

Report to Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.3

Meeting Date: 20 October 2016
Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework No
Public / Private Public

Title: Employee Opinion Survey 2016
Report of: Policy and Communications Manager
Report Number: PC 21/16

Purpose / Summary:

Employee opinion surveys have taken place at Carlisle City Council for a number of years. They offer an opportunity to engage with staff and find out their views about working for the City Council. A survey took place earlier this year, and as with previous surveys, the results are reported to Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Recommendations:

Consider the results of the Employee Opinion Survey 2016.

Tracking

Executive:	N/A
Overview and Scrutiny:	Resources – 20 October 2016
Council:	N/A

1. BACKGROUND

The 2016 Employee Opinion Survey was completed in June with 226 responses, a response rate of 51% based on a headcount of 443 staff. This is an increase on the response rate in 2014 (39.6%). 39 paper copies were received from staff without access to a computer, 27 were received in 2014.

The survey maintained several of the questions from previous years including ones on the City Council as an employer, internal communications and leadership and management. New questions for 2016 included visible leadership, bullying and support for personal development.

Of the 226 staff who identified which directorate or team they were in 7.1% were in Governance, 27.4% in Resources, 18.1% in Economic Development, 32.3% in Local Environment and 15.1% in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams (the results of these teams have been combined due to the small number of staff in the Deputy Chief Executive's Team).

The survey report was reviewed by the Senior Management Team on 8 August 2016 and JMT on 30 August 2016. A detailed report for each directorate has been shared with the relevant directors.

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1. Vision and priorities

84.8% of employees have a good understanding of the vision and priorities compared to 85.9% in 2014. 85.3% understand how their work contributes to the vision and priorities compared to 84.2% in 2014.

2.2. Management and leadership issues and the City Council as an employer

Overall, 89.8% of employees rate the Council as a good or very good employer compared to 90.8% in 2014.

There were several questions in the survey about leadership and management. 61.3% said that the Senior Management Team provided strong leadership, compared with 71.8% in 2014. 64.9% said SMT provide visible leadership and 53.6% said communication between SMT and staff is effective. The latter two questions are new to the 2016 survey.

There were a series of questions on line management; the three new questions are presented first.

78.9% say their line manager values my work. 68.3% say their line manager asks for their opinion before making decisions that affect their work. 73% say their line manager encourages and supports their development.

77.8% say their line manager provides effective leadership compared to 62.2% in 2014 but there is a slight difference in wording. 82.6% say their line manager supports them in their role compared to 71% in 2014. 78% say their line manager keeps them in touch with what is going on compared to 67.5% in 2014. 67.6% say their line manager provides feedback on their performance compared to 61.8% in 2014.

When asked for comments on the biggest challenges facing the City Council a number of common issues have been raised:

- Recovering from the floods.
- Continuing to meet the expectations of customers and Members with fewer staff and resources. In particular, maintaining the standards of service and keeping the people of Carlisle happy.
- Maintaining the morale and happiness of staff during periods of uncertainty and increased workload, especially in teams that have lost roles through the VR/ER initiative and being under review.
- Delivering services with fewer, less experienced staff and ageing technology (fleet).

2.3. Learning and development, working environment and balance

A series of questions explored issues that could impact on employee's experience of working. The first three are new questions.

6.5% say they are subject to bullying at work (91.3% say they strongly disagree or disagree with this statement and 2.2% don't know). In the 2013 Employee Opinion Survey 11.4% said they were subject to bullying at work.

74.7% say they have the tools and resources to do their job. 66.7% say they are satisfied with their pay and benefits package. 81.7% say they are able to maintain a good balance between work and their personal life compared to 82.8% in 2014.

70.1% have taken part in learning and development in the last 12 months compared to 78% in 2014.

When asked for comments on what makes you feel most valued at work, the following sentiments and experiences were common:

- A simple 'thank you' and a 'well done' were common as examples of appreciation and acknowledgement. These plaudits could come from customers, colleagues, managers and elected Members. This is especially strong within teams with positive relationships.
- Regular supportive feedback, especially when received from someone who is trusted.
- Respect and acknowledgment, especially for staff in less visible roles. Being listened to and recognised for the contribution made and having comments taken on-board.
- Being trusted to do the job, make decisions and feeling genuinely trusted.

