

Item 3

21st May 2025

# Glasgow City Council

## Best Value Thematic Report: Workforce Innovation

May 2025



Building a better  
working world

This report has been prepared in accordance with Terms of Appointment Letter, through which Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission have appointed us as external auditor for Glasgow City Council for financial years 2022/23 to 2026/27.

This report is for the benefit of the Council and is made available to the Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission (together the Recipients). It has not been designed to be of benefit to anyone except the Recipients. In preparing this report we have not taken into account the interests, needs or circumstances of anyone apart from the Recipients, even though we may have been aware that others might read this report.

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## **Accessibility**

Our report will be available on Audit Scotland's website and we have therefore taken steps to comply with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018.



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# Executive Summary

As part of our responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice, we perform an annual programme of work in relation to Best Value which includes reviews based on thematic Best Value topics prescribed by the Accounts Commission ("the Commission"). The Commission directed auditors to report on workforce innovation as part of our 2023/24 audit considerations. Our wider Best Value considerations, including other aspects relating to the Council's workforce, such as severance arrangements and the implementation of a new pay and grading model, are reported within our Annual Audit Report and are not considered within this report.

Our key conclusions against the 6 questions set by the Commission are outlined below.

## **1. How effectively are the Council's workforce plans integrated with its strategic plans and priorities?**

The Council has workforce planning arrangements that reflect the size and complexity of the organisation. A Strategic Workforce Board is established to support a corporate response to HR and Employment policy decisions, and allow the escalation of emerging issues from services, including the implementation of budgetary decisions.

In addition, the Council's Workforce Board has cross-party elected member representation and is chaired by the City Convenor for Workforce and Homelessness and Addition Service, and Policy Lead. This provides an important escalation and discussion forum for the Council's trade union representatives to meet directly with elected members. The Council was able to provide examples of the effectiveness of this approach in practice, including the establishment of a cultural change programme within Neighbourhood, Regeneration and Sustainability (NRS), following the identification of employee engagement recurring issues.

The Corporate Management Team maintains oversight over service workforce plans and the development of key skills and capabilities but there is not a comprehensive workforce strategy to support longer term strategic planning.

## **2. How effectively has digital technology been used to support workforce productivity and improve service quality and outcomes?**

The Council recognises that there are opportunities to increase productivity and service outcomes adopting digital technology. Successes to date include the use of technology to make efficiencies and improve customer service within NRS and social care, alongside work to improve access to workforce data.

The Digital Glasgow Strategy 2024 to 2030 was approved by the City Administration Committee in April 2024 and sets out three action plans, including areas of focus on workforce productivity including the development of a Technology Modernisation Plan to increase business agility, underpin staff flexibility, and improve the collection, management, and use of data across the Council Family.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>3. How effectively is the Council using hybrid and remote working and other innovative working practice to achieve service and staff benefits?</b></p>                      | <p>The Council created a Future Ways of Working project to support the learning from the pandemic and employee experiences and transform the technology available to employees to support hybrid working. The Council's hybrid working policy is based on two employee surveys to learn from pilots and support employees who can work at home for part of the week.</p> <p>The Council has invested in its Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy, including support from the Council's occupational health and employee assistance providers and wellbeing sessions. The Council raises awareness of support and events via QR codes on posters and use of the 'screen savers' on Council devices.</p>   |
| <p><b>4. What innovative practice is the Council using to develop its future workforce capacity and skills needs and manage staff reductions in line with its priorities?</b></p> | <p>The Council has a Resourcing Group to manage significant changes in staffing and has a succession planning framework to support employee development. There is scope to improve succession planning, particularly in services that are more difficult to recruit to, or where skills and expectations develop at pace.</p> <p>The Council has responded to a specific need to improve the age profile of its workforce by implementing a Youth Employment Strategy and can demonstrate key success against its objectives, including defined positive destinations for employees on the graduate programme and modern apprenticeships. More recently, the Council has developed a Climate Ready apprenticeship to develop capacity in key skill gaps linked to its strategic priorities.</p> |
| <p><b>5. What progress has the Council made with sharing roles or functions across its services and/or with other councils and partners?</b></p>                                  | <p>The Council continues to work collaboratively with bodies across the sector and Glasgow City region to maximise the opportunities to increase capability. A Regional Local Government Skills Working Group is working with the University of the West of Scotland to launch courses to respond to the shortage in Planning skills. The group is also addressing skills gaps in other areas such as trading standards, health and social care.</p> <p>The Council uses its scale to support other organisations with shared services. Examples include Audit Glasgow (the internal audit service) and out of hours service helplines.</p>   |
| <p><b>6. How effectively is the Council measuring the impact of its workforce planning approach?</b></p>  | <p>The Council continues to invest in data to support the availability of workforce performance indicators across services.</p> <p>We noted that no full employee survey has been undertaken since prior to the pandemic, and there are not currently any plans to run another full survey due to resource availability and capacity. This may limit the Council's ability to assess the effectiveness of workforce management arrangements across all services, or the return on investment in strategies to support staff health and wellbeing.</p>   |

# Scope of the audit

## Introduction

Under the Accounts Commission's Code of Audit Practice (the Code), published in June 2021, the approach to the audit of Best Value involves reporting both on:

- ▶ individual local government bodies; and
- ▶ thematically across the local government sector.

