

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director for Children's Services

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Date:	29 March 2018
Subject:	Employee Survey 2017 - Results Report

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the results of the Employee Survey 2017. This report focusses on the organisation-wide results in 2017 compared to the results from the 2015 Employee Survey. Next steps and key themes emerging at a corporate level are also included.

Actions Required:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is asked to note the results and the conclusions this drawn regarding the workforce and their current experience of LCC as an employer.

1. Background

1.1. Employee Survey 2017

The Employee Survey is managed by LCC People Management with the process and analysis being managed by Serco Organisational Development colleagues. The survey is run biannually with the last survey being conducted in 2015. Prior to this in 2013 we undertook work under the title of Unwritten Ground Rules (UGR's) the output of which was our current values and behaviours and the challenging of psychological rules and behaviours which were barriers to these values and behaviours.

The survey is provided to employees via an online tool (Snap Survey) with paper copies provided to those without online access. Paper copies are input to the online tool to enable analysis across all responses.

We already held the required licenses for the online tool and the support from Serco is provided under the existing service contract for People Management resulting in no additional costs being incurred.

Both the 2015 and 2017 surveys were run in the November-December period to emulate the same external factors, some of which can influence responses to questions. E.g. how employees feel during winter versus how they may feel in summer.

1.2. Process Developments for the 2017 Survey

The 2017 survey includes the same or similar questions to 2015 to allow for direct comparison. There are also some additional questions and changes to questions related to the current organisational context and lessons learnt from the 2015 survey e.g. Fire & Rescue require specific questions.

In an effort to increase participation Fire & Rescue elected to participate using paper copies rather than the online option with Retained Fire Fighters being provided with copies of the survey on their training nights.

The survey remains anonymous and voluntary to preserve authenticity of the responses. The focus for the 2015 survey was re-engagement with the workforce and encouragement to participate, coming as it did immediately after a very difficult period of organisation-wide restructuring. The 2017 survey included additional base information to allow us to drill down and examine specific questions by Director Area, grade, age and length of service, if required.

Whilst the survey remains the key tool for measuring corporate workforce engagement, for Fire & Rescue it is one of a number of data sets they have been working with in 2017 as part of their Peer Review process.

Benchmarking activity took place to determine additional improvements to the process including the style of presentation for the results output to enable ease of comparison to the 2015 results.

1.3. Objectives for the 2017 Survey

- To improve on the participation rate of 50.5% achieved in 2015. Typically, anything over 40% is seen as a very positive result for a voluntary survey.
- To provide both organisation-wide and Director Area specific data. Director Area specific data allows us to consider results against the current context for that area of work and ensure any subsequent actions are specifically targeted for best effect.
- To provide data for specific workforce priority workstreams e.g. retention in hard to recruit to posts and skills development.

Whilst outside the control or influence of the Survey Project Team, it was also hoped the results would demonstrate an improvement on the 2015 results in general.

1.4. The Results

The overall participation rate in 2017 was 56.5% with 2540 responses received. This is a 5% increase on 2015.

The numeric results in comparison to the 2015 survey can be found in Appendix A. These show significant improvements and outstanding levels of positive responses

to many of the questions. The Direction of travel (DOT) is displayed against questions 1-12 and 14–18.

Question 13 relates to current initiatives so is not benchmarked against 2015.

The highest satisfaction rate is:

Q2 "I have the support of my colleagues" 96% which is a 3% increase on 2015

The lowest satisfaction rate is:

Q9 "I have a comfortable working environment" 70% which is a 4% increase on 2015

The highest increase in results since 2015 is:

Q18 "Different views and opinions of employees influence solutions and decisions" At 77% this is a 26% increase on the 2015 result. This reflects the very different position we are in now, two years beyond the last large restructuring exercise where employees felt they had only a low degree of influence.

Free Text Format Responses

Four questions had free text options with three providing supplementary information to other questions and one being a standalone question as indicated below:

6a) Please let us know what factors are key to your sense of achievement (supplementary to Q6)

9a) Focussing on facilities and equipment, what one thing could improve your working environment? (supplementary to Q9)

19) The best thing about working here is ... (supplementary option to a drop down list of choices based on 2015 survey responses)

20) Overall, what one thing do you suggest that would improve working for LCC? (standalone free text responses)

The responses from these have been collated into themes. The results show the lowest satisfaction levels to be:

- IT – both hardware and stability of infrastructure
- Serco – made up of IT and some additional dissatisfaction with other service support functions.
- Property – at the time of the survey the heating on the main Lincoln campus had failed and snagging resolutions were still taking place at the new Lancaster House site which has now, for the most part, been resolved. Other key issues were related to Orchard House, cost of car parking in Lincoln, noise levels in open plan offices and heat and lighting in general across a number of locations. Several issues that emerged were for local management resolution rather than for Corporate Property.

These were also the three top themes from the 2015 survey. Whilst progress has been made with IMT and Serco service delivery it was expected that these would still feature. The Property issues have a different focus to 2015 with much more detail and much less focus on personal feelings about having had to move location as a consequence of the restructuring.

The free format responses displayed mature and well thought through comments from employees whereas the 2015 responses displayed a "protest vote" response.

There is a real desire from the workforce to raise issues that would really make a big difference to them and to do this in a very professional manner. Many have taken the time to thank their managers and some of the corporate services too for their support.

Quote: *Employee Survey 2017 Q19 The best thing about working here is:*

"Doing a job that you enjoy every day, feeling valued, making a positive difference to the people we support and their families/carers, fantastic Line Manager, great colleagues, shared vision, autonomy, creativity, working for an employer who values me and supports my career development. Am proud to work for Lincolnshire County Council and have high job satisfaction".

2. Conclusion & Next Steps

The results of the survey show a very positive shift in perceptions when compared to the 2015 results. Despite the challenges, the workforce, on the whole, see LCC as a good employer that provides opportunities for development and supports its employees. The very positive response regarding how supportive people are to each other, also indicates a very positive working culture.

The results are now being further analysed by Corporate Support Functions, Director Areas and Project Leads to support additional activity specific to these areas and our workforce priorities.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?
Yes

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

The risk of not taking account of the results, not using these to validate projects/actions and not communicating the results and subsequent actions to the workforce has been taken into account.

The Council recognises that our workforce are a valuable resource that requires a voice and deserves a response to the things they raise. The results are used to influence our workforce priority projects.

These risks are mitigated by the next steps activity already underway and communications to the workforce that have already been issued.

3. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Numeric Results Employee Survey 2017

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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