

Overview & Scrutiny

6th July

Staff Survey Update

This paper provides an update in respect of the ongoing work and the planned approach for the next corporate staff survey.

It was the intention for the Staff Survey to be undertaken in the Summer of 2020, however, due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the associated additional work being undertaken across the organisation the full staff survey will now be undertaken later in the year.

As a result of the changes in working practices brought about by the pandemic, including closing some of our buildings to staff, working remotely and the extended use of technology, the decision was taken to carry out a number of smaller surveys to gauge the employee experience during these unprecedented times. Specifically, surveys have been undertaken to explore the effectiveness of communications during this time and another focusing on working arrangements.

Communication Survey

A survey was recently undertaken to ask our staff about how informed they were during the pandemic so we could use this data to build on or improve what we do going forward. As well as our usual channels, the intranet, monthly Oracle newsletter and Team Brief and direct e-mails, we have also used a lot more video to connect with staff and launched initiatives, like sharing home working photos, wear a hat to work day in a bid to combat social isolation. Kevin filmed his staff briefings to staff and on the intranet we set up dedicated coronavirus and well-being pages.

The survey showed that overall staff felt very well-informed and this was via the channels we had in place before – direct e-mails being the favourite. The areas where staff didn't feel informed about were decisions which are yet to be made e.g. return to work. They enjoyed seeing each other via the more light-hearted communications and enjoyed getting involved in things like the We'll Meet Again video.

A communications improvement plan, based on the results of this survey, includes more regular messages from Kevin, as staff enjoyed these, a dedicated recovery page on the intranet and using more interactive media, like videos, to engage with staff.

Working Arrangements Surveys

Two surveys, specifically relating to working arrangements during the pandemic, are currently being undertaken. Over the last three months a large number of employees have worked in different ways in order to continue to deliver services to our customers, including working from home. The surveys provide an opportunity to hear employee's thoughts on how the different practices might, or might not, benefit both our workforce and the public we serve. Two surveys have been undertaken, an employee survey and a survey for Managers, specifically to seek the views from fourth and fifth tier officers on the use of mobile and/or home working from both a team and service delivery perspective.

Staff Survey

As outlined above, due to the pandemic, the plan to deliver a corporate staff survey has been delayed until later in the year. It is still the intention to use the same provider to undertake the staff survey. The provider was previously engaged following a workforce engagement project conducted by the Local Government Association, the Councils engaged with Martin Reddington Associates, this company is an expert in the field of employee engagement using a bespoke methodology referred to as The Employment Deal Diagnostic (TEDD). Engaging with the same provider will enable the Council to directly compare results with the previous survey.

The provider will produce the survey using the bespoke methodology. There is limited capacity to modify the questions too much, however, the questions can be, in part, tailored to ensure they are relevant and appropriate to the Council. The provider also analyses and interprets the data, providing reports by service area and supporting the organisation in interpreting the findings. The cost of the survey will be £4,750 as agreed in the contract.

We have not yet discussed or engaged the provider due to the current circumstances however, we will begin discussions when we are in a position to finalise the timings of the next survey.