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Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

Title of meeting: Employment Committee
Subject: Employee Opinion Survey - Covid 19
Date of meeting: 22 September 2020
Report by: Director of Corporate Services
Wards affected: N/A

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of the results of an Employee Opinion Survey (the survey) undertaken during May and June 2020 about the impact of Covid 19 and actions being taken by PCC as a result of the findings.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the survey findings and actions being taken.

3. Background

- 3.1 Officers previously brought a report to the Committee at its meeting of 6 March 2020 with the results and findings of the Employee Opinion Survey from 2019. In that report further information was provided about changes to the Council's approach to undertaking surveys going forward, including moving to a cycle of once every two years.
- 3.2 In view of the above changes previously advised, 2020 would not normally have seen a survey being brought to the Committee. However, the coronavirus pandemic has seen significant change come about. Within PCC our priority has been on maintaining critical and essential services to our residents whilst fulfilling our statutory role for health protection in the city. Given the reliance on staff for delivery of the majority of council services, staff were given the opportunity to take part in a survey on their views about the council's response to coronavirus and how they think we can move forward. A Covid 19 specific survey was therefore run for two weeks from 26 May until 8 June 2020.

4. Survey Response Rates

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- 4.1 There was a very high response rate to the survey and some 2,128 staff took part, some 56.4% of all staff. This compares with 1,837 or 49% of staff who took part in the survey last year.
- 4.2 Analysis of the results shows that staff are feeling very positive about working for the council and our response to coronavirus. Although the survey was specific to the events of coronavirus and most questions were not asked in previous years, where comparative data is available this also shows a positive response. In particular, some 81.77% of staff who responded feel proud to work for the council compared with 75.67% in 2019.

5. Survey Key Findings

- 5.1 Overall 83.53% of staff who responded feel that the council has responded well to coronavirus and 88.22% of staff who responded feel the council is a good employer.
- 5.2 Over 85% of staff who responded know how to access support for their wellbeing and over 80% feel well informed and think messaging is clear and easy to understand.
- 5.3 There is a high degree of confidence in leadership with over 70% reporting confidence in leadership at all levels.
- 5.4 Of those who responded to the survey 65% are currently working from home, 11% are working from their usual place of work and 22% are working from both home and their usual work place. As more services have stood up since the survey was undertaken these figures are likely to have changed slightly.
- 5.5 Staff are feeling generally supported by the council at the moment; over two thirds of staff in every directorate agree. Staff working exclusively at home feel most supported (79% agree), and those working exclusively at their usual workplace the least (63% agree).
- 5.6 Overall staff feel supported to balance work and the commitments they have at home/caring (between 67% and 93% agree). Staff working exclusively at work are least likely to say they feel supported to balance their commitments; only 60% agree.
- 5.7 Staff reported good contact with line managers across all work locations (between 78% and 86% agree).
- 5.8 Staff report having clear work directions and know what is expected of them across all work locations with over 80% agreement across all locations.
- 5.9 Productivity levels are reported as good across all locations ranging between 70% and 78%. The main factors impacting on productivity relate to IT software for

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collaboration; equipment such as chairs, monitors, keyboards; anxiety levels about the pandemic affecting focus and changes to working practices.

5.10 Staff were asked in the survey what they felt the council should focus on moving forward - the top responses fell into the following categories:

- Resident safety, protecting and supporting the most vulnerable
- Staff safety, keeping staff safe and finding safe ways of working
- Maintaining key services, including quality/level of service expected
- Flexibility for staff, including working from home, flexible hours

6. Survey Findings - Actions

6.1 A number of actions have been implemented both prior to the survey and as a consequence of the survey findings.

6.2 A risk assessment of all council premises was carried out in May 2020 and is published on the intranet for all staff to view. The risk assessment has been agreed with trade union representatives and is kept under regular review, updated as required (e.g. when new guidance is issued). As a result of the risk assessment a number of measures have been put in place in the Civic and satellite offices including:

- One way system throughout office workplaces for safe passage
- Changes to ventilation systems to increase fresh air flow and extraction
- Increased cleaning regime, particularly of common areas
- Limiting the number of users in the office to enable social distancing and due to limitations presented by other building facilities
- Encouraging remote working where staff are able to do so

6.3 Individual and service specific risk assessment are also in place where services are increasing their activity, including non-office based services. These risk assessments take account of requirements for PPE where appropriate, retaining contact information where required for Test and Trace and where staff may be vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable to enable appropriate measures to be put in place.

6.4 The numbers of staff in the Civic office are regularly monitored to ensure they do not exceed safe levels and that staff attendance is for delivery of key services to residents (e.g. Civic reception) or where work cannot be undertaken remotely.

6.5 Regular engagement and collaboration takes place with trade union representatives on staff safety matters; this was initially taking place weekly and has now moved to monthly, interspersed with more general staffing matters meetings. Union engagement is therefore, taking place once every two weeks, although dialogue and engagement continues outside of these meetings as and when the need arises.

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- 6.6 Collaboration technology (Microsoft Teams) has been rolled out to all staff (office based), and staff have been provided with additional equipment (e.g. monitors, chairs) to enable them to continue to safely work from home. All equipment issued to staff is logged. Further collaboration software is being rolled out as part of the wider modernisation of the council IT infrastructure (M365).
- 6.7 A programme of work is now being established to consider future ways of working and options for creating a Covid safe workplace for the future.

...N Edmunds.....
Signed by (Director)

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