

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

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Date:	30 August 2018
Subject:	Employee Survey 2017 - Progress Update

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on actions taken by both Corporate functions and Director Areas to address issues raised by the results of the Employee Survey 2017.

Actions Required:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is asked to note and comment on the actions taken and progress achieved in addressing the issues raised by the 2017 Employee Survey.

1. Background

1.1. Employee Survey 2017 – Results

The survey results were presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) on 29 March 2018. The survey took place from 13 November to 8 December 2017.

Whilst it was accepted that the overall results were very positive, there was further discussion around some key areas. A report on actions to address these and other service area outcomes of the survey was requested for the August 2018 meeting.

1.2. Areas of focus

Key areas of corporate focus are:

- IMT
- Property
- Insights into the cause of lower participation rates in some areas and actions to improve this.
- The drivers for 23% of participants not feeling they have opportunities to develop both personally and professionally and actions to improve this.
- Actions to improve levels of awareness of:
 - Employee Benefits
 - Work of other Director Areas
 - Performance & Appraisal System

The findings and actions are outlined below in section 1.3 of the report.

Service Area Outcomes and activities are outlined separately in section 1.4 of the report.

1.3. Corporate areas of focus

IMT

The previous agenda item "Performance of the Corporate Support Contract" refers to wider IMT issues. The impact of these was reflected in both the 2015 and 2017 Employee Survey with IMT being a key area of dissatisfaction in both surveys.

IMT is now collating the feedback from the employee survey with the results from the recent IMT Staff & Member engagements and mapping those to the IMT strategy, in a way that explains how the forward work plan addresses the shortcomings of the Corporate IT provision. This is being worked on in conjunction with the OSMB IT Working Group chaired by Cllr Mrs J Brockway and with the Portfolio for IMT Cllr R Davies, IMT's Executive Director and the Chief Executive.

Serco has invested in additional resources in Lincoln to support the IT helpdesk rather than using the overspill function which saw callers diverted to Birmingham. This has seen ongoing improvement in the service and in the overall perception of the helpdesk function.

Property

The Survey identified a number of common themes as well as specific items in buildings. In response to the key themes raised, feasibility studies are being undertaken on the following areas.

- Provision of staff rest and kitchen areas on principal office sites, the outcome of this is expected in early autumn
- Toilets
- Facilities for cyclists

There have been specific matters raised in relation to improving toilet facilities in Orchard House and some rooms in County Offices and further investigation is taking place on these where they have been identified in the survey responses.

It is also planned to review offices which have been refurbished to take feedback from staff on how they operate and identify any lessons to be learned. Over the longer term individual surveys for principal sites will be undertaken along with suitability surveys to identify more specifically matters that may wish to be addressed.

Some issues raised were line management responsibilities and reminders of these and how to access information and help to resolve them has been issued to managers in support of this.

It also became apparent that employees were raising property issues within the survey which they had not previously reported and a reminder on how to do this has also been communicated.

A review of the Lincoln campus meeting rooms has been undertaken which has resulted in replacing furniture where required, adding telephones and WI-FI, decorating and increasing capacity and improved signage.

A new George page has been created providing information about the meeting rooms including more floor plans, a new directory and room photos.

Participation Rates

As was discussed at the meeting in March, IMT access was a block to participation for those who were field based across the county and in particular for Children's Services.

IT connectivity issues for field based employees across the organisation, together with the capacity issues this caused, resulted in communications and reminders about the survey being missed and if they were seen, either not having the time to take part or being unable to access the survey.

As the survey was anonymous, we are unable to identify who did not take part to explore their views further. Managers have made enquiries to try and identify any additional issues but nothing has been identified and there appears to be no dissatisfaction across the workforce with either being asked to take part or with the style or content of the survey.

The next survey will be in Nov/Dec 2019 by which point it is expected that IT accessibility and connectivity will have improved.

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) achieved the lowest participation rate of 34% (increased to 42% with 60 late submissions). This again was discussed at the March meeting as it had already been discovered that despite best efforts, communications to Retained Fire Fighters about the survey had not been received.

LFR has added actions to their existing Retained Firefighter Engagement Project to address this.

The drivers for 23% of participants not feeling they have development opportunities.

Drivers identified are:

- Flatter structures & less roles within the organisation
- More specialist roles with these being recruited externally to deliver immediate outputs
- Reduction in training and development budgets
- Reduced capacity to think about self-development and motivation to commit to it

The Performance & Development Appraisal system has been implemented fully across the organisation since the survey, 2017 having been the pilot year. All employees should now have had a development plan discussion and at the very least have a plan in place which captures the "must do" elements e.g. Information Governance training.

Priority projects are underway to address a "grow our own" approach to career development to identify career pathways, early careers routes and put succession planning approaches in place in hard to recruit and retain areas.

Recent developments have seen the secondment issues addressed with an expression of interest rather than full application form to simplify the process. Managers have been reminded, however short term, that all secondments must be clearly identified and advertised.

The opportunities offered via the Apprenticeship Reforms have in effect boosted our training and development budgets by £1m per year. Our initial focus in 2017/18 has been the recruiting of new apprentices at predominantly level 2 and 3 qualifications. However, these funds are also available to existing employees to undertake higher level qualifications up to post graduate level and there will be a focus on promoting this in autumn 2018 in preparation for appraisals and development plans in the New Year.

