

POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 OCTOBER 2015

Present: County Councillor Howells(Chairperson)
County Councillors Hunt, McKerlich, White and Murphy

37 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Goodway and Huw Thomas

38 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson advised Members that they had a responsibility under Article 16 of the Members' Code of Conduct to declare any interests and complete Personal Interest Forms, at the commencement of the agenda item in question.

39 : MEMBERSHIP

The Committee notes that at the Council meeting of the 24 September 2015 it was agreed that Councillor Sanders be appointed to sit on the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

40 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8 September 2015 were deferred to the 3 November 2015.

41 : EMPLOYEE SURVEY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The Chairperson welcomed the following:

Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance
Philip Lenz, Chief Human Resources Officer
Katie Richards, Human Resources Organisational Development Specialist
Helen Witham, Senior, Communications Officer

Council Ambassadors

Theo Callendar, Training and Compliance Manager
Lorraine Gilmore, Hostel Services & Outreach Support Officer
Julie Reed, Day Centre Manager
Tye Whithear, Estates Management Officer

The Chairperson advised Members that they had the opportunity to consider the 2015 Employee Survey, and the Council's approach to employee engagement around the Survey. The aim of the scrutiny would be to:

- Scrutinise the results of the Survey and provide feedback to Councillor Hinchey and officers on the basis of what the survey had told the Committee.

- Scrutinise the process and conduct of the Survey to see if there were any lessons that could be learnt for planning future phases of the survey and engagement work.
- Consider the wider context of new methods of employee engagement being developed by the organisation to increase engagement of the workforce in the Council's "Make the Difference" improvement agenda.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Hinchey to make a statement.

Councillor Hinchey explained that staff engagement was a key priority with the best ever response rate up to 51%. The introduction of new questions, each linked to recognised enablers of employee engagement and the Workforce Strategy. An extensive communication and engagement plan was developed to raise awareness of the survey and its purpose and to encourage employee participation. A significant improvement in the response rates from harder to reach areas was recorded, with an overall improvement of staff engagement an increase of 59% when compared to the previous 2013 Employee Survey. Departmental scores were recorded at 5 and above and key messages on this improvement were being fed into directorates.

The Chairperson invited officers to give a presentation which outlined the following:

- Workforce Strategy
- Employee Charter
- Programme of Engagement
- Employee Survey
- Corporate Key Findings
- Directorate Mean Scores
- Survey Results
- Current Activity and Corporate Commitments
- Next Steps

Officers explained to the Committee that staff engagement was improving, including in what was seen as hard to reach areas and this was seen as positive progression.

Communication strategies were being rolled out across the organisation with the "Make the Difference" campaign being promoted to develop staff involvement. Staff were being encouraged to take part in this project by providing stories and examples of how they saw the organisation. A great response had been received and this was seen as the human element of the organisation with interaction at all levels.

The Committee noted the trend analysis of Mean score of Employee statements with a slight reduction recorded on the question in relation to the "what was expected through agreed Personal Performance Objectives".

The Chairperson thanked officers for the informative advice and invited the Committee to ask questions.

Members of the Committee were advised that the survey consisted of a small selection of pre-designed rating scale questions and one open-ended question relating to budget savings and service improvements. This style of survey was required to capture the flavour in a snap shot type of way. The Employee Charter

would link into the Workforce Strategy to develop and enhance employee engagement going forward.

The Committee was concerned with some of the questions included in the survey, especially the question recommending the Council as an employer which resulted in a low score. Officers explained that a re-fresh exercise may take place to analyse the questions even though this particular question had a higher score than the previous survey.

Members of the Committee drew attention to the trend analysis of mean scores. The interpretation of the results was discussed, including the scores in the 5.00 to 6.24 range. The Members were of the view that some questions needed to be more specific with direction towards pensions, sickness absence, work location, including the car park.

Officers explained that previous surveys had provided a high level of detail and the response rate was less than satisfactory. With these results the analysis would enable a broader outcome with focus being directed on specific areas. For example a question on Health & Wellbeing was part of the survey and that included their views of areas to support staff.

The Committee was assured that a separate Schools Staff Survey would be produced as the initiatives included in this employee survey didn't reflect schools, even though some of the principles were similar and in line with the Corporate Agenda.

