



RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Panel Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 27 July 2011

Title: EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY 2011

Report of: Organisational Development Manager

Report reference: CE 21/11

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.

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

Contact Officer: Emma Titley

Ext: 7597

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Employee Opinion Survey for 2011 was circulated to staff on 18th January with a closing date of 18th February. A link to the survey was emailed to staff with access to computers and paper copies were provided for other staff. 342 returns were received including 81 paper copies giving a response rate of 46%, compared with 43% when the last survey was done in 2008.
- 1.2 Several of the questions were open ended which gave staff the opportunity to give detailed replies and over 1000 comments were made. The note from Maggie Mooney that accompanied the survey encouraged staff to be honest as responses would be anonymous so individual comments will not be included in this report.
- 1.3 Of the 332 staff who identified which directorate they are in 33% were from Community Engagement, 27% from Local Environment, 17% from Resources, 13% from Economic Development, 6% from the Chief Executive's Team and 4% from Governance.

2. Key Findings

- 2.1 Staff want more information from the Senior Management Team, from service managers and from their line managers. They said they want to know what is really going on and not have to rely on rumours or the local papers to find out what is happening to them.
- 2.2 Staff said they understand that difficult decisions need to be made but want reassurance that these will be made as quickly as possible and that they will be kept informed about what is happening.

3. Results

- 3.1 **Transformation, management & leadership issues and the City Council as an employer**
- 3.2 The survey asked how staff felt about the changes resulting from the Transformation Programme and 71% said they were worried or very worried compared with 22% who were positive or fairly positive. Staff in the Chief

Executive's Team and Governance were most positive and staff in Economic Development and Community Engagement were most worried.

- 3.3 Over 200 comments were made in response to the question on how the City Council could support staff at this time. The majority of comments were for more information about what is happening. Other issues that were raised included requests for guarantees of job security, assurances that services to the public would be maintained and details of savings made so far.
- 3.4 There were several questions in the survey about leadership and management. 21% of staff agreed that the Senior Management Team provided strong leadership compared with 41% who disagreed. The remainder were undecided. In terms of communicating the City Council's priorities, 23% agreed that senior managers did effectively communicate them, while 49% disagreed.
- 3.5 A majority of staff, 64% agreed that their line manager supported them in their role, compared with 18% who disagreed. 56% of staff agreed that their line manager kept them in touch with what is going on and 25% disagreed with this.
- 3.6 There were some differences between directorates for these questions, with staff from Community Engagement most likely to disagree.
- 3.7 A question on how staff rate the City Council as an employer has been included in several of the previous surveys. This year 76% of staff said the City Council was a good employer compared with 88% in 2008. Given the current circumstances, this is still a good result. Staff in Economic Development were least likely to rate the City Council as a good employer.

4. Communications

- 4.1 This year, 44% of staff said they were satisfied with internal communications at the City Council compared with 70% in 2008. Staff were asked how they would like to receive information and the preferred way was via team briefings. Email and a 1-1 with the line manager were also favoured. Staff said that the information given needs to be honest and believable and that they did not like getting unexpected letters at home.

5. Dignity & Respect, Health & Safety and Risk

- 5.1 There were several questions in the survey about dignity & respect, health & safety and risk. 90% of staff were aware of the City Council's Dignity and Respect Policy. 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 and a few external organisations were mentioned as possible sources of support. Some examples were given of where staff had negative experience of approaching their line manager or Personnel.
- 5.2 Overall, 92% of staff were aware of their role in managing risk within their area of work. Staff in Resources and Local Environment were most aware of this with staff in Economic Development and the Chief Executive's Team being least aware. The line manager was the person most staff would talk to if they felt a risk was being ignored in the workplace.

6. Learning and Development

- 6.1 There were several questions in the survey about learning and development. This year, 24% of staff said there was learning relevant to their role that they wanted to do in the last year but were unable to. Staff in Local Environment and Resources were most likely to say this. In 2008, the figure was 19%. The main reason given for why staff were unable to do the learning was budget limitations. 85% of staff were satisfied with the learning and development opportunities offered by the City Council with staff in Economic Development being the most satisfied.

7. Feeling valued & contributing to the City Council's objectives

- 7.1 The questions on how valued staff feel and to what extent they understand how their work contributes to achieving the City Council's objectives are new this year. 38% of staff say they feel valued compared with 57% of staff who do not which is a concern. 76% of staff say they understand how their work contributes to achieving the City Council's objectives while 19% do not.

8. Employee Benefits

- 8.1 The City Council is considering introducing some new employee benefits and staff were asked about three possible benefits – holiday purchase, cycle to work and sabbaticals. Staff could express an interest in more than one benefit and also give suggestions for other benefits.

8.2 There were 137 people interested in holiday purchase, 136 in sabbaticals and 80 in cycle to work. Other ideas suggested by staff included a review of the flexi system to make it more flexible, health schemes, cheaper public transport for travel to and from work, being able to sell holidays back, onsite gym facilities, a canteen, being able to buy laptops through monthly salary deductions, bonuses at Christmas, rewarding attendance and job swaps/work experience with other departments and organisations.

9. Best thing about working for the City Council

9.1 There were over 260 responses to this question. Overall, staff were very positive about working for the City Council, but some did say that the changes that have taken place recently have made them less positive. Relationships with colleagues and being part of a good team were mentioned by a large number of staff, as were benefits e.g. flexi time, final salary pension scheme and free staff parking.

9.2 Many people also said they like contributing to the city they live in, serving the local community, protecting the public, working with partner organisations and making a difference to peoples' lives and the environment.