Reporting to the Accounts Commission on the Council's performance in relation to its duty to deliver Best Value will be drawn from local external audit work performed under our wider scope responsibilities and work that we perform in relation to annual thematic topics.

In 2023/24, the Accounts Commission has directed auditors to report on workforce innovation and how councils are responding to workforce challenges.

## Thematic focus in 2023/24

The Accounts Commission continue to report that councils in Scotland have never faced such a challenging situation. Service demands have increased after the Covid-19 pandemic and funding is forecast to reduce in real terms. Workforce pressures including recruitment in a competitive labour market, employee retention and high sickness absence levels are putting councils under continued pressure. The most recent Local Government Financial Bulletin, published in January 2024 noted that some councils are committing reserves to contingency or financial sustainability funds to help fund transformation, potential workforce reconfiguration or pay settlements.

This report therefore sets out how the Council is responding to current workforce challenges through building capacity, increasing productivity and innovation, including the sharing of good practice across councils in Scotland.

The report outlines our considerations against the series of questions set by Audit Scotland guidance:

1. How effectively are the Council's workforce plans integrated with its strategic plans and priorities?
2. How effectively has digital technology been used to support workforce productivity and improve service quality and outcomes?
3. How effectively is the Council using hybrid and remote working and other innovative working practices to achieve service and staff benefits?
4. What innovative practice is the Council using to develop its future workforce capacity and skills needs and manage staff reductions in line with its priorities?
5. What progress has the Council made with sharing roles or functions across its services and/or with other councils and partners?
6. How effectively is the Council measuring the impact of its workforce planning approach?

The focus of audit work set by the Accounts Commission reflects the expectations that the Council will comply with the seven Best Value themes set out in the [Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, Best Value Statutory Guidance 2020](#).

# 1. How effectively are the Council's workforce plans integrated with its strategic plans and priorities?

## Introduction

Workforce planning involves identifying and addressing future capacity and skills gaps, at operational and leadership levels. It requires strategic thinking, comprehensive workforce data and ongoing consultation and engagement with staff and trade unions.

A Council focused on achieving Best Value will have a workforce strategy that sets out expectations on how the local authority's staff will deliver its vision, priorities and values.

To be effective, workforce planning must be integrated across the organisation. Workforce strategies need to support the Council in achieving its strategic priorities. They must support other key plans including financial, asset, digital and transformation planning. They need to be underpinned with detailed workforce plans within services.

## **The Council has extensive workforce planning arrangements in place, reflecting the size and complexity of the Group**

Glasgow City Council employs just under 18,000 full time equivalent (FTE) staff, including around 6,000 who work for the Health and Social Care Partnership. The total workforce at 31 March 2024 was over 27,000, accounting for around 10% of the total local government workforce in Scotland.

There are extensive arrangements to support workforce planning. These include:

- ▶ Service planning arrangements, such as the requirement for individual Directorates and ALEOs to prepare an Annual Business Plan;
- ▶ Service Workforce Planning Boards including representation from the related Finance and HR Business Partners; and
- ▶ A Corporate Workforce Board.

This provides a process for individual services to respond to budget pressures and other requirements, and to escalate significant risks or pressures within the organisation, including to the Corporate Management Team.

In addition, the Council has specific arrangements to engage with the trade unions at a number of levels, including the officer-led Strategic Trade Union Board, and a cross-party Workforce Board, which is chaired by the City Convenor for Workforce and Homelessness and Addition Service and Policy Lead. This Board does not have decision-making powers, but provides a unique mechanism to support discussions between trade union representatives and elected members, for example in relation to budget briefings, Equal Pay developments and local arrangements for national issues.

The Council described a number of examples of the impact of the Workforce Board, such as the development of a programme of wider cultural change that

## **Exhibit 1: The Workforce Board allows issues to be escalated with elected members. One example of the impact of the Board is the Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability (NRS) People Project**

- ▶ The NRS People Project was established as a number of related issues were brought to the Workforce Board, leading to senior elected members directly visiting key depots to hear directly from members of staff.
- ▶ Following employee feedback, a programme of staff health and wellbeing roadshows were developed which included hearing from external speakers, such as cost-of-living information from Glasgow Credit Union, physiotherapy information from the Council's employee assistance provider and information on managing their own wellbeing.
- ▶ A series of pilot projects were developed as part of wider cultural change, including employability sessions within NRS to reduce the use of temporary workers, and succession planning workshops.
- ▶ The employability sessions focussed on skills and areas for development for individual members of staff, allowing them to gain confidence around learning new skills, applying for internal promoted posts and interview techniques.

