WILTSHIRE COUNCIL
STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE
15 November 2018

<u>**Staff Survey 2018**</u>

Purpose of report

1.   To confirm arrangements for the 2018 staff engagement survey.

Background

2.   The staff survey is a valuable tool in recognising staff voice and gives an opportunity to measure the effectiveness of the action plans generated following the previous survey. It also enables the identification of any new issues or opportunities, which can help shape revised priorities for both corporate and service area plans.

3.   A staff survey was last undertaken in November 2016 and was completed by 65% of the workforce (2898 responses).

4.   The 2016 survey results were presented in a corporate report for staff and members, and service-specific reports were provided to service heads, linking results to people strategy themes.

5.   Based on the outcomes of the 2016 staff survey, four corporate priorities were agreed and communicated to all managers.
   *   Learning and Development
   *   Visibility of Senior Management
   *   Corporate Communications
   *   Resources

6.   The 2017-27 People Strategy introduced an increased focus on developing and measuring staff engagement, and its associated benefits, as a key priority. To support delivery of this priority, a specific employee engagement officer post was created in HR.

Main points

<u>Timescales</u>

7.   The staff survey will run from Monday 10th December 2018 until Sunday 6th January 2018, to coincide with the completion of the staff engagement forums.

8.   Forums are scheduled to take place between 21st November and 6th December 2018. They will include a brief review of the 4 corporate priorities from the 2016 survey, updates on action taken towards these, and staff will be encouraged to complete the new survey.

9.   It is envisaged that corporate level reports summarising the outcomes of the survey will be available to CLT by the end of February 2019, and presented to Staffing Policy Committee on 6th March 2019.

Survey amalgamation

10.   Both the staff survey and the health survey are full staff surveys which take place bi-annually.

11.   Public Health and HR have agreed that it would be helpful to have the opportunity to take the pulse of the organisation regarding specific areas of these surveys annually, by including repeat questions from the other survey.

12.   The health survey is due to run again in late 2019. Ahead of that, the service head for occupational health and safety has asked that we repeat 2 questions from the most recent Health and Wellbeing workplace health survey in the 2018 staff engagement survey.

13.   Staff responses to the repeated questions will not be included in staff engagement survey results, but will be fed back to the health and wellbeing team for them to review and analyse.

Context of the 2018 survey

14.   The 2017 People Strategy identifies a key priority of improving staff engagement. Based on the significance of this priority, we have repositioned the 2018 survey to focus on the themes and enablers of staff engagement. The survey will therefore be launched to staff as the 2018 staff engagement survey.

15.   The decision was made in 2016 not to benchmark Wiltshire Council results externally through ORC. This decision provides us with an opportunity to be more flexible with the way questions are asked, and to set them in a local context to better reflect our own objectives and workforce.

Approach to the survey

16.   To support this, we have reviewed the survey sections and questions to better align them to supporting effective measurement of engagement. This has been undertaken with reference to an externally verified model provided by "Engage for Success", who are a voluntary organisation aligned with the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) and provide advice and support to organisations to improve employee engagement.

17.   This model also forms the core of the work undertaken with staff through our HR engagement officer and the staff engagement group, EPIC.

18.   The model describes 4 areas which are considered as the enablers of employee engagement. The survey structure will be aligned to these 4 areas, with a fifth section covering equality and diversity information:

Strategic Narrative	Engaging Managers	Employee Voice	Integrity
Visible, empowering leadership providing a strong strategic narrative about the organisation, where it's come from and where it's going.	Engaging managers who focus their people and give them scope, treat their people as individuals and coach and stretch their people	Employee voice throughout the organisation, for reinforcing and challenging views, between functions and externally. Employees are seen not as the problem, rather as central to the solution, to be involved, listened to, and invited to contribute their experience, expertise and ideas.	Organisational integrity – the values on the wall are reflected in day to day behaviours. There is no 'say –do' gap. Promises made and promises kept, or an explanation given as to why not.

19. Engage for Success also advocate developing a range of additional ways to "take the temperature" of either the whole or parts of the organisation on a more frequent and focused basis.

20. It is proposed that, following the 2018 survey, HR&OD develop this approach of more frequent focused surveys, to obtain staff feedback going forward. This will be augmented by the data available from the recent launch of our Pulse employee sentiment tool.

21. Staff engagement results from previous surveys are still recognised as an important measure, so the 6 benchmark questions will be spread through the engagement survey to enable comparison back to previous engagement results.

22. By assessing staff feedback against these 4 enablers, we can steer corporate action towards those elements which are less well developed. This will ensure that we can continue to improve our overall levels of staff engagement.

Questions

23. Appendix 1 shows the draft proposed questions for the 2018 survey, aligned under the four engagement enablers outlined above. For reference purposes, Appendix 2 shows the questions from the 2016 survey.

