



Title of meeting:	Employment Committee
Date of meeting:	26 th February 2019
Subject:	Employee Opinion Survey
Report by:	Jon Bell, Director of HR, Legal and Performance
Wards affected:	None
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the results of the 2018 Employee Opinion Survey, and the actions being taken to address issues raised in the survey

2. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- (i) Note the results of the 2018 Employee Opinion Survey as set out in Appendix 1
- (ii) Note and, where appropriate, agree the actions set out in section 4 below

3. Background

- 3.1 The council carries out a survey of all staff on an annual basis, to ascertain staff's views on a range of issues. The latest survey was carried out in July 2018
- 3.2 Directors have been provided with more detailed results relating to their own staff, to enable them to identify service-specific issues and develop actions to respond to these.
- 3.3 53% of staff completed the survey, a slight increase on last year. This means that the council can place considerable reliance on the survey results. However, it should be noted that response rates varied significantly between different parts of the council.
- 3.4 Overall, results showed a positive trend in the majority of areas. This is analysed further in the paragraphs below:

3.4.1 Training and development



Rates of satisfaction have increased marginally for all questions related to training and development. It is very encouraging that the vast majority of staff feel they have the skills needed to do their job effectively. However, while other responses have improved slightly, it is still concerning that more people do not believe they can access the learning and development they need, or that it has not helped to improve their performance or career development.

3.4.2 Reward and recognition

Satisfaction rates for all questions relating to reward and recognition have improved. There has been a significant increase from 50% to 55% of staff who are satisfied by the recognition they receive. There has also been an increase from 61% to 66% of staff believing the balance of pay and benefits they receive is appropriate for their role. There has also been an increase from 46% to 48% of staff who think they are fairly paid. For the first time, questions were asked about the "My Rewards" benefit portal. This showed that 84% of respondents were aware of the portal but only 25% have used it.

3.4.3 Opportunity to feedback

There was an increase in satisfaction in most questions about the opportunity that staff have to feedback. In particular there has been an increase from 48% to 56% of staff who believe that the council gives them the opportunity to contribute their views and suggestions. More staff also believe that their manager is open to their ideas and suggestions, with an increase from 70% to 74%.

3.4.4 Health and wellbeing

For the first time, there was a dedicated section in the survey asking staff about issues relating to their health and wellbeing. This has highlighted that only 47% of staff believe that the council provides for their mental health, although 55% believe that the council provides support for their physical health.

3.4.5 Work/life balance

Slightly more staff feel that they are trusted to manage their own workload and have the opportunity to work flexibly in their role, compared to the previous survey. Overall however there was a slight decrease in how positive staff feel about their work/life balance. In particular there has been a decrease from 59% to 56% in the belief by staff that they are able to get their work done in their contracted hours. Staff are also less satisfied with their physical working environment.

3.4.6 Values

When staff were asked if they were proud to work for the council, a significant increase was recorded with 70% indicating this was still the case, compared with 64% in the previous survey.

3.4.7 Change

There was a slight increase in staff who believe that the council and their directorate are responding well to our financial challenges. Overall however, change continues to be challenging for staff and only 34% of staff believe the council as a whole manages change effectively. There has also been a large decrease from 68% to 59% in the number of staff who understand the budget setting process.



3.4.8 Communications

There has been a slight increase in how well staff feel that their team is working across the council, from 81% to 83%. The number of staff who feel well informed about the council has also shown a marginal increase from 60% to 62%. There has, however, been a decrease from 55% to 52% of staff who find the information on the intranet helpful.

3.4.9 Leadership/My manager

When asked about leadership and management, all scores had improved with the confidence staff have in the leadership of their immediate managers increasing most significantly from 70% to 76%. There has been an increase of 83% to 88% of staff believing that their manager treats them with fairness and respect.

3.4.10 Personal Development Reviews (PDRs)

Significantly fewer respondents indicated they have had a PDR in the last 12 months, from 63% to 52%. There has, however, been a significant increase in staff who know how their work contributes to their directorate business plans from 67% to 73%, and the number of staff who responded who have considered and agreed their development needs has increased from 72% to 79%.

4. Actions in Response to Survey Results

A number of actions are underway, or planned to address the areas highlighted in the survey:

4.1 Reward and recognition

The council has decided to pay the Foundation Living Wage (FLW). It has also implemented the 2-year national pay award for 2018-2020, which was higher than in previous years, particularly for lower-paid staff. The council's overall package of pay and benefits remains broadly comparable to other organisations in the sector, although competing with private-sector salaries for certain professional roles continues to be a challenge.

Regular benchmarking of the council's salary levels will continue, and market supplement payments used as appropriate where particular recruitment and retention issues exist.

Uptake of the "My Rewards" employee benefits scheme is lower than expected, which has inevitably been influenced by the Government's tightening of salary-sacrifice rules. The content and marketing of the scheme will be reviewed to ensure that it remains attractive and relevant to staff.

4.2 Training and Development

The council has continued to improve its Learning & Development (L&D) offering. This has included:



- Using the apprenticeship levy to create apprenticeships in a wide range of professional areas, including legal, finance and surveying. The council now has more than 200 apprentices.
- Restructuring the L&D team to focus on the council's current and future training needs
- Implementing a new Learning Management System (LMS), the "Portsmouth Learning Gateway" to improve access to training for all staff
- Increasing the range of "E-Learning" courses available
- Developing a new leadership and management offering (see below)
- Providing mandatory training in areas such as cyber security and data protection
- Reviewing the council's "Welcome to PCC" induction programme

The majority of this is provided as part of the council's core HR provision, or under the apprenticeship levy, and so there is no additional cost to service budgets. However, there is still a high dependency on managers identifying their staff members' training and development needs, and approving their enrolment and attendance on courses. Inevitably this becomes increasingly difficult when capacity is limited, and may also be linked to the declining responses in respect of PDRs (see below).