*Source: Glasgow City Council*

has been established within NRS (Exhibit 1) and arrangements to improve the Council's response to red weather conditions for workers.

### **| The Council's workforce priorities are outlined in the Strategic Plan**

The Council's Strategic Plan 2022-27 outlines the risks and opportunities associated with its workforce, including the need to manage its own workforce to maintain a strong ethos of public service, developing a younger generation of new staff and respect the dignity and quality of life of existing workers.

One of the missions within the Strategic Plan relates to the need to enable staff to deliver a sustainable and innovative Council structure that delivers value for money. There are a range of cross-cutting themes across the Strategic Plan's missions that demonstrate a number of the Council's key priorities including:

- ▶ Attracting and developing a younger workforce;

- ▶ The implementation of the Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- ▶ Addressing areas of under-representation; and
- ▶ Establishment of an Employment Equality Action Plan.

There is not a single standalone workforce or people strategy that underpins the Strategic Plan for the Council as a whole. A Strategy would support the Council's response to digital, technological and strategic changes and facilitate improved succession planning. A Workforce Strategy is a key expectation under the requirements of the [Best Value Statutory Guidance \(2020\)](#), but we recognise that this would be a significant undertaking for the Council, and unlikely to be progressed in the short term while significant change programmes are underway.

**| Recommendation 1:** There is an expectation that the Council will have a workforce strategy that sets out how it will deliver its vision, priorities and values in the medium term.



## **| Service planning arrangements support workforce planning at directorate level**

One of the key objectives of workforce planning is to identify and respond to any emerging workforce gaps.

The Council's Service Planning processes require the inclusion of workforce information and actions as part of the Annual Business Plan for each Directorate.

Resources and Organisation is a mandatory section of the plans, which includes key information on the workforce such as the structure of the department and the proportionate gender, ethnicity and disability population by grade. The Plans are also required to report on how the service contributes towards the commitments in the Strategic Plan and meets its equalities obligations.

Some key information on the workforce is reported to committees, including:

- ▶ The Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee provide oversight for the Council's wider risk management arrangements, including the escalation of workforce matters. The Committee also receives a bi-annual report on early retirements and voluntary severance.
- ▶ The Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee consider and approve key policy developments such as the Youth Engagement Strategy (2024-27).

## 2. How effectively has digital technology been used to support workforce productivity and improve service quality and outcomes?

### Introduction

Digital technology will continue to make councils' future workforces look and work quite differently. In order to achieve the change required, councils need to make good use of digital technology and use the workforce in flexible ways.

Digital technology has a strong bearing on a council's workforce needs. It can be used to re-shape jobs to increase productivity and reduce back-office functions while improving service quality. Technology solutions include online services, customer relationship management systems, mobile digital devices and more recently, artificial intelligence (AI) applications.

Councils need to be innovative in their use of technology and build on new working practices that emerged during the pandemic. In doing so, they must also consider service quality and the needs of people experiencing digital exclusion.

### **The Council has recognised the opportunities available to make efficiencies and service improvement by adopting digital technology**

The Digital Glasgow Strategy 2024 to 2030 was approved by the City Administration Committee in April 2024.

The Strategy is structured around three missions:

1. A Fair and Empowered Digital Society;
2. An Inclusive Growth Digital Economy; and
3. Sustainable and Innovative Digital Public Services.

Action Plans are in place for each of the missions. Key actions that are focused on workforce productivity include:

- The development of a new operating model for digital, data and technology;
- Developing the digital, data and technology profession and enhancing the existing Digital Champion network;
- The development of a Technology Modernisation Plan for simplifying the Council's underlying technology platforms and equipment to increase business agility, underpin staff flexibility, and increased resilience; and
- Initiatives to improve the collection, management, and use of data across the Council Family. This will include provision of data training courses as part of the commitment to improve digital and data capabilities and cyber security.

The Digital Glasgow Board, which is chaired by an elected member, is responsible for monitoring progress against the Strategy while Policy Committees have a key role in the implementing changes.

## **| A range of projects have been delivered to help support staff experience and deliver improved customer services**

The Council has delivered a number of significant projects, which it reports as case studies under the Digital Transformation Strategy to date. Projects with a direct impact on workforce productivity include the use of data to provide a real time picture of housing demand in the city. The Council can track in real time the number and details of housing lets turned over by social landlords to homelessness services each month. This enables service managers to work with social landlords in a more agile way to influence the supply of properties for homelessness applicants across the city.

After understanding the needs of the Housing Strategy team, a series of data dashboards have been created and brought together in one interface to provide real time data on critical measures such as house building supply, existing stock, empty homes, private rents and housing repairs.

