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## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 28 SEPTEMBER 2023**

### **STAFF SURVEY 2023**

## **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a summary of the outcomes and actions identified from the 2023 staff survey.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. The People Strategy was approved by the Employment Committee at its meeting in December 2020. The results from the 2023 staff survey will be incorporated into departmental action plans and these will be used to further support the key aims of the People Strategy.

### **Background**

3. A full staff survey is carried out every two years across the Council. The 2023 Staff Survey, which ran for 7 weeks from 23 May, was the tenth staff survey and had a response rate of 46%, with 2,804 staff completing the survey. This is an increase from 38% (2,323 staff) in the 2021 survey.
4. The questionnaire has remained broadly the same although with the addition of two questions on the wellbeing offer to staff and an expanded question about sources of bullying and harassment at work.
5. There was an increased response rate for all departments. Public Health and Chief Executive's Department had the highest response rates overall (at 66% and 64% respectively).
6. As was the case in 2021, the detailed results are being made available to all staff and managers. Line managers will be asked to review the results for their areas and develop appropriate local actions. The headline summary shows:
  - i. Improvement in the overall result since the last survey in 2021, although not statistically significant. The average for questions 1 to 21 is 82.8% (+0.6% points since 2021). There are a number of significant changes for individual questions.

- ii. Respondents of grade 13 or above and those aged 16-34 are significantly more positive than average.
  - iii. Colleagues with disabilities are still significantly less positive than average.
  - iv. Respondents from the Public Health Department are significantly more positive than average.
7. The survey was divided into three sub-sections over 21 questions, exploring views on My Council, My Manager and My Job. Appendix A shows the results overall. In summary:
  - i. Under 'My Council' the highest scoring areas identified were:
    - 93.3% said the Council is a good employer;
    - 92.7% said they know how to access wellbeing services for staff;
    - 92.5% said they believe the Council is committed to equality and diversity.
  - ii. For 'My Manager' the areas scoring highest were:
    - 91.5% believed their manager supports flexible working;
    - 88.9% believed their manager values their opinions and ideas;
  - iii. Under 'My Job' staff said:
    - 92.4% felt trusted to carry out their job effectively;
    - 90.6% said they felt they were treated with fairness and respect.
8. The areas identified with the lowest ratings across the Council remained fairly consistent with the lowest rated responses in 2021. In summary:
  - i. 60.8% said stress at work does not affect their job performance, a significant increase (improvement) of 2.3 % points since 2021;
  - ii. 62.4% said they felt that change is well managed in the Council, a significant decrease of 2.5 % points since 2021;
  - iii. 67.0% said they felt safe to speak up and challenge the way things were done, similar to 2021; and
  - iv. 70.6% said they thought the reasons for change were well communicated, a significant decrease of 3.7 % points since 2021.

9. A number of areas saw statistically significant increases since 2021. Appendix B shows the percentage point change for questions 1-21. In summary:
- i. A 4.9 % point increase in those that said they have got their work/life balance about right, the highest ever result (80.0%);
  - ii. A 2.4 % point increase in those that said they have a say in deciding how they can work most effectively, also the highest ever result (86.4%);
  - iii. A 2.3 % point increase (improvement) in those that said stress at work does not affect their job performance (60.8%).
10. A number of areas saw statistically significant decreases since 2021, however, these results all remain higher than in 2019. In summary:
- i. A 3.7 % point decrease in those that feel the reasons for change are well communicated (70.6%)
  - ii. A 2.8 % point decrease in those that believe the Council values its staff (78.4%)
  - iii. A 2.5 % point decrease in those that feel that change is well managed in the Council (62.4%)

#### Bullying & Harassment, Discrimination and Job Factors

11. In summary:
- i. 9.7% experienced bullying or harassment at work in the previous 12 months (no significant change from 8.3% in 2021).
  - ii. 27.4% experienced some form of discrimination in the workplace in the previous 12 months (no significant change from 28.0% in 2021).
  - iii. Job factors that 'matter a great deal' were:
    - Job satisfaction (78.7%) a significant decrease of -2.4% points since 2021;
    - Pay and benefits (64.5%) a significant increase of 6.2% points since 2021, possibly reflecting cost of living pressures;
    - Career development (40.4%);
    - Work/life balance (82.1%).

### Employees with Disabilities

12. Employees with disabilities are still significantly less positive on almost all questions. The largest gaps to the average results are:
- i. 'Stress at work does not affect my job performance' (47.7% for disabled staff compared to 60.8% for all staff, -13.1 % points);
  - ii. 'I think it's safe to speak up and challenge' (57.7% for disabled staff compared to 67.0% for all staff, -9.3 % points);
  - iii. 'I feel I have got my work/life balance about right' (71.1% for disabled staff compared to 80.0% for all staff, -8.3 % points);
  - iv. Colleagues with disabilities are significantly more likely to have experienced bullying and harassment (17.0%, +7.4 % points) and discrimination (44.3%, +16.8% points) than the workforce averages of 9.7% and 27.4% respectively.
13. The results for employees with disabilities have, however, improved significantly since 2021, with this demographic group being the only one to show a statistically significant improvement in the overall average score for all questions (+4.4 % points to 77.3%). In summary:
- a) There have been significant improvements for employees with disabilities in 10 of the 21 core questions. The largest increases were:
    - i. A 10.2% point increase (to 84.7%) in those satisfied with the opportunities for flexible working (compared to -0.5 % point decrease to 90.3% for non-disabled staff);
    - ii. A 9.1% point increase (to 71.7%) in those that felt they have got their work/life balance about right (compared to a 5.2% point increase to 82.2% for non-disabled staff);
    - iii. A 8.3% point increase (to 89.3%) in those who feel their manager supports flexible working practices (compared to a -1.3% point decrease to 92.0% for non-disabled staff).
  - b) There has also been a 4.0% point decrease (to 17.0%) in the percentage of disabled employees reporting they have experienced bullying & harassment at work and a 13.9 % point decrease (to 44.3%) in the % of disabled employees experiencing discrimination.

### Timetable for Decisions

14. An Action Plan will be developed in response to the survey findings, and this will be presented to the Employment Committee in Spring 2024.

### **Summary**

15. The survey highlights a number of positive areas and the direction of travel since the 2021 survey is generally positive. Work to build on these results and to address specific areas of concern is underway with HR Business Partners identifying the top issues for consideration with each of their departments and actions required. The survey results will be made available to all staff and Members via interactive dashboards.

### **Recommendations**

16. The Committee is asked to note the summary of the outcomes and actions identified from the 2023 staff survey and to support the approach being taken to address the findings of the survey.

### **Background Papers**

17. None.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

18. None.

### **Equality Implications/Other Impact Assessments**

19. The People Strategy and subsequent actions arising from the Staff Survey are subject to Equality Impact Assessments. Any actions that recommend changes to existing practice, processes or procedures as a result of the staff survey action plans will be subject to a full Equality and Impact Assessment as required.

### **Human Rights Implications**

20. Any actions that recommend changes to existing practice, processes or procedures as a result of the Staff Survey Action Plans will be subject to a full Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment as required.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A – All questions summary
- Appendix B – Percentage point change

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