



RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Panel Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 29 March 2012

Title: EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY 2012

Report of: Organisational Development Manager

Report reference: CE 09/12

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 as Annex A.

Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:

Consider the results of the employee opinion survey.

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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. Introduction

- 1.1 The Employee Opinion Survey for 2012 was circulated to staff on 12 January with a closing date of 3 February. A link to the survey was emailed to staff with access to computers and paper copies were provided for other staff. 341 returns were received including 50 paper copies giving a response rate of 54.7%, compared with 46% in 2011.
- 1.2 The survey maintained many of the questions asked in previous years including ones on the City Council as an employer, learning and development, internal communications, leadership and management, equality and diversity, and risk management. New questions for 2012 included ones on whether staff feel they have an appropriate level of control over their working day, what the barriers are to them having more say over their work and what health and wellbeing projects staff think some of the income from the holiday purchase scheme should be spent on.
- 1.3 The survey provides evidence to support the City Council's continuous improvement against the Equality Framework for Local Government through the questions on the Dignity and Respect Policy and support for bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- 1.4 One of the key issues arising from the 2011 survey was that staff felt they were not communicated with effectively by managers at all levels of the organisation. The 2012 survey included a question on whether staff feel communication has improved since the last survey.
- 1.5 Of the 337 staff who identified which directorate or team they were in, 6.8% were Governance, 18.4% were Resources, 10.4% were Economic Development, 30.3% were Community Engagement, 27.6% were Local Environment and 6.5% were the Chief Executive's Team.

2. Key Findings

- 2.1 In 2011 the key staff issue was communication and 65.5% of staff say this has improved since the last survey. This year the key issue is feeling valued. Staff said they want to feel more appreciated at work and for managers at all levels of the organisation to recognise the increased workload that many staff have as a result of

the transformation programme. Another key issue is to make the Carlisle City Council staff based at Allerdale and Copeland feel more included.

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. 57.1% said that the Senior Management Team provided strong leadership, a significant increase on the 21% who said this in 2011. Staff in Governance were most likely to agree with this and staff in Community Engagement were least likely. In terms of communicating the City Council's priorities, 50.3% now say that senior managers communicate them effectively compared with 23% in 2011. Staff in the Chief Executive's Team were most likely to agree with this and staff in Community Engagement and Local Environment were least likely.
- 3.2 78.6% of staff say their line manager supports them in their role compared with 70% in 2011. 70% say their line manager keeps them in touch with what is going on compared with 57% in 2011.
- 3.3 A question on how staff rate the City Council as a employer has been included in several previous surveys. This year 87.6% rate the City Council as a good employer compared with 76% in 2011. All the staff in Governance and the Chief Executive's Team who completed the survey said the City Council was a very good or fairly good employer. Staff in Community Engagement were least likely to rate the City Council as a good employer but the figure there was still 81.2%.

4. Feeling valued and contributing to the City Council's objectives

- 4.1 This year, 46% of staff said they felt valued at work which is an improvement on the 38% in 2011 but there is still significant work to do on this. Staff in the Chief Executive's Team are most likely to feel valued with 95.4% of those who completed the survey saying they felt valued compared with 33.2% in Economic Development.
- 4.2 76.8% of staff say they understand how their work contributes to achieving the City Council's objectives. Staff in the Chief Executive's Team were most positive about this at 90.8% and staff in Economic Development least positive at 69.8%

5. Communications

- 5.1 This year, 65.5% of staff said they were satisfied with internal communications at the City Council compared to only 44% of staff in 2011 which is a significant improvement. The Chief Executive has continued with the quarterly briefings and monthly newsletter for staff and has also added a weekly blog which has proved popular with staff.

6. Dignity and Respect, Health and Safety and Risk

- 6.1 There were several questions in the survey about dignity and respect, health and safety and risk. 87.8% of staff said they were aware of the City Council's Dignity and Respect Policy. Staff in Governance were most aware at 95.7% and staff in Community Engagement were least aware at 80%. The line manager was the person most staff would go to for support if they experienced bullying, discrimination or harassment in the workplace. Several staff commented that it would depend on the circumstances as to who they would go to for support.
- 6.2 Overall, 88.4% of staff were aware of their role in managing risk within their area of work. Staff in Local Environment were most aware at 92.4% and staff in the Chief Executive's Team were least aware at 81.8%. The line manager was the person most staff would talk to if they felt a risk was being ignored in the workplace.

7. Learning and Development

- 7.1 There were two questions in the survey about learning and development. The first asked how satisfied staff were with the learning and development opportunities offered by the City Council and 85.9% of staff were very satisfied or satisfied. The second question asked what new courses staff would like to see in the training directory for 2012/13. A wide range of courses were suggested including public speaking, finance, IT, negotiation and more courses for administrative staff as well as specific technical courses. There were a number of requests for more courses to be put on for staff based at Allerdale and Copeland. The Organisational Development Team will consider all the suggestions and start including them in future training programmes.