The Council has also prioritised automated and service reform within customer and business services within its investment programme. Other examples include:

- ▶ NRS use of live tracking for waste management vehicles, resulting in efficiencies and improved customer service.
- ▶ Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking equipment is installed in the Council's large carriageway gritting vehicles to establish accurate treatment records and minimise waste; and

- ▶ Projects that support frontline delivery, such as hand-held devices for social care staff and the roll-out of the Analogue to Digital Telecare Project.

## **| The Council continues to invest in technology to improve reporting and communication with the workforce**

The Council's Corporate Human Resources team is working with the business intelligence team to support improvements in the access to data about the workforce. Until now, reporting to services on key performance indicators such as absence rates, has been cascaded via the Service Strategic HR Teams. Pilot work is underway to develop quarterly dashboards so that local management has up to date information to hand.

The Council is also increasingly using technology to communicate directly with staff groups. A significant proportion of the Council's workforce do not work in offices with access to digital kit. As a result, QR codes are used on posters to provide direct links to the Council's staff engagement webpages (Exhibit 2). The Council took the decision that these pages should be open to the public to ensure that no employee groups were excluded from key information.

In addition, the Council use text messages to reach customer facing staff such as the Council's 4,000 homecare workers, catering and facilities management teams.

## Exhibit 2: Good Practice The Council uses QR codes on posters to direct staff directly to the Staff Updates website



Information available [online](#) includes:

- ▶ Latest staff news and the monthly update from the Chief Executive;
- ▶ Direct access to Health and Wellbeing support and information;
- ▶ Updates on key Council projects, such as sustainable staff campaigns, mentoring programmes for young people in Glasgow, and the data makes a difference project;
- ▶ Information on the new pay and grading structure and job evaluation updates; and
- ▶ Access to key HR Policies.

Individual Services, such as NRS have their own pages where blogs, training updates and staff financial wellbeing support pages are available.

Source: *Glasgow City Council*



### 3. How effectively is the Council using hybrid and remote working and other innovative working practice to achieve service and staff benefits?

#### Introduction

During the pandemic councils needed to make the best use of their existing workforce while continuing to monitor employee wellbeing. Councils continue to look to new ways of working to improve job satisfaction and reduce sickness absence and staff turnover.

Home-working and hybrid working (a combination of office and home-based working) have now become commonplace. Some councils are also considering more radical working practice. However, whatever the working practice, employers need to ensure that service quality and productivity are maintained.

#### The Council conducted two staff surveys to support hybrid working pilots following the pandemic

The Council created a Future Ways of Working project to support the learning from the pandemic and employee experiences. In July 2021, it conducted a digital survey of all employees who had worked outwith the normal office environment to assess:

- ▶ The health and wellbeing impact;
- ▶ How they adapted to change; and
- ▶ The work life balance impact for an engaged workforce.

The results of the initial survey were predominantly positive. Over 73% of respondents felt that they were trusted to deliver their roles from home, and nearly 68% noted that working from home had improved their work life balance. Almost half of the respondents felt that organisational messaging had kept them informed while working at home.

A further survey in 2023 found that:

- ▶ 85% of employees (and 92% of managers) said that because of the hybrid working pilot the level of trust between them and their team has either improved (34%) or stayed the same (51%).
- ▶ Overall, 91% of managers stated that service delivery needs have been met since the hybrid working pilot was introduced.
- ▶ Only 4% of managers reported a view that service delivery was not being met with the pilot. This is consistent with the responses from employees who have themselves felt that they are just as productive and are delivering the desired service outputs with hybrid working pilot.
- ▶ 92% of managers said that the level of trust has either improved (44%) or stayed the same (48%) because of the hybrid working. This is consistent with the employee view, as 93% of employees felt the hybrid pilot had also improved trust between them and their team.

### **| The Council has subsequently committed to hybrid working principles**

The Council has committed to hybrid working, although for the majority of the workforce, front line service requirements mean it is not possible. For those that can, a balance needs to be struck to maintain team working and business relationships. The Council has established key hybrid working principles:

- ▶ **Flexible:** aiming for flexibility in where and how staff work to introduce a sustainable level of home and office working.
- ▶ **Collaborative:** sustaining team working and gain the benefits of working together in person.
- ▶ **Supportive:** sufficient office time to support colleagues, the team and service delivery, learning and developing through the process.

- ▶ **Resilient:** meeting the needs of service internal customers and citizens.
- ▶ **Adaptable:** one size does not fit all and there is therefore a need to find mutually beneficial solutions.

### **| The Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy includes a communications plan and a series of activities to support employees**

One of the key strategies underpinning the Strategic Plan is the Council's Staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The implementation plan includes the communications strategy for all groups of employees, and updated information is available on the screen savers of Council devices and on the webpages for individual services.

The Council's Staff Health and Wellbeing Handbook includes access to a range of readily-available resources (Exhibit 3).

### **Exhibit 3: Good Practice The Council's Health and Wellbeing programme of work during 2024 included:**

- ▶ 100 staff have attended health checks provided by the Council's occupational health provider, PAM, resulting in 36 onward referrals to GPs, smoking cessation or the Employee Assistance Provider for counselling support.
  - ▶ Over 200 staff have attended other wellbeing sessions taking place in the Council's city centre wellbeing room.
  - ▶ 140 staff engaged in a 4-week Autumn Step Count Challenge to encourage and support a more physically active workforce.
  - ▶ Around 280 staff participated in onsite health promotional activities and learning.
- In addition, the handbook includes direct links to a wide range of resources that staff can access including:
- ▶ Links to the Council's official partnership with See Me for supporting employee mental health at work;
  - ▶ Equality Peer Support Network groups;
  - ▶ Financial wellbeing seminars; and
  - ▶ The Gambling Harms Support policy.

Source: *Glasgow City Council reporting*

## 4. What innovative practice is the Council using to develop its future workforce capacity and skills needs and manage staff reductions in line with its priorities?

### Introduction

Councils need to find innovative ways to ensure the workforce capacity and skills they need to deliver services in the future. Training and development opportunities can help to attract and retain employees and ensure skills are in place. Many councils work with their partners to offer apprenticeship schemes or vocational qualifications. Succession planning is also important to develop future leaders and ensure that essential skills are in place.

Jobs can be re-designed to optimise the workforce and improve services. For example, generic roles across health and social care disciplines. Leaders need to engage with staff and trade unions over fundamental workforce reform. This is particularly challenging in an environment of potential job losses.

### The Council has a Resourcing Group to manage significant changes in staffing

The Council's service workforce planning boards are in place across Directorates and ALEOs and are used as the key mechanism to manage workforce capacity. Additional requests for staffing where there is a service or legislative requirement, or budget and service reform requests to redeploy staff are escalated to the cross-Council family Resourcing Group. This allows Corporate HR and the wider HR Community to manage significant staffing changes.

### There is a succession planning framework programme across the organisation

The Council has a succession planning framework to support employee development. The Resourcing Group is responsible for implementation of the framework across services, and support services to evaluate:

- ▶ If succession plans for all key positions have been identified;
- ▶ How effectively employees assessed as "ready now" within the framework perform on appointment to promoted posts; and
- ▶ The impact of any current skills gaps.

However, we have noted as part of our audit engagement that in some services there remains scope to improve the effectiveness of succession planning. Where services experience significant turnover in staff, or changes to required skills at pace, current arrangements can mean that key roles are not filled quickly.

Training on effective Succession Planning is available on GOLD, (Glasgow Online Learning and Development), which is the Council family's digital learning platform. A pilot programme with Glasgow Clyde College, has been developed within the

NRS People Managers programme to support career conversations with staff, personal development plans and training needs analysis. It is hoped that this will future proof the workforce whilst engaging frontline staff in considering a career pathway in NRS. Interested staff members can apply for a BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering.

**The Strategic Plan identifies key workforce needs and priorities**

Like many local authorities in Scotland, the Council has identified that there is a need to diversify the workforce within its Strategic Plan. The Council has identified that the workforce is under-represented by those aged under 20. Exhibit 3 notes that the age distribution of the Council’s employees improved in 2023/24, but that the proportion of employees aged over 50 was 42% at March 2024, down from 45% in March 2023.

In September 2023, the Council approved its Youth Employment Strategy to bring together a number of key strands of work to support the development of a sustainable workforce plan that helps to protect future service delivery.

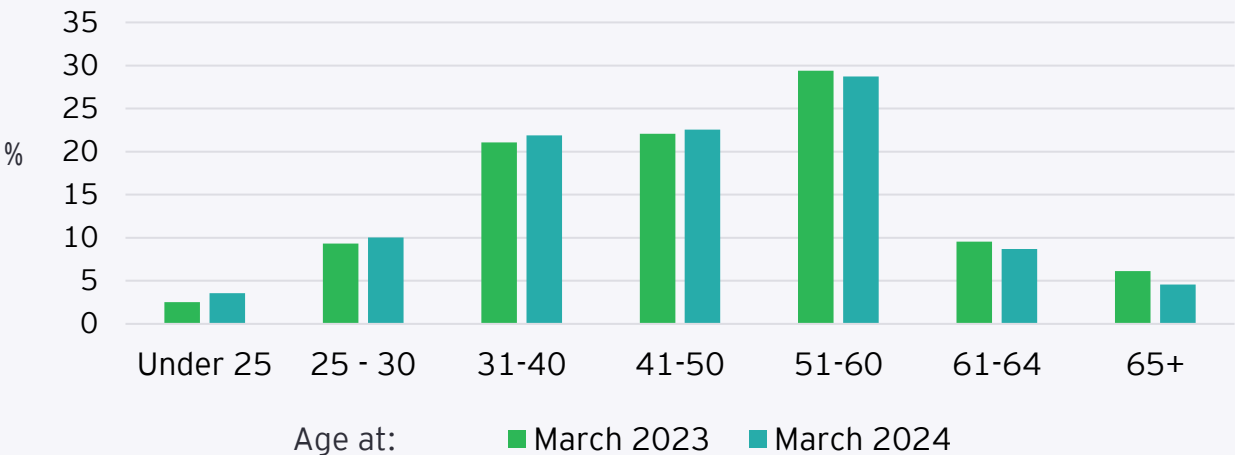
A programme of youth consultation was carried out with the current young people employed at the Council, including modern apprenticeships, graduates and permanently employed young people and young people in their final years of education at local schools.

This work identified a programme of actions to help the Council to achieve its objectives, including employee development and digital engagement.

The Council has aligned the Youth Employment Strategy to the Grand Challenges identified within the Strategic Plan, including:

- ▶ Investment in youth employability and training opportunities to support the reduction of poverty and inequality across the city.
- ▶ Investment in career development pathways and succession planning to retain skills and opportunities within the city.
- ▶ Investing in sustainable skills for the transition to a net zero Glasgow.

**Exhibit 4: The Council’s Strategic Plan reflects the priority to attract younger people into the workforce. Around 42% of the workforce were over 50 at March 2024**



Source: Glasgow City Council workforce reporting



## **| The Council's Corporate Graduate Programme has resulted in 65% remaining employed within the Council family**

The Council's Corporate Graduate Programme has supported 69 graduates since 2016. The programme is a two-year supported skills development and career management programme which targets young people across the City, but with a particular focus on reflecting the diversity of the city. Applications from underrepresented categories in the current workforce are therefore particularly encouraged.

The Council see this as an opportunity to provide a first role for young people who may otherwise find it more challenging to secure employment directly out of University, but also a route to improve the age profile of its workforce.

The programme is part funded by the Glasgow Guarantee Employability Support

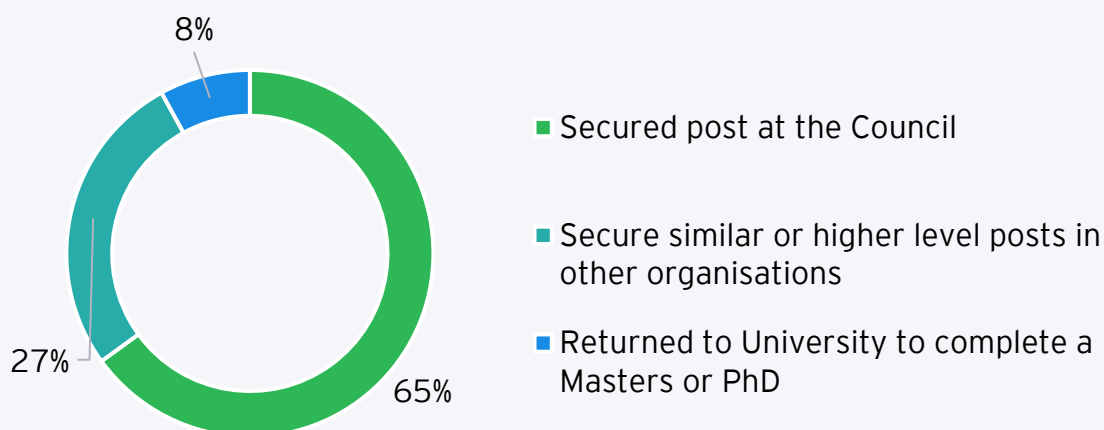
Initiative targeted at reducing and sustaining employment levels for Glasgow citizens.

The programme includes:

- ▶ A two-year development programme with core modules in self-management / awareness, confidence building, working in local government, first line management skills, project management, stakeholder engagement, effective communications, managing change and preparing for your future career.
- ▶ A tailored package of training relevant to the role.
- ▶ A senior manager as a dedicated mentor with regular meetings to support, encourage and assist your development.

At the end of the programme, graduates receive access to job opportunities across the Council family.

### **Exhibit 5: The Council's graduate programme has resulted in positive destinations for young people**



Source: Glasgow City Council reporting

If employment is not secured at end of the programme, graduates continue to get this access for a 6-month period. As Exhibit 4 highlights, the outcomes to date have been very positive, with 100% of graduates achieving a positive destination. Of the 65% who stayed within the Council family after the programme:

- ▶ At least 18% have gone on to secure a further promoted post; and
- ▶ 6% subsequently achieved a promoted post in another organisation.

### **| The Modern Apprenticeship programme has resulted in 51 positive destinations in 2024**

The Modern Apprenticeship Programme is a two to four year opportunity for young people aged 16-24 living within the Glasgow City Council boundary, to gain valuable work experience in a variety of different occupational areas whilst working towards a recognised Vocational Qualification.

This programme is funded through Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and supported by Glasgow Futures who offer a contribution towards the first year of the apprentice's salary.

