

Report of the Director of Resources & Housing

Report to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)

Date: 21st December 2017

Subject: 'Can Do' Culture and Recognition in Leeds City Council

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report provides an update on work regarding 'can do' culture and recognition.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Board note the contents of this report as an update regarding how the Council is developing a 'can do' approach to working towards its ambition to be the Best City and Best Council.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. This report provides an update on progress regarding 'can do' culture and recognition. It provides information on the background, current development and future opportunities.

2. Background Information

- 2.1. Over the past three years we have kept our values and our vision at the heart of our cultural change throughout the organisation. In 2016 the Peer Review said that one of our strengths is that "Leeds is clearly driven by its aspiration and values, to be the best and positive mind set."
- 2.2. The Peer Review was clear that we have a strong foundation for progress. It also challenged us to go further to develop a clear narrative, shout about what we are good at, be more innovative and be even more confident to go further and faster.

- 2.3. In 2011, we developed our five core values. To make sure they are still relevant, in January 2017 we talked about them with staff from across the authority. Overall, people are positive and enthusiastic about our values, feeling they fairly represent how we currently work, or how we should work. Encouraging a 'can do' attitude runs throughout our existing values. Some examples of this are:
- I am open to new ways of working.
 - I appreciate the efforts of others and acknowledge a job well done.
 - I look for ways to improve processes and service delivery.
- 2.4. A 'can do' culture is a culture that supports everyone to feel safe and confident to take a 'can do' approach to working towards our ambition to be the best city and the best council.
- 2.5. We are working on bringing these values to life for people, so that they can understand what a 'Can do' approach means for them and their work. It draws together priorities such as inclusion and diversity, focusing on lower paid, front line staff without access to a computer as part of their role and making changes in partnership with trade unions and staff networks.

3. Main Issues

3.1. 'Can Do' Culture

- 3.1.1. In our constantly and quickly changing world, the skills needed to work effectively, safely and resiliently have also changed. In this environment we need a culture that supports everyone to feel safe and confident to take a 'can do' approach to working towards our ambition to be the best city and best Council.
- 3.1.2. We want everyone to say: "I am part of a team with a 'Can do' attitude." "A 'can do' approach and team problem solving is encouraged". It is intended that this description form a starting point for discussions to:
- Help managers think more about what a 'can do' culture looks like
 - How their own behaviour impacts on culture development.
 - Draw out & celebrate the stories that bring this to life for people at all levels of the organisation.
- 3.1.3. Falling out of the values refresh, the concept of a 'No Wrong Door' approach emerged. This is about providing great customer service, taking accountability, and seeing things through. The Councils' values underpin what we do and how we work to achieve the priorities outlined in the Best Council Plan.
- 3.1.4. For the Council, developing a 'can do' culture is a long term vision. With many different strands being developed by staff at all levels of the organisation: embedding values and habits, leadership at all levels, front line engagement and influence, recognition, collaboration and innovation, performance and productivity, learning, streamlining processes.
- 3.1.5. There is not a one size fits all approach; it can't be pinned down easily. As individuals, staff and managers have to use their experience and know how to choose the right routes in, at the right time, based on good strong understanding of where services and teams are at.

3.2. Areas of development 'Can do' culture

3.2.1. There have been various areas of development in regards to 'can do' culture and recognition:

- 2017 Leadership Conference
- 2017 Leadership Unconference
- Recognition
- Employee Engagement

Further details regarding development in these areas can be found in Appendix 1a.

4. Future Developments and next steps

- 4.1. Further to the Leadership Unconference and Leadership Conference, there will be a roll out of the 'UnConference' approach that will encourage services to try new ways to find solutions to problems and share their successes.
- 4.2. In response to feedback from focus groups received earlier this year, we will be taking a different approach to recognition to enable staff to nominate others all year round to encourage continuous recognition.
- 4.3. The recognition and engagement knowledge portal (Calls9) will be rolled out with participating front line services from mid-December for a three-month trial ending in March 2018. The success of the trial will be evaluated using both analytics from the portal and information from staff.
- 4.4. An evaluation of methods of Employee Engagement survey completion for those staff who do not have a computer will take place in January 2018 with a view to different methodology being used in the 2018 Employee Engagement Survey. There will also be an evaluation of the success of the new questions and an in-depth analysis regarding the comments received from staff in the open text box.

5. Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1. In addition to holding conversations with over 200 staff from across the organisation to find out what they thought of our values, focus groups also took place with staff to ask them what staff would like to see in the future to make our approach to recognition of excellent work even more meaningful.
- 5.2. Consultation regarding the recognition and engagement portal trial is currently taking place with services, front-line staff and trade unions in those services. This pilot will inform what next steps are taken.
- 5.3. We are talking to other authorities to ascertain their approach to recognition and engagement and external companies have been able to provide an overview of techniques used to engage staff in the private sector.
- 5.4. Consultation has taken place with Corporate Leadership Team regarding the development of 'can do' culture.

6. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 6.1. 'Can do' culture and the developments discussed in this report aim to address inclusion and diversity themes and encourage cohesion and integration. The work

around our Values over the last few years has inclusion at its heart, so this is a good place to start.

- 6.2. The pilot concerning the knowledge portal aims to give those lower paid staff without access to a computer, the opportunity to access information, and engage with their services and each other. The insights gained will inform future approaches.
- 6.3. Ongoing consultation with services regarding methodology for reaching front line staff and changes made to the employee engagement survey aim to encourage staff voice in hard to reach areas and provide services with the information and tools to make positive changes.