When asked for comments on what the organisation could do better to support employees in their role the following points were made:

- Complete service reviews promptly.
- Provide more cover for roles when staff are on leave.
- Clarity on opportunities for career progression.
- Improve the ICT equipment.
- Enable more agile working and working remotely, preferable from home.
- Service managers and senior managers should make more time to meet employees.

When asked 'overall, what is the best thing about working for the City Council' comments included:

- Flexible working, job security, pay and conditions, pension and salary sacrifice schemes.
- Working with colleagues.
- Having a positive impact on Carlisle.

When asked 'What is the one thing that could be done to improve the Council the most?' responses included:

- Continuing the work on the culture of empowerment.
- Clarity on priorities and what we can do and can't do.
- Reducing the administrative burden of internal processes, most notably the Flexitime System.
- Improve the Council's image and maintain a high profile.
- More staff and more resources.

2.4. Communications

69.9% of employees are satisfied with internal communications compared to 75% in 2014. Employees were also asked how they would prefer to receive internal communications; the top four preferred options in descending order were email/e-newsletter (63%), team meetings (59%), staff newsletter (42.4%) and Chief Executive Briefings (40%).

Comments were sought on how to improve internal communications; responses included:

- More blogs from other members of SMT.
- Using technology and social media tools such as Intranet/Skype/Salesforce Chatter/webcasts for briefings.
- Increased visibility of SMT, walking the floors for an informal chat.
- Access to information for staff without email.
- Reducing the number of emails received.

3. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, there are many positive indicators of corporate health from these results with strong ratings in employee satisfaction and well-being. Areas for consideration for further exploration include:

- The perception of senior management leadership and relationships between senior management and the next tier of management.
- Satisfaction with internal communications and preferred options.
- Uptake of learning and development opportunities.
- Understanding why 6.5% say they are subject to bullying at work.

All these measures need to be put into context against a background of continued austerity, unprecedented flooding and reorganisation. There is a sense of loss both with assets damaged in the floods and colleagues leaving through the VR/ER initiative. The desire to recover and restore services to pre-flood levels is paramount. There is also a good deal of professional anxiety as employees continue to maintain service standards at a level with diminished resources. The solution to this challenge is widely understood as a blend of increased agile working and improved use of ICT.

The Panel are asked to comment on the report and note the areas for further consideration.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

Employee wellbeing is embodied in the vision 'To improve the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of the people of Carlisle.'

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**Appendices Survey questions
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

* 1. In which directorate or team do you work?

- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Resources
- ☐ Economic Development
- ☐ Local Environment
- ☐ Chief Executive's Team
- ☐ Deputy Chief Executive's Team

2. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the City Council's vision and priorities

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I have a good understanding of the City Council's vision and priorities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand how my work contributes to achieving the City Council's vision and priorities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the City Council in the next 12 months?

4. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Senior Management Team?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The City Council's Senior Management Team provides strong leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The City Council's Senior Management Team provides visible leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication between the Senior Management Team and staff is effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your line manager

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My line manager provides effective leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager supports me in my role.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager keeps me in touch with what is going on.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager provides feedback on my performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager encourages and supports my development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager asks for my opinion before making decisions that affect my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My line manager values my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. How do you rate the City Council as an employer?

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very poor

7. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about working for the City Council:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I have the tools and resources needed to do my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am subject to bullying at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to maintain a good balance between work and my personal life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the pay and benefits package offered by the City Council.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel valued as an employee at the City Council.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Have you taken part in learning and development in the last 12 months (training courses/workshops/qualifications/e-learning/conferences)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. What makes you feel most valued at work?

10. Overall how satisfied are you with internal communications at the City Council?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

11. How would you prefer to receive internal communications (please tick all that are applicable)?

- ☐ Chief Executive briefings
- ☐ Team meetings
- ☐ Staff newsletter
- ☐ Email / e-newsletter
- ☐ Intranet
- ☐ Other - please specify:

12. What other ways can we improve internal communications?

13. What could the organisation do to better support you in your role?

14. Overall what is the best thing about working for the City Council?

15. What one thing could the City Council do to improve the Council the most?

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