The Council provide off-the-job additional training to ensure the apprentice will have the necessary skills and competencies to move into a role within the Council family. This also ensures any apprentice who successfully completes their programme will be guaranteed an interview for a suitable vacancy for up to 6 months after their apprenticeship is completed. The Council monitors the positive destinations of each of its apprenticeships to monitor success

Other arrangements have been made within specific services, for example the Health and Social Care Partnership has transitioned 31 student interns into permanent employment through a joint internship programme that it established with Glasgow Clyde College.

### **| The Council has identified a specific requirement to respond to the need for climate ready skills to support the aims of the Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan recognises the opportunity to develop sustainable skills within a Climate Ready Environmental Apprenticeship. In response, the Council's NRS Directorate has refreshed the Modern Apprenticeship programme to create a Climate Ready Modern Apprenticeship role to directly link to the Climate Plan and sustainability objectives.

The first apprenticeships were advertised in June 2023, and are a three-year modern apprenticeship to provide a range of placements across the city and attend Daldowie Training Centre regularly, to achieve qualifications in Horticulture and Waste Management.

## 5. What progress has the Council made with sharing roles or functions across its services and / or with other councils and partners?

### Introduction

Councils should look to work collaboratively with their partners to make the best use of their existing workforces and plan for the particular workforce needs in their areas. They should also work across traditional service department roles within councils to deliver improved services and outcomes.

Examples of this include generic working across health and social care, professional posts or functions shared between councils, and services delivered through empowered communities.

### Councils across Scotland have taken action to respond to skills shortages

Across Scotland, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) in Scotland is working with the Improvement Service on developing six workstreams to improve collaboration, for example within digital shared services to maximise the capability across Scottish local government.

Shared platforms already exist for areas such as My Job Scotland and resources including parentpay.

As the largest single employer, the Council plays a significant role in COSLA HR groups and has therefore supported national responses for skills gaps in Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Solicitors and Procurement.

### The Council is a member of Glasgow City Region, which has supported collaboration more locally

The Council is a member of the Glasgow City Region, where partners work collaboratively to use data from the Intelligence Hub to plan in the medium to long term. A Regional Local Government Skills Working Group is working with the University of the West of Scotland and the University of Dundee to launch a 2-year conversion course and full undergraduate course for Planning Skills. For students who are completing the course in Dundee, the Council provides the opportunity to complete work experience locally in Glasgow.

The group is also addressing skills gaps in other areas such as trading standards, health and social care.

### The Council has taken opportunities to share services

The Council's scale allows it to provide support to other, smaller, local authorities. Examples include:

- ▶ Sharing Audit Glasgow services with smaller bodies to allow them to benefit from the investment and expertise in internal audit.
- ▶ Supporting other councils with the out of hours call centre and road and lighting fault helpline.

## | 6. How effectively is the Council at measuring the impact of its workforce planning approach?

### **Introduction**

Councils should monitor the impact of their workforce planning and delivery approaches. This should include cost, service quality and productivity benefits as well as employee wellbeing. This in-turn should inform their workforce planning approach. Councils and their partners should also understand the wider impact of their employment practice on the local economy.

### **| The Council's understanding of its workforce is being enhanced by developments in data**

The Council continues to work with IT providers to enhance the availability of workforce data for senior management, including pilots of quarterly dashboards focusing initially on staff absences.

Under the current arrangements, the Corporate HR team provide rich data about the current workforce and challenges directly to individual services and ALEOs via Strategic HR Managers.

Workforce information, including the diversity of the organisation, is published annually and key statistics on absence and voluntary redundancy or early retirements are reported to appropriate committees.

### **| Performance Coaching Review (PCR) is the Council's performance management and development process**

The Council's Performance Coaching and Review (PCR) process is established for self-assessment, feedback and support to help individual employees develop their capabilities and potential to fulfil their job role and purpose. It is expected to be an employee led discussion held at least once annually. The timing of completion can move to support service work pressures.

The PCR process is not fully mandatory but completion rates are tracked by Corporate HR. The targets for completion are set by individual services, for example within the Chief Executive's Service and Finance the target is 85% completion. In NRS, completion rates have historically been much lower.

**| Recommendation 2:** Performance discussions are a critical process for any organisation to ensure that employees continue to fulfil their roles effectively and develop throughout their career. The Council should take steps to improve PCR participation rates.



**| The Council make use of employee surveys for specific issues but there has not been a full employee survey for a number of years**

The Council has used employee surveys to understand particular issues, such as:

- ▶ Temperature checks on progress with the NRS People Project;
- ▶ A survey of employees from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, driven by the BME Network with an aim to continue to diversify the workforce; and
- ▶ A Be Safe at Work survey related to the new preventative duty.

No full employee survey has been undertaken since prior to the pandemic, and there are not currently any plans to run another full survey due to resource availability and capacity.

The Council's main source of information on employee engagement is therefore on the matters arising within services and issues raised by trade unions.

**| Recommendation 3:** The Council should develop plans to monitor and track employee engagement, including at least annual workforce surveys.

