Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Meeting Date:	3 April 2014
Portfolio:	Finance, Governance and Resources
Key Decision:	No
Within Policy and Budget Framework	No
Public / Private	Public

Title:	EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY 2014
Report of:	Organisational Development Manager
Report Number:	CE 05/14

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. A copy of the survey is included.

Recommendations:

Consider the results of the Employee Opinion Survey.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. Background

1.1 The 2014 Employee Opinion Survey was sent to staff on 6 January with a closing date of 24 January. This year, 228 surveys were completed giving a response rate of 39.6% (based on 576 staff at 31/12/13), compared with 42.1% in 2013. 27 paper copies were received from operational staff (34 in 2013).

1.2 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 2014 included ones on understanding of the City Council's priorities, work/life balance and appraisals.

1.4 Of the 226 staff who identified which directorate or team they were in 10.2% were in Governance, 35.4% in Resources, 19% in Economic Development, 21.7% in Local Environment and 13.7% 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).

2. Key Findings

2.1 Many of the key issues raised in the survey are similar to those raised in the Work Together, Get Results workshops so there will be a co-ordinated approach to feeding back the results of both and taking action.

2.2 A number of comments from staff were about wanting a period of certainty, having fewer reviews and to stop making people redundant. Consideration will be given to how we can better communicate that this is the 'new normal' and help staff build their resilience to cope with constant change.

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

3.1 There were several questions in the survey about leadership and management. 71.8% said that the Senior Management Team provided strong leadership, compared with 59.3% in 2013. In 2011 when this question was first asked the result was 21%. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most likely to agree with this (84%) and staff in Local Environment were least likely (53%).

3.2 62.2% of staff said managers in their directorate provided effective leadership compared with 53.4% in 2013. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most likely to agree with this (90%) and staff in Local Environment were least likely (45%).

3.3 This year there was a slight decrease in the percentage of staff who said their line manager supports them in their role, 71% compared with 73.9% in 2013. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most likely to agree with this (94%) and staff in Local Environment were least likely (57%).

3.4 This year 67.5% say their line manager keeps them in touch with what is going on compared with 65.6% in 2013. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most likely to agree with this (94%) and staff in Local Environment were least likely (49%).

3.5 There was a new question this year which asked staff if their line manager provides feedback on their performance. 61.8% of staff said their line managers did this. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most likely to agree with this (84%) and staff in Local Environment were least likely (51%).

3.5 A question on how staff rate the City Council as an employer has been included in several previous surveys. This year 90.8% rate the City Council as a good employer compared with 89.4% in 2013. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most likely to agree with this (97%) and staff in Local Environment were least likely to agree (82%).

4. Feeling valued and the City Council's objectives

4.1 This year, 61.7% of staff said they felt valued at work which is an improvement on the 53% in 2013 and 46% in 2012 but there is still work to do on this. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams felt most valued (84%) and staff in Local Environment felt least valued (45%).

4.2 Staff were asked what makes them feel most valued at work and the most popular responses were positive feedback, recognition, appreciation of work done, being listened to and support from their manager.

4.3 This year 84.2% of staff say they understand how their work contributes to achieving the City Council's objectives compared with 74.7% in 2013. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most likely to say this (94%) and staff in Resources were least likely (79%).

4.4 A new question for this year asked staff if they had a good understanding of the City Council's priorities and 85.9% said they did. Staff in Governance were most likely to say they did (96%) and staff in Local Environment were least likely (81%).

4.5 Another new question for this year asked staff if they felt their ideas and opinions were listened to by managers at the City Council. 59.2% of staff felt this did happen. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most likely to agree with this (87%) and staff in Local Environment were least likely (41%).

5. Communications

5.1 This year 75% of staff said they were satisfied with internal communications at the City Council compared with 68.8% in 2013. The Chief Executive has continued with the quarterly briefings for staff and a weekly blog, both of which have proved popular with staff. A monthly staff newsletter, 'In the Loop', has been introduced since the 2013 survey in response to requests from staff for more information. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most satisfied with internal communications (97%) and staff in Local Environment were least satisfied (59%).

5.2 Staff were asked how internal communication could be improved and the most popular answers were providing more regular transformation updates, notes being taken at Management Briefing and shared with all staff, being notified about starters/leavers and improved computer access for all staff including intranet and email facilities in bothys.

6. Learning and development, appraisals and work/life balance

6.1 There were three new questions this year on learning and development, appraisals and work/life balance. 82.2% of staff said they were able to maintain a good balance between their work and personal lives. Staff in the combined Chief Executive's and Deputy Chief Executive's teams were most likely to agree with this (90%) and staff in Economic Development and Local Environment were least likely (79%).

6.2 78% of staff said they had taken part in learning and development in the last 12 months. Staff in Local Environment were most likely to agree with this (83%) and staff in Economic Development were least likely (74%).

6.3 57.9% of staff said they had taken part in a team or individual appraisal in the last 12 months. Staff in Resources were most likely to agree with this (87%) and staff in Economic Development were least likely (66%).

7. Working for the City Council

7.1 A question asking what staff consider to be the best thing about working for the City Council has been included in several previous surveys. This year, the most popular response from staff was terms and conditions including flexitime, holidays, pay,

pension and employee benefits. Other popular responses were working with good colleagues, providing a service to the people of Carlisle and training opportunities.

8. Improving the City Council

8.1 A question asking staff what one thing could the City Council do to improve the council the most has also been included in previous surveys. This year there were a wide range of suggestions from staff including solving recruitment delays, improving the effectiveness of managers, listening to staff, job security and better communication.

9. Conclusion

9.1 As in 2013, there is not a key issue which all staff are concerned about this year. There are some issues specific to directorates and these will be considered by the directors with support from the Organisational Development Team.

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Appendices **Employee Opinion 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**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's - None

Community Engagement – None

Economic Development – None

Governance – None

Local Environment – None

Resources - None

Annex A

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CITY COUNCIL

Employee Opinion Survey 2014

www.carlisle.gov.uk

Q1   **Which directorate or team do you work in?**

Governance... ☐ 1

Resources .... ☐ 2

Economic Development........................ ☐ 3

Local Environment............................... ☐ 4

Chief Executive's Team....................... ☐ 5

Deputy Chief Executive's Team........... ☐ 6

Q2   **Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about leadership and management at the City Council.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The City Council's Senior Management Team provides strong leadership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Managers in my directorate provide effective leadership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My line manager supports me in my role	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My line manager keeps me in touch with what is going on	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My line manager provides feedback on my performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q3   **How do you rate the City Council as an employer?**

Very good... ☐ 1

Fairly good... ☐ 2

Poor.. ☐ 3

Very poor.. ☐ 4

Q4   **Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the City Council's priorities.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I have a good understanding of the City Council's priorities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand how my work contributes to achieving the City Council's priorities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5 **Please indicate 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 feel my ideas and opinions are listened to by managers at the City Council	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have taken part in learning and development in the last 12 months (training courses / workshops / qualifications)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have taken part in a team or individual appraisal in the last 12 months	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am able to maintain a good balance between work and my personal life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel valued as an employee at the City Council	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q6 **What makes you feel most valued at work?**

Q7 **Overall how satisfied are you with internal communications at the City Council?**

Very satisfied... ☐ 1
Satisfied .... ☐ 2
Dissatisfied... ☐ 3
Very dissatisfied .... ☐ 4

Q8 **How could the City Council improve internal communications?**

Q9 **Overall what is the best thing about working for the City Council?**

Q10 **What one thing could the City Council do to improve the Council the most?**

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey