

Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council

Joint Commissioning Committee

15 September 2016

Staff Survey Action Plan

Report of the Commercial Director

This report is public.

Purpose of report

To provide the committee with a proposed Action Plan in relation to the findings from the Staff Survey undertaken during 2016. The action plan will be in place for the period before the next Staff Survey takes place, which is likely to be two years.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Consider, review and agree the draft Action Plan attached at Appendix 1.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The findings from the Staff Survey as undertaken in 2016, were submitted to JMT and JCEEC and JCC during July 2016. Based on these findings consideration has been given to possible actions that could improve on the employee experience. Actions would be monitored to ensure that progress could be seen, and where appropriate reported through the Performance Team.
- 2.2 It is important to note that when considering appropriate actions, this also needs to take account of other strategies and action plans that are or will be in place to ensure duplication of effort is not seen. A good example of this might be the People and OD Strategy that is currently being developed.
- 2.3 JMT, the trade unions and the Joint Employee Council (JEC) will be asked for feedback on the proposed action plan, following the JMT meeting on the 7th September 2016. Any feedback received will be provided to the committee as a verbal update due to timings of the meetings.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The response rate was 59% (433 out of 733 staff) compared to 71% (534 out of 748 staff) in 2013.

- 3.2 Many respondents were 'on the fence' by neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement / question posed. As the statements in the survey were predominately positively positioned i.e. do you feel something was better / improved / more effective, it has been considered the responses where staff neither agree nor disagree on a particular issue indicate a non-positive answer. This has been reflected in the key findings.
- 3.3 **My Job** - On the question whether changes in the past year have or will improve staff effectiveness, an overall 75% of respondents could not agree to this and 40% of respondents are not convinced they are recognised for doing a good job.
- 3.4 **Development and training** - Around two thirds of respondents indicate they use the appraisal process to offload issues and problems and around half could not agree they get training and development addressed.
- 3.5 **Communication** - As a whole, respondents felt communication is good across the organisation but around a third of respondents could not agree that we have good internal communication that keeps them informed and allows them to be aware of the contribution their role makes to overall performance. 50% of respondents could not agree the organisational awareness days were useful.
- 3.6 **Management** - Around 70% of respondents generally feel that they have good support from their line manager, but just under half may not get monthly 121s, whilst a third don't feel their opinions, ideas and views are taken forward. Additionally, two-thirds of respondents could not agree the changes have been managed effectively and that adequate assistance has been provided to enable staff to cope with the changes. 85% of respondents did agree that their team co-operates to get work done.
- 3.7 **JMT** – less than a third agreed that JMT is visible, dynamic, forward thinking, listens to staff or is honest with staff.
- 3.8 **Line management** – This doesn't appear to be something that respondents feel there is a huge problem with although the idea of managers escalating and acting upon ideas comes out strongly here again and a third of respondents are not sure their manager is good at managing people.
- 3.9 **Work / Life Balance** - A third of respondents cannot say they feel the amount of work they do is fair or appropriate although two thirds do not feel staff absence makes things more difficult.
- 3.10 **Place of work (Facilities)** - General positive responses were received in relation to the workplace but these become more negative when looking at break areas and catering amenities.
- 3.11 **Place of work (Work stations)** - Home working and hot desking provoke a strong negative response with two thirds of respondents suggesting they may not have the benefit of using these working practices. A third of respondents do not aim to have a clear desk policy.
- 3.12 **Perceptions of the Council** - A third of respondents could not agree to recommend working here and could also not agree they are proud to work here. Whilst pay is always a contentious issue, nearly half could not agree to say it's

reasonable. Around 80% of respondents understand their role in safeguarding and believe the council is an equal opportunities employer.

- 3.13 **Looking Ahead** - Responses on job movement indicate a 12% churn rate. Nearly half of respondents don't see progression within 2 years.

4.0 Staff Survey Action Plan

- 4.1 In pulling together a draft Action Plan to support areas for improvement, it should also be noted that there are other strategies and actions that are being developed/are newly in place, in relation to staff, that should be noted and cross referenced. Together all of the actions will hopefully enhance the staff experience and be closer in meeting staff expectations over the next few years. These should include the following:
- 4.2 **JEC- Joint Employee Council**
The Council is made up of staff representatives from across all staff departments within both Councils, and will support the ability to enhance consultation and engagement arrangements across both Councils, which in turn should also improve communication that would specifically relate to staff such as restructures, policy development, change management and development activity.
- 4.3 **Health and Wellbeing Charter**
Both Councils have recently signed up to the Charter which it is hoped will not only impact directly on health and wellbeing for staff but also in relation to recruitment and retention. There will be a more specific action plan agreed once assessment has taken place in relation to the requirements of the Charter.
- 4.4 **People and OD Strategy**
This is at draft consultation stage but once agreed will include many areas of activity that relate to staff during their career at the Councils and will be an important cross reference to the staff survey action plan as many of the points raised from the staff survey are reflected within the Strategy.
- 4.5 The draft Action Plan has been drawn up based on what is known from the feedback within the survey, however it should be noted that in some areas it is hard to interpret what is meant by the responses and without further questioning it may be impossible to determine what actions would provide a focussed approach to any improvement. Therefore there are some general actions that should be considered as necessary to ensure the right focus and resource is used.

5.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

It would be helpful to consider actions in relation to an overhaul of the Staff Survey for future use, but also in relation to whether other surveys between now and the next Staff Survey in 2 years would be effective. This could be on more focussed topics such as facilities.

The Action Plan hopefully picks up a wide variety of areas that could be improved and some methods for this to be achieved, although it is also important to ensure

the Action Plan is monitored against activity and consideration needs to be given to how this will be done e.g. whether the actions can be held in Performance Matters.

Communication on the Action Plan will also need to be considered, and it may be worth considering a Communication Strategy specifically for the Action Plan at key milestones, to ensure that employees can see they have been listened to and actions are being moved forward.

And finally in order for the Action Plan to be implemented and to be successful this is not necessarily just about those that have actions, but also to embed any changes further afield in teams managers need to be on board and these need to be fully supported by leaders and managers at both Councils.

6.0 Consultation

Consultation is taking place with JMT, the trade unions and members of the JEC, and feedback will be provided verbally at the JCC meeting due to deadline and meeting timings. The report will also be discussed at JCEEC on the 15 September 2016 meeting, where it is hoped a recommendation for approval will be given.

7.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

7.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not agree with the recommendations made in this report, but the staff survey outcomes will not be change if not actions are taken.

8.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer – 0300 003 0106
paul.sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

8.2 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance – 0300 0030107
kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

9.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

None

Lead Councillor

Cllr Barry Wood, Leader of the Council, CDC
Cllr Ian McCord, Leader of the Council, SNC

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Staff Survey Action Plan
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Karen Curtin, Director, Commercial Development
Contact Information	karen.curtin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk