

Report of the Director of Resources & Housing

Report to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)

Date: 11th February 2019

Subject: Update – Staff Survey

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 a summary of the proposals for the Council's Staff Survey which is due to launch in Spring 2019.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Board note this update and comments are welcomed.

1.0 Purpose of this report

1.1 The report provides an outline of an updated Staff Survey approach to specifically improve the uptake in front line services where employees do not have access to a computer as part of their everyday roles.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Staff Survey has been running in its current format for four years providing year on year comparison of engagement with questions centred around the Council's values.

2.2 Some of the main highlights from the 2017 results are as follows:

- We increased our overall engagement score from 7.51 to 7.54 out of 10.
- The overall response rate is high and comparable to previous years with a slight decrease of 3.1% on the previous year.
- Some new questions have been added this year; improved scores on 21 questions and reduced scores on 5 questions.
- 90%+ of staff agree that they have clear expectations, are trusted to do their jobs, and get help and support from colleagues. 89.5% of staff agree they are making a difference to the people of Leeds.

3.0 Main issues

3.1 Staff Survey and Engagement

3.1.1 We know that there is no 'one-size' fits all approach to employee engagement, and no single model for getting it right. All services continue to work hard to make the everyday employee experience better, with activity cutting across the key areas for improvement agreed by CLT in February 2018:

- Improving the quality and value of appraisals across the Council.
- Giving everyone a say and influence at work, especially those in front line teams.
- Tackling increased workloads and burnout, with everyone doing their fair share.
- Tacking areas of poor management (Fairness, consistency, values and behaviour).
- Looking at the money pressures that people are facing and the things that will help.
- Improving IT systems and equipment.

3.1.2 The recent refresh of our Organisational Development Strategy has enabled us to update our key messages around culture change, responding to the six priority areas (above) falling out of the 2017 Staff Survey feedback. Feedback from previous Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board Meetings has also identified that the areas for improvement above are key to creating a 'can do' high performance workplace.

3.1.3 It is the continued efforts of all services on the ground, putting people at the centre of what we do, that makes the difference.

3.1.4 There is a focus on how we can improve the employee experience. In part this can be achieved by encouraging staff to take a greater concern in the welfare of their colleagues, whether as peers or managers. In 2019 there will be a focus on the healthy organisation with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy being extended until 2021.

3.1.5 To develop the initiatives above, it is really important for us to understand how staff feel about working for Leeds City Council.

3.1.6 We have recognised that the current methods for engaging staff with online access are successful, with around two thirds of these staff taking part (65% in 2017).

However, engaging front line staff has been more of a challenge and response rates were closer to 1 in 4 (26% in 2017), with some services engaging to a much lesser extent than others. In order to change this we will agree a bespoke approach for each front-line service looking at staff culture, preferences and local work practices to determine the best way to engage staff. Some examples include:

- Providing the option for staff to use a web-link to complete the survey via smartphones or tablets.
- Supporting teams by providing access to IT equipment if required.
- Attending staff events to support teams to complete the survey.

3.2 The 2019 Staff Survey

3.2.1 The way forward (outlined below) for the 2019 Staff Survey has been refreshed through consultation with teams, trade unions and staff networks.

3.2.2 Feedback and suggestions from previous Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board Meetings regarding how we can reach out to front line staff has also been taken into account when refreshing this approach.

Frequency of the survey	We conduct the survey every other year , giving the opportunity for further engagement to fill gaps and explore themes in between.
Questions	We keep the questions largely the same to allow comparison, with a few changes to avoid duplication. Links to the OD strategy and how we measure its success. Some amendment to the open question to constrain responses.
On-line staff	We will email a personalised link to the online survey , which has been shown to generate a high response rate.
Front line services/low IT access	We will take bespoke approaches per service to meet staff preferences, culture and local work practices, with paper as default. Access via personal devices through social media, text messages and apps will also be on offer, with tablets and laptops being made available where required.
Reporting and follow up	HR and IPS will offer advice and support around development of action plans, follow-up and communication of findings. Levels of response will be considered, including by demographic group - further engagement (pulse surveys, focus etc.) will be carried out to fill gaps and explore themes. Instead of creating individual reports at a service level, it is proposed that a dashboard is created , which enables managers to select a full report for their Service. Figures could be compared between Services or at Directorate or LCC level and further information, such as response rates, could be included. Where response numbers are low and results less statistically robust, the reports would be displayed, however managers would see a warning. Only where response numbers are unreasonably low would reports not be displayed.

4.0 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1 This way forward is based on the 2017 Staff Survey results and consultation with services, staff networks, leadership teams, staff, trade union colleagues and feedback from Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board meetings.

5.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.1 Our Staff Survey and feedback from services, staff networks, leadership teams, staff and trade union colleagues give a valuable insight into the real work experiences of different staff groups and employees. We use the results from the staff survey to improve the employee experience and become a more inclusive workplace.
- 5.2 The Council have a legal duty to eliminate any forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- 5.3 The bespoke approaches for staff who do not have access to a computer will meet staff preferences and should further increase the response rates for those staff who are off-line.

6.0 Council Policies and Best Council Plan

- 6.1 The Council's values are at the heart of what we do and how we work to achieve the priorities outlined in the Best Council Plan.
- 6.2 A 'can do', high performing, inclusive workforce is key to delivering the Best Council Plan through increased customer trust and confidence and improved service delivery and outcomes.
- 6.3 This report recommends that there remains a place for the Staff Survey as part of our culture change work, but that we update our approach and bespoke our methods where it makes sense to do so.

7.0 Resources and Value for Money

- 7.1 The Staff Survey allows us to improve the employee experience, increase engagement and maximise our investment in staffing.

8.0 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 8.1 This is not applicable as shown in the content of the report.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Engaging front line staff has been a challenge and response rates were closer to 1 in 4 (26% in 2017), with some services engaging to a much lesser extent than others. Using bespoke approaches for front line staff should improve the uptake in front line services where employees do not have access to a computer as part of their everyday roles.

10.0 Conclusions

10.1 This report highlights the way forward for the 2019 Staff Survey.

11.0 Recommendations

11.1 It is recommended that the Resources and Housing Scrutiny Board note this update on the proposals for the 2019 Staff Survey and comments and feedback are welcomed.

12. Background documents¹

12.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.