All of the above actions are being managed and monitored as part of the Corporate Workforce Plan as it is intended that they will contribute to raising the profile of employee development across the organisation.

Actions to improve levels of awareness of Employee Benefits (20% unaware); Work of other Director Areas (35% unaware) and the Performance & Appraisal System (10% unaware).

A major Employee Benefits project was underway at the time of the survey and launched very successfully at the end of February 2018 outstripping all previous campaigns in terms of sign up. We now expect to hit 3,000 sign ups by the end of September 2018 and have evidence that actions to encourage participation from those employees who are traditionally hard to reach, have worked well.

Actions are in place via the Apprenticeship Reforms opportunities to rotate placements across the organisation and the advertising of secondment opportunities to a wider audience should also aid awareness of other Director Areas.

Different Service Areas are also being invited to promote information about their work to groups of apprentices in the Council with the offer of shadowing opportunities being made to further increase their knowledge.

As mentioned previously the full implementation and associated communications about the new Performance and Development Appraisal System in 2018 will have addressed the 10% of employees who were not aware of the system.

1.4. Service Areas key themes and actions

The Employee Survey is facilitated by the People Management Service on behalf of Corporate Management Board (CMB). The Engagement Lead and relevant Strategic People Management Advisor met with each CMB member in March to discuss emerging themes specific to each Director Area and put these into context in terms of any key developments within Service Areas prior and during the period of the survey.

These have then been discussed with management teams to identify actions that were already planned which would address the themes and any additional actions that may be required.

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue

There is an ongoing project to encourage greater engagement and inclusion from the Retained Firefighters and the general themes emerging for LFR echoed what was already known and actions planned. The communication issue related to participation rates was a specific instance to investigate further and actions have been added to address this.

Finance & Public Protection

An away day was held with all SMT members on 14 June with part of the day focussed on the survey outputs. Many of the themes raised focussed on corporate activity e.g. The Finance Teams in Orchard House being unhappy with their accommodation, career development and progression opportunities. Actions at Service Level have been identified to support the corporate actions.

Within Business Support a theme related to flexible working had arisen and actions to address this were agreed.

Children's Services

In April Debbie Barnes held briefing sessions across the county discussing the survey outcomes with teams. There was a commitment to improving IT kit which was seen as the greatest enabler for teams and action was taken to roll this out in a phased approach.

The roll out of the new tablets for Children's Health has been successfully completed and the order for Phase 1 of the Social Care and early help tablets has been approved and placed with an estimated implementation start date of the beginning of September.

Adult Care & Community Wellbeing

There was already an awareness of the key themes and again, some activity was already underway at the point the survey took place. These addressed resources and workload and issues with Mosaic, which dominated the survey outcomes.

After the Peer review of 2017 there was a plan in place to increase professional grades and it was also agreed that some of the Better Care Fund could be utilised for support staffing. Action around this has been taken and this will support the areas of resources and workload.

A programme of grow your own has been initiated for Social Workers with a cohort of 12 being trained this year and a plan for a further 12 next year.

There has been a review of Mosaic workflow, which has simplified and improved the experience of assessment documents and the OT's have had a revamp of the documentation they use.

A roll out of 378 Windows 10 Sim enabled laptops has also been delivered to front line staff to update and upgrade the connectivity capability within area teams countywide. This was funded directly from Adult Care budgets to enable this to happen.

Environment & Economy

Managers within the Service Areas have taken a variety of approaches in considering the survey outputs. These have included:

- Discussion of the results at appraisals to identify any specific issues individuals may have
- Driving actions to replace old phones and laptops
- Discussion of results at both management and team meetings some of which have influenced the 2018 Business Plan
- Creating standing items on management team agendas for survey themes and staff suggestions
- Introducing new management practices and working processes post major restructuring
- Re-introducing management posts and team meetings that had previously been removed in restructures and were causing concern
- Support at Service level for corporate survey actions e.g. Apprenticeship Reforms and Succession Planning
- Leading activity on resilience at service level as the positive survey outcomes overall did not reflect the need that had been identified at local level
- Offering to work with external partners to attempt to address the cost of car parking for all employees in Lincoln
- Increased focus on supporting the "upward cascade" of ideas/thoughts
- More emphasis on structured development opportunities e.g. use of Apprenticeship Reforms opportunities

2. Conclusion & Next Steps

Both at Corporate and at Service level, activity is underway to address themes raised. It is pleasing to note that many of these were already identified and planned ahead of the survey results demonstrating manager's awareness of the challenges our workforce face on a day to day basis.

IMT remains the dominant issue and if addressed would resolve a whole host of impacts that would improve employee's experience of working for the Council.

The Employee Survey George pages will be updated with the actions and progress made and will also be shared with the Trade Unions who have been extremely supportive of both encouraging participation in the survey and other initiatives mentioned in this paper.

A lessons learned activity was undertaken by the survey project team in March 2018 which will inform the process and recommendations for the 2019 survey along with other feedback and suggestions from management teams and representative groups.

With such positive results in 2017 there is already an expectation emerging that this can be maintained or improved upon in 2019. A cautionary note, with IMT being such a big issue this may have masked other dissatisfaction that would not have seemed such a priority for employees in 2017.

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.

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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