

Head of Human Resources Operations

Vacancy Information Pack

Term: Permanent

Location: Oxford, Hybrid

Salary: £85,682 - £96,260 per annum

Closing date: Tuesday 25 November 2025

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Hear from Chief Executive, Martin Reeves

Thank you for your interest in joining our team at Oxfordshire County Council. You're potentially just a few steps away from the best career decision you'll ever make. With exciting changes in the local government environment coming soon, it's the perfect moment to join us.

What makes us special? Whatever you do, you'll be able to look around and say, "I made a difference". Because we're all bringing lasting change to people's lives in Oxfordshire. Every day, you'll be challenged in a new way, supported by your team, in an organisation that is free-thinking, flexible, and helps people achieve their ambitions. Working for us, you can create a unique career for yourself – while raising the bar for the future of the UK public sector, together.



Our focus for the past year has been shaping our organisation to be successful and sustainable for the future. We're on a journey to Deliver the Future Together and become:

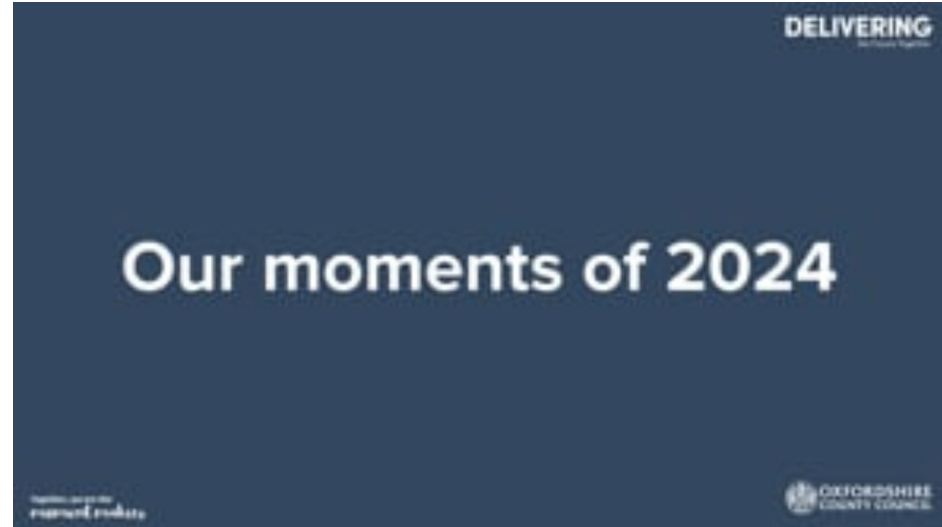
- ✓ an **employer of choice** – where everyone recommends working here;
- ✓ a **partner of choice** – nurturing purposeful relationships with partners who feel well supported by us; and
- ✓ a **place shaper of choice** – where we act as a convener across public, private and community groups to shape and lead an ambitious and more equal future for our place and our residents.

Hear from Chief Executive, Martin Reeves

In 2024, we spent time redesigning our leadership structure to make sure we have the right roles in the right areas. Our next phase is to review the size and shape of all our services, addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities locally and nationally, including devolution. That's where you come in.

We're seeking experienced, compassionate, inspiring leaders who can drive strategy and change in complex environments. We're looking for people who will live our values: always learning, be kind and care; daring to do it differently; equality and integrity in all we do; and taking responsibility. We prioritise ethical, inclusive leadership and the safety and wellbeing of our colleagues, while putting our residents at the heart of everything we do.

I'm proud of how much our organisation has achieved since I joined in March 2023 and I'm even more excited about what's to come! Take a look at some of our best moments of 2024.



Video Link: <https://shorturl.at/2sUjo>

*Feeling inspired? Join us and help us shape our
2025 moments and beyond!*

About Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire is home to approximately 800,000+ residents. It is one of the most rural counties in England and includes parts of three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: the Cotswolds to the Northwest, the North Wessex Downs to the south, and the Chilterns to the Southeast. Alongside picturesque villages and hamlets, the county has a range of vibrant market towns, such as Abingdon, Henley, Witney and Woodstock, together with the large town of Banbury and the historic city of Oxford.

Oxfordshire boasts a wealth of cultural and heritage sites, from the Ashmolean Museum to Blenheim Palace, while as a centre of excellence for learning and research, it has earned global recognition. Alongside the world-renowned University of Oxford, and one of the best new universities in the country Oxford Brookes University, the county has a range of internationally regarded research and development institutions, including the Synchrotron light source, Diamond.

We're the local authority for Oxfordshire, committed to delivering top quality services and value for money on behalf of the county's residents. These services range from museums and libraries to the disposal of waste, from the maintenance of our roads to the provision of adult and children's social care services. We employ almost 5,500 people to deliver those services.



About Oxfordshire County Council

Here are some of the things you might not know about us...