24. The questions are colour coded in Appendix 1 to identify changes, as follows:

No change – coloured green

25.   These questions replicate those asked in the 2016 survey.

Minor amendments – coloured yellow

26.   These questions are similar to those asked in the 2016 survey. However, the wording, responses or both have been slightly revised to ensure they are easily understood within the Wiltshire context.

27.   These changes are minimal and will still provide responses which can be internally benchmarked against the 2016 survey.

28.   These include the 6 questions which together formed the overall engagement score for the organisation in previous years.

Major changes – coloured orange

29.   These questions or response criteria replicate themes that were included in the previous survey, however they have been considerably altered to provide more specific insight and greater depth of understanding in relation to the engagement section of the survey in which they appear.

30.   These questions have been piloted with the EPIC staff group and a wider group of managers to test their relevance and clarity. Some changes have been made based on the feedback from this group.

Deleted questions – coloured red

31.   These questions have either been superseded by amended questions, replaced by alternative questions or are no longer relevant.

New questions – coloured blue

32.   These are questions that have not been asked in previous surveys but will give greater insight into specific areas of engagement, support measurement of the effect of engagement on performance, or allow more in depth understanding of a specific issue that has been asked about previously.

33.   These questions have also been tested with both the EPIC staff group and a focus group of managers from across the organisation.

"About you" questions

34.   This section of the survey has been retained as it provides valuable data both for survey analysis but also in support of meeting our public sector equality duty.

35.   In 2016 we extended this section of the survey to include a question on religion and belief.

36.   For 2018 we have amended the response options for the questions related to gender identity and sexual orientation to reflect changes to the equalities monitoring questionnaire this year. These were made following consultation

with the LGBT staff network and to reflect best practice recommended by organisations such as ACAS and Stonewall.

37. We have also included 3 new questions within this section designed to support us in meeting our public-sector equality duty. As part of this duty we are required to have equality objectives; one of our published objectives includes a focus on embedding an inclusive workplace culture for all employees. One of the requirements of equality objectives is that they should be measurable and the new questions will enable us to measure the views of staff in relation to this. This will be helpful to us in terms of understanding and targeting areas where change is most needed and measuring any improvements in forthcoming years.

38. A further two questions have been included to allow for data and results to be broken down by level of responsibility (staff, team manager, senior manager) and by main work location. This is to enable actions to be targeted to more discrete groups within the Council.

Piloting approach

39. To support the development of the revised questions and the new format of the survey, pilot sessions were held with staff in the EPIC group and with a wider group of managers. The survey content has been amended to incorporate their feedback wherever possible.

40. To best reflect the focus on engagement for this survey, the proposed questions were then reviewed by an external consultant, sourced through Engage for Success. Feedback from this review has been assessed and incorporated into the survey where appropriate.

Process

41. As in previous years, SNAP survey will be used to build and run the survey. This will mean that costs will remain low as no external support will be required.

42. A link to the survey will be sent out through global wire messages, the Friday Electric Wire each week and placed on grow, The Wire home page and HR Direct. This will allow all individuals who have access to a computer to complete the survey on-line.

43. Staff without access to a computer will be given the opportunity to complete a paper survey. These will be distributed by contacts within each area and will be accompanied by freepost return envelopes.

44. We will continue to use an external partner to collate paper-copy responses into an electronic format and return this to us.

45. The previous survey achieved response rates of 65.7% of staff. Service response rates for the 2018 survey will be made available regularly to managers and staff, encouraging competition between service areas. The intention is that this will improve the overall response rate.

46.   To preserve anonymity, where responses to any question could be used to identify individuals a report will not be supplied at that level, for example in small teams/services with low numbers of staff.

<u>Communications</u>

47.   HR will work closely with the communications team to create a comprehensive communication plan during the months leading up to the launch of the staff survey.

48.   Following on from this there will be communications to highlight the actions, both corporately and within individual services, which took place following the 2016 survey to remind staff that their views are listened to and acted upon. This will include a brief review during the 2018 staff engagement forums.

49.   The Corporate Leadership Team have been asked to emphasise the importance of completing the survey in meetings with managers, through their leadership blog and in discussions with staff.

50.   Comenius (providers of the council's grow system) have again agreed to sponsor the survey to the value of £100. It is proposed that we offer a first prize of £50, second prize of £20 and 3 prizes of £10 gift cards through Wiltshire Rewards to encourage staff to respond to the survey.

Recommendations/Decisions

51.   Staffing policy committee are asked to confirm their support for carrying out a staff survey in 2018, as outlined above.

52.   Staffing policy committee to note that a report of results will be presented to them in March 2019.

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