7. Council Policies and City Priorities

- 7.1. The Council's values underpin what we do and how we work to achieve the priorities outlined in the Best Council Plan.
- 7.2. We would like to sustain a culture that supports everyone to feel safe and confident to take a 'can do' approach to working towards our ambition to be the best city and best Council.

8. Resources and Value for Money

- 8.1. Adopting a 'can do' attitude will encourage problem solving and allow teams to try new things allowing teams to work more effectively to deliver services in line with the ambitions in our Best Council Plan.

9. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 9.1. All research that takes place will adhere to the data protection act ensuring confidentiality of those that take part.

10. Risk Management

- 10.1. The developments outlined in this paper pose minimal risk. Leeds City Council's policies and guidance will be adhered to. It is noted that performance results may be linked to the corporate risk on 'Workforce Planning' (Workforce change does not secure sustainable quality services within the medium-term financial plan) that could impact on the delivery of the Best Council Plan.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1. This report highlights our ongoing work regarding 'can do' culture, recognition and engagement highlighting the many different ways in which a 'can do' approach can have a positive impact on the workforce.
- 11.2. The Council will continue to build on the work we have undertaken so far and continue to seek improvements for staff by building on successes to promote 'can do culture' and recognition. This will draw together priorities such as inclusion and diversity by listening to those staff in lower paid, front line services without access to a computer as part of their role.
- 11.3. We continue to work on the initiatives that will deliver maximum impact across the organisation for the best value investment of resources.

12. Recommendations

12.1. It is recommended that the Resources and Housing Scrutiny Board note this report as an update regarding 'can do' culture and recognition. Comments regarding the content of this report are welcomed.

Appendix 1: Areas of Development – 'Can do' culture

Leadership Unconference and Leadership Conference 2017

On the 16 October 2017 two exciting events took place at the University of Leeds; the Leadership Unconference and the Leadership Conference.

Leeds City Council annual Leadership Conference brings together the senior leaders and key influencers from across the Council. Over the past three years we have kept our values and our vision at the heart of our cultural change throughout the organisation. The peer review said that one of our strengths is that "Leeds is clearly driven by its aspiration and values, to be the best."

In 2016 we won the prestigious Local Authority of the Year Award (amongst other awards) and received excellent feedback from the LGA peer review. We have continued to build on this success in 2017 and are not complacent. We continue to work towards our ambition to be the Best City and the Best Council in our new organisational shape. Championing Inclusive growth continues to be vital to building our 'Strong Economy and Compassionate City'.

Our five core values are vital to our continued success. In January 2017 we held conversations with staff from across the organisation to check that they are still relevant. Over 200 people from across the organisation took part in values refresh conversations and the insights gained were included in the Best Council Plan Update 17/18. We continue to build on feedback from the Peer Review and that from our colleagues who took part in 'Values refresh' conversations to do more to bring our values to life.

The leadership unconference was well attended with over 60 staff coming together from across the Council; pitching for sessions which encouraged open discussions regarding questions and issues. As a result, colleagues were able to agree actions to take back to their services to change the way things are done in the spirit of 'can do' culture. Feedback from attendees was that they very much appreciated this opportunity to bring their ideas and connect with different people. We will be rolling out this low cost approach more widely in 2018.

The leadership conference 2017 was attended by around 350 of the organisation's senior leaders who took part in this interactive event to engage senior leaders and key influencers around [calls to action](#). We;

- Explored and furthered our shared understanding of how we can have a greater impact on inclusive growth.
- Listened to and celebrated examples of working to our values and explore how they help us all to contribute every day to our ambition to be the Best City and the Best Council.
- Launched 'Can do' week – celebrating our values and a week of activities to bring 'Can do' culture to life and to all of our interactions with communities and citizens.

Recognition

The Awards for Excellence and Celebrating Success event is taking on the 15th December 2015.

Feedback from focus groups earlier in the year indicated that to complement annual event we could also encourage continuous celebrations of success throughout the year. This has led to the proposal to implement a Recognition Strategy early next year.

In December 2017, HR will launch a three month trial of a knowledge portal in partnership with a company called Calls9. The trial will focus on those lower paid, front line staff who do not have access to a computer as part of their job. It will open up access to information and a platform for employee voice and engagement.

Participants will be able to access both Council-wide and service related information from any device, so that they can keep up to date with what is happening and view the latest staff discounts. The fantastic part of the knowledge portal is that staff can be given the opportunity to share successes, ask and answer questions and nominate each other for prizes.

During the trial, analytics will be collected and collated to assess the success of the portal. To complement this 'gamification' approach, we will also be asking staff directly about their experiences of using the portal.

Employee Engagement

The Council runs an annual employee engagement survey which gives staff a chance to have their say about how they work and what we can do better

In 2016 we achieved an overall engagement score of 7.5 out of 10. This was based on answers to the question 'If a friend asked you to give a score from 1 to 10 working for Leeds City Council, what would it be?' All directorates have scored higher than 7 out of 10. The scores for 23 of the 26 survey questions improved between 2015 and 2016.

It is hugely encouraging to see such results. In response to feedback received from the 2016 survey we have made some positive amendments to the survey in consultation with staff, managers and trade unions including:

- The addition of a new question regarding appraisal.
- An open text box has been introduced for the first time where staff can express their views and opinions on how the council can improve.
- There have also been some supplementary questions added where there were high areas of 'agree nor disagree' responses including a question regarding whether staff have experienced inappropriate behaviour within the last 12 months and whether they have made suggestions for spending money wisely.
- Consultation with those who do not have access to a computer regarding the ways in which front line staff receive and complete the survey has taken place in an effort to boost response rates.