Members drew attention to some of the lower response rates and asked if this was expected. In response Officers explained there was an overall increase in participation and this represented an improvement.

The Committee was advised that work was on-going with Directors to analyse comments and provide a variety of themed responses. Staff could not be identified through the comments and some of these messages were being fed into further work in response to the Survey.

The Committee asked to see some of the ideas, and suggestions resulting from the Employee Survey.

The Chairperson invited the Staff Ambassadors to briefly introduce themselves and explain their impressions of being a Staff Ambassador and a brief appraisal of the Council's current position in engaging employees.

Staff Ambassadors

Theo Callendar – Training and Compliance Manager

This engagement programme was one of the best delivered by the Council. The Employee Survey was seen as a valuable tool and the feedback to Directors was essential when developing and analysing the results. Further work was required to deal with negative responses.

Lorraine Gilmore – Hostel Services & Outreach Support Officer

This exercise was an effective tool to maintain and support employee engagement, which allowed staff to become part of the decision making process.

Tye Whithear – Estates Management Officer

This was a great tool, which provided feedback and a breakdown of responses to support staff development. Channels of communication could be poor and staff were sometimes not properly informed. However, the development of the engagement programme had boosted morale and for example allowed staff to attend small staff group sessions with the Chief Executive. A suggestion was to have additional workshops which Councillors could attend and provide a more open communication process with staff.

Julie Reed – Day Centre Manager

Progress was welcomed and the organisation was a completely different environment to work in, than in the past. Staff were encouraged to become more vocal about issues and felt part of the organisation.

The Chairperson thanked the Ambassadors for the update and invited the Committee to ask questions.

The Ambassadors could not pinpoint any specific reasons why the Council was not being recommended as an Employer by its staff. It was always difficult to analyse these responses as staff were coming from different perspectives.

The Committee was advised that even though Personal Performance Development Reviews were seen as a valuable tool, the priority placed on the process of completion to meet targets had tended to overshadow the quality of discussion.

The Committee discussed the Corporate Message which in some instances was not being channelled past line management. Some part time staff felt disconnected and the message of communication was not being relayed to all areas.

The Committee asked officers to provide them with a list of all Ambassadors.

Committee members welcomed the input from Ambassadors and thought it was refreshing to be provided with an insight into the organisation from a different perspective.

The Committee was advised that Ambassadors were in place within Highways and their support was valuable and contributed towards employee engagement.

Members were informed of the process in place to encourage managers to further engage with their employees and provide feedback on a regular basis. Cabinet Members recognised this was essential to develop staff awareness in the organisation and contribute to employee development. Budget pressures were also a factor, but with useful communication tools like the Core Brief would help support and contribute towards staff engagement.

RESOLVED: The Committee AGREED that the Chairperson writes on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet Member to convey their comments and observations (see attached)

42 : CARDIFF COUNCIL'S DRAFT STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2016/20

The Chairperson welcomed the following to the meeting:

Councillor Daniel De'Ath, Cabinet Member for Skills, Safety, Democracy and Engagement

Paul Keeping, Operational Manager, Scrutiny and Equality

Andrew Lucas and Caryle Alleyne, Equality Officers

Martyn Jones, Chief Executive, Diverse Cymru

The Chairperson advised Members that they had an opportunity to consider the Council's draft Strategic Equality Plan for 2016/20. Councillor De'Ath and officers had agreed to bring a draft of the Plan at the very beginning of a two month consultation programme, prior to the Plan being finalised over the winter and adopted in March 2016. The Council was seeking views from people on whether the Council had chosen helpful objectives and on the actions that the Council needs to perform to achieve delivery of those objectives.

Councillor De'Ath explained to the Committee the impact both the Equality Act and the Human Rights legislation was having in the organisation. Adaptation of these processes were in the early stages but it was imperative that this be taken forward and developed in the communities. The input from the Third Sector was vital in order to progress, along with input from Bilingual Cardiff to achieve and adapt to the Welsh Measure.

The Chairperson invited Sheila Hendricks-Brown, Chief Executive Officer of the Cardiff Third Sector Council to the Table, in preparation for the Third Sector Question on Equality Impact Assessment.

