

## **STAFF SURVEY**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The following information is provided as a reminder to Members of the background to this item. Copies of presentations referred to can be found within either the agenda packs or minutes on modern.gov or via the Council's website under the appropriate meeting.

- 1. The item was originally discussed at the Overview & Scrutiny Board meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013 as part of the Work Programme item, when Members discussed that an online staff survey had been produced in August 2013.**
- 2. At its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014 Members received a presentation from the Executive Director, Finance and Resources which gave a summary of the results of the staff survey, the minute extract is detailed below:**

*The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources circulated a copy of a presentation that had been produced summarising the results of the staff survey. She explained that the survey had been completed by 40% of staff. Responses had included 800 comments from individual members of staff. Due to the scale of these responses it had taken time to analyse the feedback that had been received.*

*Some of the feedback that had been received had been positive. However, there had also been some responses that had caused concern. For example, only 45% of staff had indicated that they took part in regular team meetings and 50% had indicated that they did not receive feedback from their managers regarding their performance.*

*Members discussed the content of the presentation and highlighted the following points:*

- The difficulty for Members to scrutinise the effectiveness of the Steering Group's response to the staff survey results without first having an opportunity to consider the responses that had been received from staff.*
- The fact that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) had also not analysed all of the responses received from staff because this feedback had been treated as confidential. Additional information would be presented for the consideration of CMT at the end of April, though this information would have the same level of detail as that which was contained within the presentation to the Board.*
- The potential to share general feedback received from staff, trends within departments and in relation to sickness absence rates without breaching staff confidentiality.*
- Concerns that one to ones and team meetings were not taking place as regularly as they should be.*
- The frequency of the staff surveys.*

- *The potential for Members to consider a copy of the survey template to enable the Board to assess the feedback provided by staff in context.*
- *The length of time it had taken to assess the feedback received from staff and how this compared to other organisations where staff surveys were circulated.*
- *The fact that completion of the survey was not compulsory.*

RESOLVED that

- a representative of the Steering Group be asked to attend the Board meeting to be held on either 16<sup>th</sup> June or 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014 to present more detailed information about the responses received to the staff survey; and*
- a copy of the survey template be provided for Members' consideration at that meeting.*

**3. At its meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014 a further presentation was received from the Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development – the minute4 extract is provided below:**

*The Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development delivered a presentation which summarised the results of the staff survey conducted in August 2013 (Appendix 1).*

*Following this presentation a number of points were raised by Members:*

- *The level of responses that had been received from staff, which represented a third of the employees from both Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council.*
- *The potential to design and promote future versions of the survey in ways that would encourage a larger proportion of staff to respond in future years. Officers confirmed that the survey had been made available both electronically and in paper form for staff to complete.*
- *The value of assessing responses at a departmental level and the challenges this would present to the Staff Survey Working Group due to the fact that staff were not required to indicate which department they worked in when completing the survey.*
- *Some of the feedback that had been received in completed surveys, particularly the qualitative data, had been treated as confidential. This was because in some cases the comments submitted by staff could have enabled observers to identify the respondent or a specific team.*
- *The potential for senior Officers to make themselves available for staff to access across numerous working sites. Members were advised that senior Officers would not focus on one action exclusively but rather would seek to engage with staff face-to-face using a range of methods in order to meet the differing needs across both Councils.*
- *The Working Group's Action Plan, which was in the process of being developed would be utilised to monitor progress in implementing actions taken in response to the feedback, particularly the top ten recommendations.*
- *The benefits of face to face communications between staff arising from "No Email" days.*

- *How the feedback that had been received compared to the responses to previous versions of the staff survey. Members suggested that in future a record should be kept of the responses received in order to ensure that progress with addressing staff concerns could be monitored.*
- *The importance of 1:2:1 meetings for staff and the need for these to be held regularly. However, it was noted that there needed to be some flexibility across the organisation regarding the frequency of these meetings due to the varying work patterns and demands on staff employed in different services.*
- *The fact that some staff struggled with change and the challenges this presented at a corporate level during the course of service transformation.*
- *The failure of some ICT systems and the financial implications that this presented for the Council.*

*Concerns were expressed in respect of the 14.75% of respondents who had indicated that they had been subject to bullying and harassment while at work. Officers confirmed that there was a policy for managing reports relating to bullying and harassment and this was applied by managers when cases were reported directly by members of staff. Improved training of managers would further enable them to respond to reports of bullying and harassment in a sensitive manner. There were also support groups, such as Phone a Friend, which could provide advice to staff. Members concurred that it was important to demonstrate to all staff that the Council would not tolerate bullying and harassment and it was suggested that this could be highlighted within the top ten recommendations.*

*The Board also discussed the proposal for the staff finder and phone lists to be updated in order to improve internal communications. Members noted that unfortunately they were not able to access the intranet, where the staff finder facility was located, using their Council IT equipment. However, the Board recognised that it was important to provide all elected Members with access to staff contact details as this could help Members to manage issues raised at both Committee meetings and by residents in a constructive manner.*

RECOMMENDED that

1. *a statement should be added to the top ten recommendations arising from the staff survey which demonstrates that the Council has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment among staff;*
2. *the contact details for staff, as detailed in the staff finder on the Council's intranet, should be made available for the consideration of elected Members; and*

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

3. **At the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 the Board received both a report and presentation, together with a copy of the questionnaire. The relevant minute extract is given below:**

*The Acting Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager delivered a presentation on the subject of the staff survey. During the delivery of the presentation she raised the following points for Members' consideration:*

- *The survey, which was circulated in August 2013, had been completed by 40 per cent of staff.*
- *There had been delays in analysing the data due to the complexity and volume of the feedback.*
- *Responses had been treated as confidential and every effort had been made to ensure that individual respondents could not be identified.*
- *There had been a low response rate from Bromsgrove depot, which would be addressed in any future surveys.*
- *A Working Group, comprising senior Officers, had been established to consider the feedback provided in the surveys.*
- *Sub-Groups had also been established to consider four key themes, chaired by members of the Working Group.*
- *The four key themes identified from analysis of the feedback were; management and the need for managers to manage staff in a different way in a changing environment, the need for more effective internal communications, the importance of an appropriate working environment that enabled staff to be a healthy workforce, and failures in ICT support and the impact of IT improvements on wider service delivery.*
- *Action had been taken in a variety of areas to address the concerns raised by staff.*
- *The first event relating to the Council's Time to Change pledge would take place at Bromsgrove Council House on 5th March 2015.*
- *The Council was participating in the Worcestershire Works Well accreditation process.*
- *A new performance management framework was being piloted in the business transformation team.*
- *A new induction process, which would include face-to-face support, mentoring and podcasting, was due to be introduced.*
- *A generic skills matrix was being launched focusing on 25 skills all staff required in addition to any technical and specialist abilities.*
- *Additional support for staff was being made available in Bromsgrove and the Phone a Friend service was due to be re-launched with new volunteers.*
- *Monthly updates were being delivered through Oracle newsletters.*
- *A staff choir had been launched due to identified links between singing and wellbeing.*
- *In total 11% of respondents had reported that they had experienced some form of bullying from either the public or other officers in the workplace. The Council's Bullying Policy had been promoted in an attempt to address this problem.*
- *The information available to staff in respect of corporate priorities, performance measures and strategic purposes had been updated and various ICT policies would be rewritten to ensure they were user friendly for staff.*
- *The new survey would be launched outside the school holiday period in order to maximise the number of responses.*
- *Officers were intending to use the same questions in the survey to ensure that the feedback could be compared to the data from the 2013 survey.*

*Following the delivery of the presentation Members discussed a number of points in further detail:*

- *The need for first aider and fire warden training to be delivered as part of the corporate training programme.*
- *The current content of the Bullying Policy and the extent to which changes needed to be made to the policy in order to secure a reduction in bullying.*
- *The type of issues that were considered bullying by staff.*
- *The training delivered in wellbeing sessions, covering healthy eating, physical exercise, breaks from work and health checks.*
- *The potential for exit interviews to take place in order for the Council to have an understanding why staff left. (Members were informed that these would be introduced across the organisation and the fact that these could only be undertaken on a voluntary basis.)*
- *The arrangements for the new Performance Development Review (PDR) framework which would look forward towards achieving objectives rather than backwards at past behaviour.*
- *Some concerns were expressed about the limited number of PDRs that staff had undertaken in recent years and the impact that this could have on both staff morale and performance.*
- *The provision of regular one-to-one meetings for staff and the fact that these varied in content and timescales.*
- *The payment of staff by increments rather than in accordance with an assessment of service performance.*
- *The number of times members of the Corporate Management Team had attended team meetings and the breakdown of attendances at these meetings.*
- *The number of new members of staff who would be employed by the Council in the following year.*
- *The potential value of a podcast in the corporate induction process and the benefits of face-to-face contact when welcoming new staff to the organisation.*
- *The content of the Oracle newsletters and the potential for these newsletters to be sent to Members alongside the monthly newsletter for Councillors.*
- *The operation of staff from Redditch Town Hall and the extent to which the working environment in the building was appropriate for shared services.*
- *The work that had been delivered in accordance with the Council's Equalities Plan.*
- *The reasons why the review of key behaviours in a customer driven organisation had been superseded. Officers explained that this had occurred as part of the on-going work to transform the organisation.*

*Members also suggested the following amendments to the survey:*

- *An additional question on the subject of health and wellbeing concerning the option to work from alternative locations to the standard Office workspace.*
- *The potential for "paternity" to be added as an additional option as a reason why a member of staff may have been subject to bullying or harassment.*
- *The potential for the option "lack of belief" to be rephrased as "no religious belief".*

*Following further discussion the Board*

**RESOLVED** *that the report be noted.*