HR will review the current arrangements for identifying and fulfilling development needs for staff, working with managers across the council to provide an effective solution.

4.3 Health and wellbeing

The council has now appointed a Workplace Wellbeing Co-Ordinator, funded from the Public Health Transformation Fund, who is responsible for promoting wellbeing across the council's staff, including at the council's remote locations. The Workplace Wellbeing Co-ordinator has commenced a programme of activities and interventions to improve staff wellbeing across the council.

Regular updates on these activities are provided to Employment Committee as part of the reports on sickness absence management. However activities include:

- Lunchtime walks have continued to be embedded into the council with new walks having started from Paulsgrove and Leigh Park housing offices
- The Workplace Wellbeing Coordinator hosted 3 wellbeing roadshow events at the Civic Offices and interacted with just under 250 members of staff, providing them with a wealth of materials on wellbeing support and activities available to staff. These events were specifically organised in response to the employee opinion survey where the results indicated that employees weren't always aware of where to access information to manage their health and wellbeing. Wellbeing leaflets and banners have also been produced to direct staff to the 'my wellbeing' intranet site. Further work is also being undertaken to organise these events outside of the Civic offices with the 1st happening within Adult Services at QA hospital.
- The winter wellness campaign has continued to show positive results with more members of staff having had the Flu vaccination than previous years. Public Health has indicated that this years' vaccination is successful in preventing flu. This would suggest it has the ability to reduce sickness absence for flu and colds in the first 3 months of 2019.

- Additional mental health training for managers has been organised and fully booked for February and March. We will be completing a procurement exercise in the coming weeks to appoint a provider to deliver these sessions on a regular basis.
- The newly revamped "welcome to PCC" induction programme now includes a range of information on staff wellbeing, including activities such as walks, posture awareness training and mindfulness. But also how to access the wellbeing pages on the intranet and the Employee Assistance Programme.
- The contracts for Occupational Health and Employee Assistant Programmes are in the process of being re-let, with a stronger emphasis on wellbeing
- In February there will be a new campaign to encourage employees to use the stairs rather than the lifts to improve fitness. Using the stairs burns more calories per minute than jogging, reduces cardio risk by more than 30%, helps control weight and builds muscle tone and is an easy way to build fitness into your life and make it habit. The campaign will include communication messages to all staff as well as new signage being displayed around the lift areas of the Civic Offices and other locations.

4.4 Managing Change

There has been a large decrease from 68% to 59% of staff who understand the budget-setting process, and many staff perceive that the council does not manage change well.

Information will be shared with staff to help them understand more about the council priorities including how the council is responding to its financial challenges, generating income and managing change. Clearer communications will be developed around the budget-setting process.

The ability of managers to lead and implement change has been recognised as a key driver for success in this area, and is an area of focus in the Leadership and Management provision detailed in 4.6 below.

4.5 Personal Development Reviews (PDRs)

This has historically been an area of challenge for the council, with differing schools of thought amongst senior managers about the value of a formalised annual appraisal as opposed to a more flexible, ongoing approach to agreeing objectives and managing performance on a continuous basis. This issue has previously been debated by members at Employment Committee, and the most recently agreed position was that all staff should have some kind of PDR, but that the format and frequency of this should be determined by service managers based on the specific needs of each service area. HR have produced a range of tools and templates for managers to use, as required, to enable them to do this.

It is clear from the survey that a decreasing number of staff have received what they consider to be a PDR, although increasing numbers of staff feel that their objectives are clear and that they have opportunity to discuss their development needs. This



suggests that the current approach is proving effective and it is proposed that this continues.

4.6 Leadership and Management

Although confidence levels in leadership have improved, there is an ongoing need to develop the skills of managers, as well as equipping future leaders with the skills necessary for them to move into more senior roles.

The council has recently reviewed its leadership and management development, and now provides a wide range of training and development opportunities for managers at all levels, as well as aspiring managers. This includes:

- Apprenticeship-based MBA courses at University of Portsmouth
- Leadership and Management qualifications (all levels up to Level 7 (Master's Degree))
- Restorative practice training for managers
- Core management skills training (includes recruitment, absence management etc)
- A wide range of e-learning courses on a variety of management skills (using "Skills Boosters" package)
- Bespoke facilitation and team-building support
- Coaching and mentoring

The effectiveness of this provision will be reviewed over the coming year to ensure that it is meeting the council's current and future needs.

4.7 Communications

There has been a decrease from 55% to 52% of staff find the information on the intranet helpful. Staff user groups will be established to inform the future development of the intranet to ensure it contains useful information that is easy for staff to access.

5. Reasons for recommendations

The Employee Opinion Survey provides an excellent insight into the way the council operates as an employer, as well as providing an opportunity for staff to provide their views and feedback on a range of issues. It is important for the council to respond to this feedback and take action to address issues that emerge from the survey results.

6. Equality impact assessment

A preliminary EIA has been completed. There is no requirement to complete a full EIA for this report.

7. Legal implications

There are not legal implications arising directly from this report

8. Director of Finance's comments

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. All activities listed above are either independently funded or provided for within existing cash limits



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Signed by:

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: