but will also record proactive outcomes, such as recruitment and retention rates, take up of wellbeing offers.

Some wellbeing benefits are more difficult to quantify such as increased productivity, better morale, changed behaviours we will however attempt to determine these as part of our measure of success.

Ultimately success for us will be a productive, healthy, engaged and positive workplace that attracts, develops and retains the best talent.