We received a Best Companies 1 Star accreditation in 2024 with a focus on Wellbeing, Fair Deal, and My Manager

We were ranked the 9th Best Big Company to Work for in the UK in 2024 by Best Companies

We were ranked the 6th Best Not-for-Profit Body to Work for in the UK 2024 by Best Companies

About Oxfordshire County Council

Our [strategic plan 2023 - 2025](#) sets out our vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

Oxfordshire is a county full of ideas, innovation, inspiration and an ambition to deliver. It is a great place to live, work, learn and raise a family. The county has many strengths: it is home to world-class academic and research institutions; we have one of the strongest economies in the UK, with over 400,000 jobs and 30,000 businesses; and our vibrant rural and urban communities are supported by an active voluntary and community sector.

These make Oxfordshire a very special place.

We want to make sure that everyone in Oxfordshire can take advantage of what the county has to offer. Our strategic plan explains our nine cross-cutting priorities and commitments to achieve our vision and sets out our areas of focus.

Our 9 Headline Projects

- 1) Create better spaces for residents and visitors in our town centres.
- 2) Work with transport partners towards a countywide integrated rail and bus offer.
- 3) Create two dedicated highways response teams to tackle issues in priority areas
- 4) Roll out a network of family hubs.
- 5) Through initiatives like Connect to Work, help people overcome barriers to employment
- 6) Support young people leaving care into employment.
- 7) Increase the number of children who reach a good level of development at age five.
- 8) Deliver more specialist school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 9) Support an expanded and coordinated programme of youth provision

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

On 16 December 2024, the Government published a white paper on a national programme of devolution and reform to local government. The Government wants successor councils to emerge from the current two-tier system and join a Strategic Authority. In February, all councils in Oxfordshire received the statutory invitation to submit proposals for local government reform. For more information: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/node/10068>

This role will be pivotal in ensuring the Council can meet the challenges for modernisation through LGR and ensuring that our services meet the needs of all Oxford residents.

The Government's vision for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of governing local areas in England

Local Government Reorganisation Timeline

Now & ongoing: public engagement on proposals to shape and finalise

Early '26: Government Consultation

Before Summer recess '26: Decision on proposals announced

After Summer recess '26: Secondary legislation presented to Parliament

6 May '27: Elections to the new shadow authorities

1 April '28: New authorities go live

Policymaking and coordination

Mayors may also come together across larger geographical areas to collaborate on inter-regional issues, like energy and water

Principal authorities come together to form **Strategic Authorities** (outside of London)

Tiers of government

National Government
Delivery and coordination of national level services, such as defense and macroeconomic policy, and services where national consistency is crucial, such as health

Strategic Authorities
Coordination of levers relating to local growth and issues crossing council boundaries, such as infrastructure planning, transport, and spatial planning, while convening partners for public service reform

Combined Authorities

Combined County Authorities

Greater London Authority

Principal Authorities
Delivery of local public services, place shaping and local public service reform

Unitary Councils

County Councils
District Councils

Representation

Mayoral and Enhanced SAs are represented through the **Council of Nations and Regions** and the **Mayoral Council**

Local authorities are represented through the **Leaders Council**



Welcome from the Director of HR & Cultural Change



Thank you so much for your interest in the Head of HR Operations role at Oxfordshire County Council.

We're genuinely excited about the journey our HR and Cultural Change team is on as we transform the way we work and bring our People and Culture Strategy to life. Our recent service redesign has helped us create a new operating model - one that brings clarity to our roles, gives us the capacity to deliver, and strengthens our 'one team' spirit.

Our focus is simple: **ATTRACT, THRIVE, GROW, LEAD**. Together, we're building a workplace where everyone can flourish and where we make a real difference for people across Oxfordshire. We're passionate about creating high-performing, innovative, and agile teams that truly reflect the communities we serve.

As our new Head of HR Operations, you'll be at the heart of this transformation - helping to shape our direction, champion new ideas, and drive positive change. If you're ready to bring your fresh perspective and make a meaningful impact, we'd love to hear from you!

Cherie Cuthbertson
Director of HR & Cultural Change

HR & Cultural Change Team: Vision & Priorities

Our Vision

We develop and maintain a high performing, innovative, highly engaged and agile teams, employing the best people, and reflecting the communities we serve. We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents.

Our People And Culture Strategy Priorities

ATTRACT: Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people

- It is essential that we are able to attract, recruit and retain our talented people to deliver excellent services for the residents of Oxfordshire

THRIVE: Enabling our people to thrive and perform

- Creating a positive and inclusive work environment built on fairness, trust and transparency will allow our People to thrive and perform.

