

Overview & Scrutiny Board

29th March 2021

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 originally 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 in respect of other surveys to employees, the staff survey will be reviewed with a view to understanding it in the spring.

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, both surveys were referenced in the last report to O&S although the Working Arrangement Survey was currently out to employees and managers at the time of the O&S meeting.

Working Arrangements Surveys

We have now analysed the results of the remote working survey. There were two surveys, specifically relating to working arrangements during the pandemic. 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.

The two surveys were 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.

The survey had:

- * A response rate of over 79% (451 currently working from home, 358 valid returns)
- * Mixed responses – some positive, some negative
- * Been carried out after a sufficient time had passed to make responses meaningful.
- * A rate of return that may be an indication of how strongly people feel about this.
- * One dataset which should be balanced with other information and knowledge about our services/staff.
- * Responses from a moment in time when pandemic stresses were in place. In the 'old normal' the experience may have been different to the pandemic normal.

Key findings: (358 staff respondents, 64 managers)

- * Before lockdown 238 (66.9%) of our staff never worked from home. With (115) 32% who worked from home some of the time.
- * Managers establishment information indicates that since lockdown 451 members of staff have been working from home.
- * 89% of respondents said they were clear about the outcomes expected of their work whilst working from home.
- * 44.5% said wfh had affected their wellbeing and life balance in a positive way.
- * 40.9% it had affected them both positively and negatively, only 5.5% indicated it had been negative.

How the data is being used:

- * Services will review the service level data to identify key issues including areas of strength and areas where improvement maybe required.
- * We will be looking to ensure we can capture the views of our employees on a more regular basis – possibly a few key questions that can be quickly and easily analysed.
- * There is a potential opportunity for some far reaching changes to be made.

Wellbeing Survey

We had planned to undertake a formal Wellbeing Survey for our staff linked the HSE Stress Risk Audit, this was delayed due to the pandemic. However, we have now undertaken the Wellbeing Survey, 'Caring for the Workforce Audit', a survey to help the council to understand if or where our staff may be in need of additional support or where changes around working practices may be needed to help reduce levels of stress. The audit was carried out by an external organisation – AMC Consultancy – to ensure the highest levels of confidentiality. The data will be fed back to the councils in the form of corporate reports showing any hotspots in terms of service areas and specific stressors. The survey has been shared with all employees, either via work emails, hard copies where necessary or personal emails where staff have requested an electronic copy rather than a hard copy. We are pleased to report that 236 employees have provided their personal email address in order to receive the survey electronically in place of a hard copy. We believe this a positive indication of the result of engaging with our employees in previous surveys and demonstrates the importance of sharing survey feedback with staff, resulting in staff actively wishing to participate in future surveys.

The survey has now closed and we are awaiting the result, however, we are pleased to confirm we have received a response rate of 64% (533 returns). As a comparison we received a response rate of 54% for the previous full staff survey.

Staff Survey

As outlined above, due to the pandemic, the plan to deliver a corporate staff survey has been delayed, the timing of the Remote Working Survey and the Wellbeing Survey will all provide data that we may wish to explore further as part of the wider Staff Survey. As such the full staff survey date will be reviewed in the spring.

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 TEDD® tool has now been enhanced by Culture FITT® - effectively developing a new 'lenses' on the data to show different organisational climates.

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.

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