

HR Committee

17 December 2020



Report of: Director: Workforce & Change

Title: 2020 employee engagement survey

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Stephanie Griffin (Head of Internal Communications and Organisational Development)

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Recommendation

The Committee notes the report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the results of the 2020 employee survey and the interim wellbeing surveys undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The significant issues in the report are:

The Workforce Strategy sets out the actions to create a working environment which helps employees perform at their best. To measure the impact of these actions and guide the future work programme, an annual employee survey has been introduced.

The survey took place during March 2020 and is a snapshot of views prior to the pandemic - as lockdown was announced whilst the survey was open. The percentage of colleagues responding positively has increased for every question. This is as a result of the work of colleagues across the organisation to address the areas identified for improvement following the 2019 survey.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we ran two interim surveys to understand how colleagues were feeling about new working arrangements and what further support they needed. This will be used to develop our employee health and wellbeing offer and help shape plans for future workplace arrangements.

Policy

1. The Corporate Strategy describes the aspirations for the future organisation, one where we innovate and improve where we need to, ensuring the council is one that people are proud of and which delivers its priorities to high standards.
2. The Workforce Strategy outlines our commitment to engaging regularly with the workforce to measure the impact of our actions and help shape the future plans. Our employee survey focuses on measuring engagement which will drive performance across the organisation.

Consultation

3. **Internal**
The results have been shared with staff led groups, Cabinet members, trade union learning reps and all staff.
4. **External**
Not required because this report is for information only.

Context

5. Survey design

The objective of the annual employee survey is to gauge a clear understanding of:

- The current level of employee engagement.
- The barriers and opportunities to enhance engagement.
- Employee's awareness and understanding of key council priorities and values.
- Areas that require further attention.

Where possible, the questions remain the same each year in order to track trends and progress on actions in the Workforce Strategy. Additional questions added this year were around awareness of whistle blowing procedures; the extent to which our organisational values inform our day to day work; and the quality of performance reviews.

Consultation on the draft design was undertaken with employee groups – including staff led groups and Trade Union Learning Reps.

The survey was available online with hard copy and alternative formats available for those who needed them.

6. Encouraging participation

To ensure maximum participation a comprehensive programme of communication and engagement was undertaken. This included:

- Survey briefings at team meetings
- Staff led groups and trade unions learning reps encouraging participation with their groups
- A series of communication messages in the run up to and then through the survey period through numerous channels

- Posters, banners and survey deposit boxes in key locations for offline employees
- Walkabouts and briefing sessions with the senior leadership team

7. Results and emerging themes

The survey had been open for two weeks when the first nationwide lockdown began, colleagues were diverted to the council's response work and completion rates understandably dropped. There were 2,180 responses which represents a 35% response rate. This was lower than 2019 which achieved a 51% response rate, however the results are comparable as the response rate for the equivalent period of time was the same.

The analysis of the results is shown in Appendix I. This includes the organisational results and a summary of the results for equality groups.

There has been an improvement in all areas, the percentage of colleagues responding positively has increased for every question asked in 2020. Following the 2019 survey, there was a focused effort to identify and address areas for improvement through local action planning.

In addition, during May and October we ran two interim surveys to understand how colleagues were feeling about specific issues related to new ways of working during the pandemic, their health and wellbeing and any additional support they need. The highlights from these two surveys, and their comparison to the annual survey results have been included in Appendix I.

The results of the surveys will be used to shape proposals for the future arrangements for the workplace, and has helped inform the work to support the health and wellbeing of colleagues.

Proposal

8. That Committee notes the report

Other Options Considered

9. None.

Risk Assessment

8. Not required because this report is for information only.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 11a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
 - i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.

- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

11b) Not required because this report is for information only.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

Not required because this report is for information only.

Financial

(a) Revenue

Not required because this report is for information only.

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not required because this report is for information only.

Appendices:

I – 2020 annual employee survey results and highlights from interim surveys

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None.