

Report of the Assistant Director, Customer & Employees

Results of the Workplace Wellbeing Survey 2013

Summary

1. A monitoring report of the Workforce Strategy was presented to Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee in July 2013. At that meeting, there was a request for a report on the results of council's latest wellbeing staff survey.
2. This report and a further more detailed verbal presentation of trends behind the headlines will provide Members with the organisation level results of the 2013 workplace wellbeing staff survey. It also describes how the survey results have been used to date and what happens next, together with a summary of what was done as a result of the 2011 staff survey.

Background

3. The council undertakes a staff survey every two years as part of the commitment to examine staff opinions and encourage involvement as outlined in the Workforce Strategy 2012-15. The analysis of the survey results will also provide evidence against the assessment criteria as part of the Equality Framework for Local Government.
4. This year's staff survey was facilitated by Health 'e' Solutions, who also ran the 2011 survey. This has allowed for the data between the two surveys to be compared and identify how staff opinions may have changed. It also allows for evaluation of the interventions put in place following the last survey. Benchmarking of City of York Council's (CYC's) performance against other councils and the wider public sector has also been possible.

5. The staff survey included:
 - a) A fully HSE compliant risk assessment with 35 stress indicator questions;
 - b) 47 additional questions to test progress against the outcomes outlined in the Workforce Strategy;
 - c) An opportunity for staff to make general comments and/or put forward ideas for making the council a better place to work;
 - d) Anonymous equality profiling information.

Headline results of the 2013 survey

6. The council undertook their bi-annual staff survey from June to July 2013. All council staff were invited to take part, with the option of either completing an online or paper questionnaire. Participation in the 2013 survey has increased by 5% since the 2011 survey, with 42% of staff completing the questionnaire. This compares favourably against the public sector average response rate of 35%.
7. On the whole, the results of the staff survey are positive and do not imply that there are significant areas of concern or that the council has any general stress related problems at an organisational level. Comparing the 2013 with the 2011 stress indicator results at an organisational level show:
 - a) A positive improvement in response to the questions asked about control of work, management peer support and relationships.
 - b) The perception of staff on how the council is managing change highlighted no concerns, with the overall score remaining the same as the previous survey.
 - c) The responses to the questions asked about work demands and staff understanding how their role fits in with the overall direction of the council have deteriorated. This is unsurprising, given restructures, the reductions in staff and increases in workloads.
 - d) The survey assessment for relationships was generally good and consistent across the council. However further analysis reveals there is a perception of strained relationships in

some areas - which will be prioritised for review, within those service areas.

Progress made to date and further actions planned

8. The following actions have taken place since this year's staff survey closed in the summer:
 - a) Results have been presented to council management team (CMT); the workforce strategy steering group and human resources management team; with the same presentation to be given to the joint trade union consultation forums in November including the Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC);
 - b) Results from the staff survey were used as evidence for the external peer review in Summer 2013 and the results used to inform "Delivering for the People of York" Cabinet report;
 - c) Directorates have been given access to their staff survey results with workshops planned to take place in November to identify actions needed;
 - d) Survey results have been interrogated and equality profiled against each protected characteristic as defined within the Equality Act 2010 with work to be undertaken to address any issues highlighted;
 - e) A full communication plan agreed and in place with both summary results and full report to be made available for all staff with the offer of ongoing involvement in focus groups on specific topics.
 - f) Corporate actions and directorate plans will be presented to CMT in December 2013 with progress against these plans to be reported in June 2014 (with updates also to JHSC). Members will receive this update in the Workforce Strategy monitoring reports.

Action taken as a result of the 2011 survey

9. The results of 2011 staff survey were shared with senior management teams and reports provided to Heads of Service. CMT and the JHSC oversaw the development of improvement action plans for each Directorate. A summary of the results of the staff survey were also made available to all staff in autumn 2011. Taking

account of the results, action plans and the council's Workforce Strategy, a number of developments and activities took place:

a) Policy Review

i. Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

A number of staff made references to bullying behaviour in the 2011 staff survey. It was recommended the council's existing policy and procedures covering bullying, harassment or dignity at work should be reviewed to identify if improvements are needed. A fundamental review of the then current bullying and harassment policy and procedure followed. The policy was revised and renamed Dignity at Work, launched and publicised alongside manager briefings and training sessions. The First Contact Network was also renewed and relaunched. This network consists of a group of trained staff from across the council, who offer confidential support and information to colleagues who feel they are being bullied or harassed.

ii. Whistleblowing

Survey results highlighted concerns that the previous whistleblowing policy was difficult to understand or follow. This policy was reviewed and simplified and protects staff from victimisation when raising issues.

iii. Flexible working

Staff reported they felt their working times were not flexible enough. In light of this, opportunities for staff to work flexibly were increased by introducing two further initiatives. Term time working and the opportunity to work compressed hours were introduced earlier in 2013. The time that staff can start and finish work were also expanded from 8am to 6pm to 7am to 7pm, as part of the council's flexitime scheme.

b) Learning, skills and behaviour development

i. Behavioural competencies

To help identify and address learning and development needs, staff from across the council worked together in a series of workshops to create a new individual performance framework. Launched in summer 2013, this framework sets

out a single set of behavioural skills, attitudes and values that apply to all council staff at every level, helping everyone to work together more effectively.

ii. Core learning

In response to the 2011 results, the council's corporate learning and development programme has since been refreshed and reorganised. Learning and development opportunities on health and safety; IT skills (from beginners to advanced level); personal and professional development; building knowledge and practical application of key policies and procedures; mentoring and e-learning resources are available for all staff. The Service to City programme was launched in 2012, to develop the leadership skills of the council's senior managers. A report on the evaluation of the Service to City programme was brought to the last meeting of this Committee.

iii. Volunteering

The 2011 survey indicated that a quarter of our staff were already involved in some form of volunteering. To encourage and support more people to get involved, the council developed an employer supported volunteering strategy. As part of the council's approach to learning and skills development, staff can now request (from their manager) up to a maximum of one day per annum to take part in volunteering activities. Staff are expected to match this day with one day from their own annual leave entitlement.

c) **Health and wellbeing**

The last survey included a number of questions relating to individual lifestyle choices and what type of information and advice staff would value, regarding their health and wellbeing. Analysis of the results instigated the following actions:

- i. A series of health initiatives were run, promoting national and local wellbeing initiatives (for example non smoking day, mental health, cancer awareness);
- ii. A new website developed and launched that encourages staff to maintain a healthy, well balanced lifestyle (www.yorwellbeing.com);

- iii. Workshops to help managers recognise the signs and symptoms of stress;
 - iv. Workshops to help managers and staff build knowledge and awareness of mental health issues in the workplace.
- d) **Reward and recognition**

Just over half (53%) of our staff reported they felt their contributions were valued. In conjunction with Customer Strategy work, the council introduced employee of the month awards and has held two annual 'eXtra factor' awards to promote reward and recognition. The award categories have since been reviewed and expanded to cover volunteering; innovation and equality champions in 2013.

e) **Communications**

Under half (44%) of staff indicated they were satisfied with the council's internal communications. In response, the ways in which the council gets information and news to people has been extended giving staff more opportunities of keeping up to date through a variety of channels including face to face briefings, electronic staff magazines, staff engagement sessions with CMT and via personal email accounts and mobile phones.

Council Plan

10. The workplace wellbeing survey assists in delivering against to the council's Workforce Strategy, underpinning the delivery of all Council Plan priorities and in particular the Core Capabilities in delivering:
- a confident, collaborative organisation
 - completely in touch with our communities
 - relentlessly focused on our priorities.

Implications

- 11.
- **Financial** – none within this report, all costs are managed within existing budgets.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – as described in the report.
 - **Equalities** – as described in the report.

- There are no specific **Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT or property implications**

Risk Management

12. Failure to undertake a staff survey and analyse/respond to the results could result in the council not achieving:
- compliance with the HSE management standards;
 - Excellent status of the Equalities Framework for Local Government;
 - the outcomes as set out in the Workforce Strategy.

Recommendations

13. Members are asked to note:
- a) the progress and achievements since the 2011 survey;
 - b) the headline results of the 2013 staff survey;
 - c) work undertaken to date and the next priorities.

Reason: To keep members informed of how the results of the staff survey are used to drive improvement in workforce related matters.

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**Report
Approved**



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Specialist Implications Officer(s) *None*

Background Papers:

Workforce Strategy 2012-15:

<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=6682&Ver=4>

Previous agenda papers to this Committee

Annexes

None