# | Appendices

**A**

Recommendations and action plan

**B**

Best Value responsibilities under the Code of audit practice

# A

## Recommendations and Action Plan

We include an action plan to summarise specific recommendations included elsewhere within this Report. We grade these findings according to our consideration of their priority for the Council or management to action.

### Classification of recommendations

**Grade 1:** Key risks and / or significant deficiencies which are critical to the achievement of strategic objectives. Consequently management needs to address and seek resolution urgently.

**Grade 2:** Risks or potential weaknesses which impact on individual objectives, or impact the operation of a single process, and so require prompt but not immediate action by management.

**Grade 3:** Less significant issues and / or areas for improvement which we consider merit attention but do not require to be prioritised by management.

| No. | Findings and / or risk   | Recommendation / grading  | Management response / Implementation timeframe  |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 1   | There is not a single standalone workforce or people strategy that underpins the Strategic Plan or planning over the medium term. This is an expectation under the requirements of the <u>Best Value Statutory Guidance (2020)</u> and would support the Council's response to digital, technological and strategic changes. | There is an expectation that the Council will have a workforce strategy that sets out how it will deliver its vision, priorities and values in the medium term.<br><i>Grade 2</i> | Accepted. GCC will work to consider how this can be achieved taking cognisance of the size and scale of the organisation which will involve a strategic overview spanning the council and be supplemented by business area plans at a more detailed level.<br><br><b>Responsible officer:</b><br><br>Head of HR<br><br><b>Implementation date:</b><br><br>31 March 2026 |
| 2   | The Council's data highlights significant variation across services in the completion of the Performance Coaching and Review process.<br><br>Performance discussions are a critical process for any organisation to ensure that employees continue to fulfil their roles effectively and develop throughout their career.    | The Council should take steps to improve participation rates in the Performance Coaching and Review process across the Council.<br><i>Grade 2</i>                                 | <b>Response:</b> Accepted. The Council will continue to strive to improve participation in the PCR process across the Council<br><br><b>Responsible officer:</b><br><br>Head of HR<br><br><b>Implementation date:</b><br><br>30 June 2026 (following next two round of PCR Oct 25 and May 26)   |

## A

## Recommendations and Action Plan continued

| No. | Findings and / or risk  | Recommendation / grading   | Management response / Implementation timeframe   |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 3   | The Council has not completed a survey of the full workforce since prior to the pandemic and there is therefore a risk that employee satisfaction and engagement may not support the aims within the Strategic Plan. Employee surveys provide a way to demonstrate the effectiveness and value for money of key Council investments in its staff. | The Council should develop plans to monitor and track employee engagement, including workforce surveys.<br><br>Grade 2 | <b>Response:</b> Accepted. The Council is currently working on a number of employee engagement strategies to gauge the effectiveness of our workforce strategies.<br><br><b>Responsible officer:</b><br>Head of HR<br><br><b>Implementation date:</b><br>31 March 2026 |



## | The Council's responsibilities

Local government bodies have a duty to make arrangements to secure Best Value. Best Value is defined as continuous improvement in the performance of the body's functions. In securing Best Value, the local government body is required to maintain an appropriate balance among:

- ▶ the quality of its performance of its functions
- ▶ the cost to the body of that performance
- ▶ the cost to persons of any service provided by it for them on a wholly or partly rechargeable basis.

In maintaining that balance, the local government body shall have regard to:

- ▶ efficiency
- ▶ effectiveness
- ▶ economy; and
- ▶ the need to meet the equal opportunity requirements.

The local government body shall discharge its duties under this section in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

In measuring the improvement of the performance of a local government body's functions for the purposes of this section, regard shall be had to the extent to which the outcomes of that performance have improved.

The Scottish Government's Statutory Guidance on Best Value (2020) requires bodies to demonstrate that they are delivering Best Value in respect of seven themes:

1. Vision and leadership
2. Governance and accountability
3. Effective use of resources

4. Partnerships and collaborative working

5. Working with communities

6. Sustainability

7. Fairness and equality.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 is designed to help empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services.

Specified audited bodies are required to prepare and publish performance information in accordance with Directions issued by the Accounts Commission.

## | Auditor's responsibilities

As part of their integrated wider-scope annual audit work appointed auditors use a risk-based approach to assess and report whether the audited body has made proper arrangements for securing Best Value and is complying with its community planning duties, including reporting progress against previous Best Value findings and recommendations.

The Accounts Commission also requires the Controller of Audit to report to the Accounts Commission on each council at least once over the five-year audit appointment on the body's performance on its Best Value duty. This enables the Accounts Commission to make findings for improvement where appropriate.

The Accounts Commission reports nationally on thematic aspects of local government bodies' approaches to, and performance in, meeting their Best Value and community planning duties. Local government appointed auditors report locally on any such Best Value thematic work prescribed by the Accounts Commission.

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