Sheila Hendrickson-Brown introduced herself to the Committee and asked the following question:

"The Council is having to make very difficult decisions and choices about cuts to local services. There is potential for specific groups of vulnerable people to experience disadvantages as a result of these decisions. Council you therefore give your view on how effective the Council's arrangements for assessing the equality impacts of these decision are, how do Equality Impact Assessments feed into and inform services planning, and how is the effectiveness of the agreed mitigating actions monitored once the decisions are implemented"

Councillor De'Ath explained the organisation was experiencing a learning journey to develop its Equality practices linked into its transformation agenda. Equality Impact Assessments were being tested and their rating position reported. The Cabinet Member was mindful of the budget position and the EIAs were being fed into the proposals. These assessments were essential to improve effectiveness across the organisation and to close the gap creating complete accountability. There were opportunities for further improvement of EIAs, in four key areas:

1. the EIA process should extend beyond the budget process to encompass decisions made at other points in the year;
2. The Council should work to a consistent level of quality in the assessments undertaken;
3. EIAs should evidence the input and advice of third sector organisations and data; and
4. the impacts and mitigation measures identified in EIA documents should be explicitly referred to when decisions were subsequently brought for review and monitoring, so that Scrutiny Committees, officers and Cabinet Members could see how effective they had been, and so that the EIAs have a legacy through the life cycle of the decision.

Sheila Hendrickson-Brown emphasised this was an opportunity for the Third Sector to work closely with local authorities and improve on-going dialogue. Councillor De'Ath welcomed the opportunity to work more closely with the Third Sector.

The Committee received a presentation which outlined the following:

- Background to the Plan
- Equality Objectives – outlined to Committee
- Consultation
- Equality Team

The Committee was advised the draft Plan was published on the Council's website. Local groups were being made aware of the draft Plan and this also being made available in Hubs. Engagement of Senior Managers was essential for development with all employees being made aware of the process. The Equality Team was available to provide guidance and assistance, to develop realistic actions and promote general duties.

The Chairperson invited Martyn Jones, Diverse Cymru to make a statement.

Martyn Jones firstly thanked the Committee for the opportunity to provide feedback to Members. The Equality Impact Assessments were crucial to the development of the Plan and taking it forward. The Third Sector were ideally placed and would provide local authorities with assistance when ever possible. The BAGE (Budget Advisory Group on Equality) had been set up by Welsh Government and were part of the budget setting proposals. Martyn Jones gave an overview on his position and welcomed the fact that Diverse Cymru could be seen as a support partner to develop and roll out the Equality Plan. It was recognised that attention was on some occasions being directed towards Children and Young People when Cardiff had an aging population and was an age friendly city. All aspects of society faced poverty at some point and this should be reflected in the Plan. Employee engagement in the process for delivery and resources should be in place to support this.

The Chairperson invited the Committee Members to ask questions.

Members of the Committee welcomed the Plan but asked if the relevant factors be highlighted in three pages. In response the Officers confirmed a six page summary was available on the Council website.

The Committee was advised the Plan was in line with the Corporate Plan, in order for the objectives to sit under the 7 Outcomes of the “What Matters Strategy”.

Members of the Committee were assured that delivery of the Plan was achievable and this was mandatory. It was essential that EIAs were progressing and this would be monitored as part of its delivery.

The Committee was advised of the Cardiff Partnership Agenda with Third Sector inclusion. Co-Production was a mechanism of understanding what was required, in order to change working practices. Partnership working between local authorities and Third Sector organisations was being developed and this would support change in the work place and enhance service delivery.

Members of the Committee drew attention to the objectives and asked where the actions were to support the outcomes. In response Officers explained the process was in its infancy however, targets were being set to support the outcomes.

Practices were developing to support the harder to reach groups, which included working with Employee Ambassadors to provide information on the Plan. Working alongside Trade Unions representatives to obtain feedback and advice and; a route map was being formulated to progress the process to track and develop milestones.

RESOLVED: The Committee AGREED that the Chairperson writes on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet Member to convey their comments and observations (see attached)

43 : COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE

RESOLVED: The Committee received the report and noted its contents.

44 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 3 November 2015

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Letters to Councillor Hinchey, Cabinet Member, Corporate Services & Performance and Councillor De’Ath, Cabinet Member, Skills, Safety, Democracy and Engagement.