8. Employee Benefits

- 8.1 In 2011 the City Council introduced a Holiday Purchase Scheme to enable staff to buy up to ten days of additional annual leave. Some of the money from the Holiday Purchase Scheme will be used for staff health and wellbeing projects and a question in the survey asked staff what projects they would like to be offered. Staff came up with a wide range of ideas including stop smoking initiatives, workplace gym, staff canteen, stress management techniques, healthy cooking courses and departmental sports events. The Workplace Health Group will consider which can easily be introduced, which will need support from partner organisations and which are longer term projects. One of the ideas mentioned by several staff was weight management classes and a twelve week class on a Monday lunchtime started in February. Several staff also mentioned introducing a cycle to work scheme and research into this is currently taking place.

9. Control over working day and barriers to having more say

- 9.1 Overall, 82.3% of staff said they had an appropriate level of control with staff in Governance most likely at 91.3% and staff in Local Environment least likely at 75.3%. With regard to the barriers to having more say over their work, 32.1% of staff said the greatest barrier was procedures and working practices, although 31.2% said there were no barriers.

10. Best thing about working for the City Council

- 10.1 Overall, staff were very positive about working for the City Council and good relationships with colleagues were mentioned by many staff. The employment benefits offered by the City Council including the flexi system, pension and parking were also popular. Staff also said they felt their job makes a difference, they enjoy working with the public and they are helping to make the city a better place.

11. Improving the City Council

- 11.1 The comments on what could be done to improve the City Council were very wide ranging and many were related to the issue of wanting to feel more appreciated at work which relates to the question on how valued staff feel. Other issues included speeding up decision making, improving the heating in the Civic Centre, continuing to improve communication and departments working more closely together.

12. Conclusions

- 12.1 The results of the Employee Opinion Survey have been considered by the Senior Management Team, shared with staff at the Chief Executive's Briefings and with the Consultative Joint Committee. A report has also been circulated to staff.
- 12.2 The key issue arising from the survey this year is about staff feeling valued and the Senior Management Team will be working with the Organisational Development Team to consider how this can be improved.
- 12.3 Other actions coming from the survey will include senior managers spending time shadowing staff in their directorates to learn more about their roles, managers at all levels empowering their staff to make more decisions and looking at ways to involve staff based at Allerdale and Copeland.
- 12.4 As a result of feedback from last year's survey a Challenge and Change Group has been set up which brings together staff from across the organisation and the first issue they are looking at is introducing a staff suggestion scheme. The scheme will enable more staff to get involved in giving their ideas for how the City Council can be improved.

Impact assessments

Does the change have an impact on the following?

Equality Impact Screening	Impact Yes/No?	Is the impact positive or negative?
Does the policy/service impact on the following?		
Age	No	
Disability	No	
Race	No	
Gender/ Transgender	No	
Sexual Orientation	No	
Religion or belief	No	
Human Rights	No	
Health inequalities	No	
Rurality	No	

Annex A

EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY 2012

1. Which Directorate or Team do you work in?

Governance – Resources - Economic Development - Community Engagement –
Local Environment – Chief Executive’s Team

2. Do you work full or part-time?

Full time Part-time

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

- a) The City Council’s Senior Management Team provides strong leadership
- b) Senior managers effectively communicate the City Council’s priorities
- c) My line manager supports me in my role
- d) My line manager keeps me in touch with what is going on

strongly agree – agree – disagree – strongly disagree – don’t know

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

very good – fairly good – poor – very poor

5. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- a) I feel valued as an employee at the City Council
- b) I understand how my work contributes to achieving the City Council’s priorities

strongly agree – agree – disagree – strongly disagree – don’t know

6. Overall how satisfied are you with internal communication at the City Council?

very satisfied – satisfied – dissatisfied – very dissatisfied

7. Do you think communication has improved since the last survey?

Yes a lot – Yes a bit - No

8. Are you aware of the City Council's Dignity and Respect Policy?

yes – no

9. Who would you go to for support if you experienced bullying, discrimination or harassment?

Line manager – Personnel Team – Trade Union – Other (please say)

10. Are you aware of your role in managing risk within your area of work?

yes – no

11. If you thought a risk was being ignored who would you talk to about it?

Line manager – Safety, Health & Environment Manager – Personnel Team – Trade Union – Other (please say)

12. How satisfied are you with the learning and development opportunities offered by the City Council?

very satisfied – satisfied – dissatisfied – very dissatisfied

13. What new courses would you like to see in the training directory for 2012/13?

(text box for people to type/write answer)

14. The City Council introduced a holiday purchase scheme in 2011 and some of the income from this will be used for staff health and wellbeing projects. What health and wellbeing projects would you like us to offer?

(text box for people to type/write answer)

15. Do you feel you have an appropriate level of control over your working day?

yes - no

16. What are the barriers to you having more say over your work?

National regulations – City Council policies, procedures and working practices –
Culture within the team – Culture within the directorate – Task and finish job – No
barriers

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

(text box for people to type/write answer)

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

(text box for people to type/write answer)