10. Improving the City Council

10.1 There were over 240 comments on what the City Council could do to improve covering a wide range of issues. Improving internal communication about the changes taking place and listening to staff were raised by many people. Improving management and leadership at the City Council was an issue for many staff who feel that managers at all levels from the Senior Management Team to supervisors do not appreciate the staff or understand what they do.

10.2 Having a clear vision for the direction the City Council is going in was mentioned by a number of staff and closer working between departments was also an issue for some.

10.3 Staff also mentioned Members with several suggesting that the number of Members should be reduced and that decisions made by Members could be communicated more effectively.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 The results of the Employee Opinion Survey have been considered at Senior Management Team meetings and shared with staff through Management Briefing, Chief Executive's briefings and Chief Executive's newsletter. It is also available on the intranet.
- 11.2 Improved communication was the key issue raised by staff and regular Chief Executive's briefings for staff will continue. The next ones will take place in August at the Civic Centre and Bousteads Grassing. The monthly Chief Executive's newsletter is continuing with staff frequently contributing items for inclusion. Members of the Senior Management Team will attend team meetings in their directorates to talk to staff about the changes taking place.
- 11.3 The Policy and Communications Team are producing structure charts for the new directorates; an updated version of the A-Z directory with information about services and contact details; and floor plans for the Civic Centre to show where teams are located. They have worked with ICT Connect and the Customer Services Team to update the internal telephone directory. All of these will contribute to staff and Members having accurate information about who is doing what and where they are based.
- 11.4 In response to the many requests that managers listen to ideas from staff, Darren Crossley, Strategic Director, will lead a 'Challenge and Change' group where staff can bring their ideas for how to improve services.
- 11.5 Other issues raised by staff will be looked into and considered for action by the Senior Management Team.

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

Dear Colleague

EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY 2011

As we start this New Year we want to know your opinions.

Our staff are the City Council's greatest resource. We all recognise the links between valued staff and quality services, services that are highly regarded by all our customers and local communities. In the current climate of unprecedented public sector cuts, it is easy to lose sight of what makes us different as a sector and an authority. Our continued support for staff and investment in new training and development is very important to us and I think this makes the City Council stand out.

The rate of change for the City Council is going to increase over the coming year, as we implement the savings set out in the budget for 2011/12. Throughout the ongoing transformation we want to retain our values and vision. We need your views on how well we are achieving this balance.

Please be honest with your responses as the attached questionnaire (accessed through the link below) is anonymous. My promise is that I will respond to all the issues that are raised. Paper copies of this survey will be provided for staff without access to computers.

Please complete by **Friday 18 February 2011**.

Yours sincerely

Employee Opinion Survey 2011

Section One - Survey

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 time
- Part-time

3. The Transformation Programme has resulted in many changes taking place. How do you feel about these changes?

- Positive
- Fairly positive
- Worried
- Very worried
- Don't know

4. What could the City Council do to support you at this time?

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

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The City Council's Senior Management Team provides strong leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior managers effectively communicate the City Council's priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My line manager supports me in my role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My line manager keeps me in touch with what is going on	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

- Very good
- Fairly good
- Poor
- Very poor

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

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

8. How would you like to receive information? (please tick all that apply)

- Management Briefing
- Team Briefings
- 1 to 1 with Line Manager
- E-mail

- Memos & Letters
- Chief Executive's Newsletter
- Regular (e) bulletin
- Intranet
- Trade Union
- Other

If other , please specify

9. Are you aware of the City Council's Dignity & Respect policy?

- Yes
- No

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

- Line manager
- Personnel team
- Trade Union
- Other

If other, please specify

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

- Yes
- No

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

- Line manager
- Health & Safety Manager
- Personnel Team
- Trade Union
- Other

If other, please specify

13. Is there any learning relevant to your role that you wanted to do in the last 12 months but were unable to ?

- Yes
- No

14. If yes, what was the reason?

- Budget limitations

- Time limitations
 - Course availability
 - Other
- If other, please specify

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

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

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

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I feel valued as an employee at the City Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how my work contributes to achieving the City Council's objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. We are thinking about introducing some new employee benefits. To give us an idea of possible take-up, please say if you are interested in any of them. (Please tick all that apply)

- Holiday purchase (buying extra holiday, paid through monthly salary deductions)
 - Cycle to work (tax free bike, paid through monthly salary deductions)
 - Sabbatical (unpaid leave of 6 - 12 months to travel, study, or have a career break)
 - Any other ideas
- Any other ideas, please state

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

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

Please see over page of section Two

Section Two - About You

The following questions are entirely optional. We are asking these questions to meet our statutory duty and to highlight any inequalities.

20. Are you?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Undeclared

21. What age group are you in?

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Undeclared

22. Disability?

- None
- Registered disabled under DDA definition
- Disabled under DDA definition but not registered
- Undeclared

23. What is your religion?

- Christian
- Muslim
- Hindu
- Sikh
- Jewish
- Buddhist
- No religion
- Undeclared
- Other

If other, please specify

24. Which best describes your ethnic origin?

- White British
- White Irish
- White Gypsy/Roma or other travelling community
- Any other white background (please specify below)
- Black/Black British
- Black Caribbean
- Black African
- Any other Black background (please specify below)
- Asian/Asian British
- Asian Indian
- Asian Pakistani
- Asian Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background (please specify below)
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Other mixed background (please specify below)
- Chinese
- Undeclared
- Other

If other, please specify

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, I look forward to sharing the findings with you in my Spring Chief Executive Newsletter.