GROW: Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future

- Providing growth opportunities both on and off the job to build our knowledge, skills and behaviours will help us all deliver the future together

LEAD: Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future

- Empowering our leaders to embrace the skills and behaviours needed to achieve high performance and effective outcomes

Why This Role Matters

Do you believe in delivering dynamic HR services and doing things differently to achieve great impact on your organisation?

We're looking for a forward-thinking seasoned HR professional who can challenge the status quo and understands the complexities of HR operations in a very large organisation.

We are gearing up for Local Government Reorganisation and doing things differently will mean modernising everything that we do and everything that we deliver and truly putting people at the heart of our organisation. This role is not just an ordinary Head of HR Operations, you will be a key member of the HR leadership team and exposed to decision making at the highest levels of the organisation. You will shape and influence the strategic focus and provide insights into HR operations to become an effective partner to the organisation.

Working alongside the HR Director you will ensure that HR solutions are recognised as modern, effective and innovative. Your effective coaching and mentoring style will ensure that your team can learn from the breadth of your experience. The scale of this role cannot be underestimated; with a very busy recruitment team, building new systems and processes, driving both the use of AI and data and insights, dashboards and reporting as well as establishing an effective help desk – all with a focus on driving manager self-service to be fit for the future.

Your insights into the effective management and delivery of employee relations will ensure that our people are supported, understand what is required of them and our managers lead with a focus on getting the best from our employees. This means thinking differently about our approach to employee relations, ensuring that mediation and informal resolution are used effectively to help build trust and positive working relationships.

What You'll Do

You'll lead a broad portfolio, challenging the status quo and helping to shape a future ready council, fit for Local Government Reorganisation and beyond.

With a clear mandate to drive purposeful change, you'll ensure our services are compliant, efficient, inclusive, and customer focused. From designing operational frameworks to embedding self-service tools, your work will empower managers, enhance the colleague experience, and bring Our People and Culture Strategy to life. Responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

- Leading a complex and high-profile operational service for the Council, driving delivery of the service's vision and strategic plan.
- Reporting to the Director of HR and Cultural Change, with financial oversight of an annual staffing budget of over £2 million, and contract management responsibilities for agreements totalling approximately £10 million per year.
- Managing an overall team of c.35 employees. Key areas include Employee Relations & Organisational Change, Pay and Reward, HR Policy & Insight, HR Systems and third-party shared services, Recruitment, and Trade Union relations.
- Collaborating with leaders and stakeholders across the organisation to develop strategies that support our ambition to be recognised as an employer of choice.

Before applying, we recommend reviewing the attached job description. It has further information and clear guidance on what we're looking for.

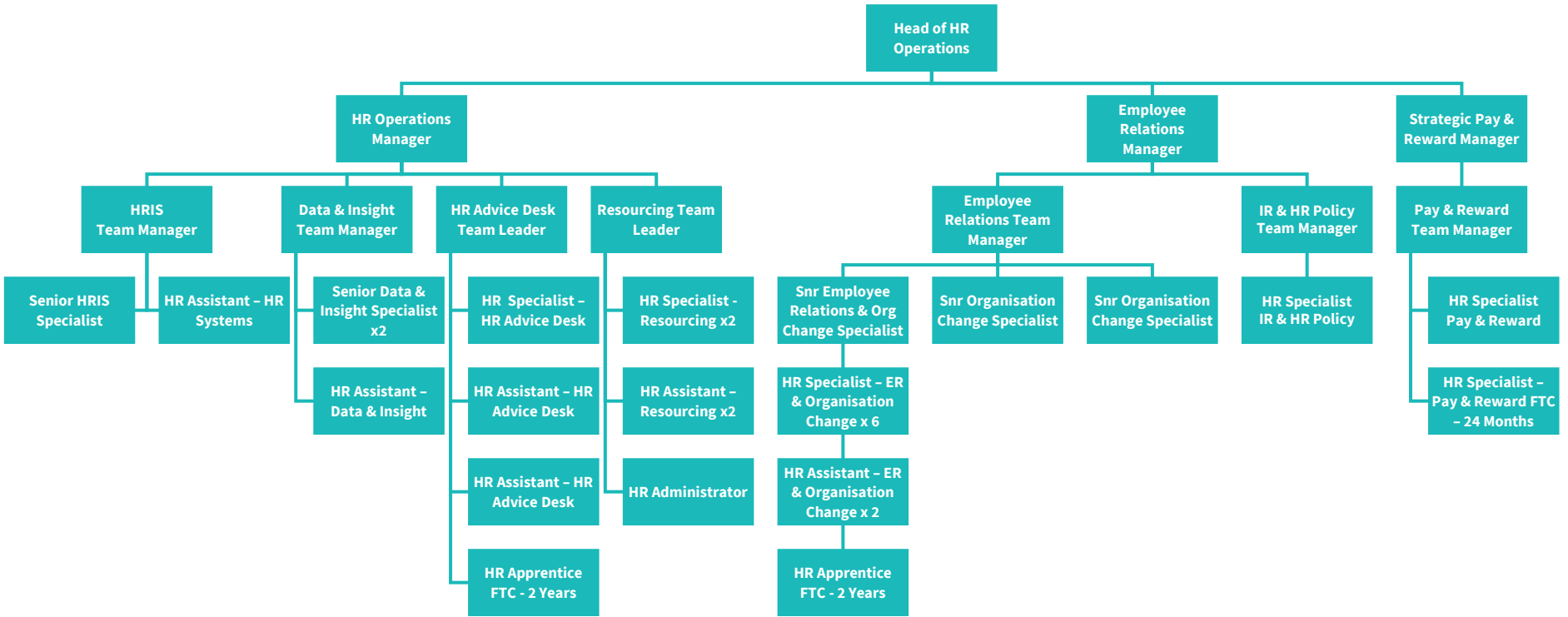
What You'll Bring

- **Bold leadership in HR Operations**, with experience guiding large, diverse teams through organisational change. Demonstratable success in leading services within complex environments, driving transformation, and inspiring continuous improvement across the workforce.
- **Credibility and influence**, built through strong relationships and stakeholder engagement. You'll be confident working with Trade Unions and navigating sensitive conversations with empathy and clarity.
- **A challenger mindset**, curious, courageous, and committed to doing things differently. You'll question legacy processes, champion innovation and drive continuous improvement that puts our people first. You'll have a strong track record of driving organisational culture change and operational excellence.
- **Expertise that inspires confidence**, underpinned by deep knowledge of HR legislation, policy and best practice. You'll stay ahead of national and local developments and translate them into meaningful action.
- **Values-led thinking**, grounded in inclusion, collaboration, and purpose. You'll help shape a workplace where everyone can thrive and contribute to a future-ready council.

Could this be you?

Team Structure Chart

HR Operations



What You Can Look Forward To

At OCC, you'll be part of a team that's not only passionate about *what* we do, but also *how* we do it.

This is a permanent role with hybrid working - typically one to two days a week in our central Oxford office, with flexibility to suit your role and lifestyle, balanced with business needs. The post holder must also be able to travel across the county and work from other locations when required.

- **General annual leave package** – 30 days plus bank holidays, and an option to 'buy' additional holiday
- **Local Government Pension Scheme** – with employer contributions up to 19.9%
- **Discounts** – local and national offers for shopping and travel
- **Great learning and development opportunities** to support your continued growth
- **Technology that supports hybrid and agile working**, with unlimited access to Microsoft Copilot for smarter productivity
- **Employee Assistance Programme** – including health and wellbeing support
- **Enhance family friendly policies**



Ready to Apply?



- This advert will close for applications on **25 November 2025**.
- Create an account in our recruitment system, Tribepad, and upload your CV and a personal statement explaining how your skills and experience meet the role requirements.
- Our advert describes the ideal, but we value diverse strengths and potential. If you meet most of what we're looking for, we'd love to hear from you.
- Shortlisting will begin after the advert closes on **26 November 2025**.
- **Interview Stage 1:** Technical interviews will be held online via Microsoft Teams, on **02 and 03 December 2025**.
- **Interview Stage 2:** Interviews are planned for **16 or 18 December 2025** at our central Oxford office. This will include a colleague engagement panel.
- Further details will be shared with those shortlisted. We'd like to stay on schedule but appreciate the holiday period is approaching. If any of the proposed dates aren't suitable, please let us know as early as possible.

Recruitment Process

 jobs.oxfordshire.gov.uk/your-journey

Our Commitments

Our commitment to: Equality Diversity and Inclusion

At Oxfordshire County Council we are proud of our diverse workforce. Everyone is accepted for who they are, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marital status, faith or belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or on maternity or family leave. We have a number of staff network groups which provide peer support, education and safe spaces for all.

Our commitment to: Guaranteed Interview Schemes

As a Disability Confident employer, we guarantee an interview for disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the job. We also guarantee interviews to care leavers who have completed further education and who meet the essential criteria for the job. For those leaving care without any further education, we guarantee an interview for our apprenticeships. We are also committed to helping and supporting those transitioning from HM Armed Forces to civilian life and guarantee an interview for those demonstrating the essential criteria for the role, within three years of leaving the service.

Our commitment to: Safeguarding

Oxfordshire County Council are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults. We expect all employees, workers and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect these commitments.

Our commitment to: Flexible Working

We are open to discussions about flexible working, which can include flexi-time, full time and part time working, job sharing, nine-day fortnights and annualised hours, depending on the requirements of the role and the service.



Contact Information

For a confidential discussion about the role, please contact Jan Cox, Interim Head of HR Operations by email on janet.cox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

If you encounter any technical issues with the application system, please contact the careers team at careers@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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