
EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2015 and EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Reasons for this Report

1. To provide the Committee with a policy development opportunity to consider the results of the 2015 Employee Survey, and help drive forward the Employee Engagement agenda.
2. To enable Members to hear from and question senior officers, who will outline what measures will follow as a direct consequence of the Survey findings. To receive independent commentary from Staff Ambassadors from across the Council.

Background

3. This Committee is empowered through the Council's Constitution to *scrutinise, monitor and review the effectiveness of the Council's...use of human resources and organisational development.*
4. During this administration's term of office, while this Committee has not specifically scrutinised work undertaken on the Employee Survey, it has considered a number of areas of employee relations, ranging from Attendance and Wellbeing to Workforce Planning, Office Accommodation, Equal Pay and the Living Wage. The Committee has also on various occasions during its quarterly

scrutiny of Corporate and Directorate Performance considered related issues including levels of staff sickness absence, and completion of Personal and Professional Development Reviews.

5. In September 2013 the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) published its *Peer Review of Cardiff Council* (October 2013)¹ In that document it commented that *“Human Resources needs to be at the heart of the management of the Council if the Council is to succeed”*. Amongst other steps, the Review advised the Council to produce a workforce plan, reflecting the Council’s Corporate Plan, as a control document to assess progress. It also advised of the benefits of prioritising employee consultation and internal communication.
6. In its September 2014 *Corporate Assessment of Cardiff Council* ² report, Wales Audit Office reinforced some of these messages, suggesting that the good practice upon which human resource arrangements were founded on positive practice should be implemented consistently, and that workforce planning should be closely aligned to the delivery of Council priorities.
7. The Organisational Development Programme report to Cabinet in May 2014 set out the Council’s commitment to improving engagement with the workforce. This commitment was translated into a Workforce Strategy and accompanying Employee Charter. In its Workforce Strategy report to Cabinet on 2 April 2015, the Council responded to WLGA and WAO commentary, stating:

“At the heart of the Council’s approach to organisational development is the principle that the workforce is our most valuable asset and that the creation of a positive and enabling culture is a primary goal. As the Council continues to respond to the challenges ahead, the ongoing contribution of the workforce will be crucial. Therefore, in order to address these matters strategically and in response to a number of issues raised previously as part of WLGA Peer Review and Wales Audit Office Corporate Assessment, a new Workforce Strategy has been developed. The development of the Strategy has been a comprehensive

¹ <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/download.php?id=5996&l=1>

² http://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/Cardiff_Corp_Assess_English_2014.pdf

and inclusive consultation process involving a range of stakeholder groups including employees, Senior Managers, Trade Unions, Equality Networks, the Ambassadors Network, etc. Discussions have also taken place on the specifics of a key element of the strategy, the Employee Charter, which sets out mutual obligations and responsibilities of the Council, managers and employees.

*“The Workforce Strategy is aligned to the Corporate Plan and the Organisational Development Programme and is underpinned by the Council’s vision, together with its values of **Open, Fair and Together**. The strategy sets out clearly the key priority areas we need to address”.*

Employee Survey

8. The Council’s Human Resources Service has during the past decade regularly asked Council employees to provide their views on a number of matters through an Employee Survey. Surveys have previously been conducted since 2007 and a revised streamlined approach introduced in 2013.
9. The survey is seen as one of a suite of mechanisms in place under the Programme of Engagement which provides the organisation and its managers with insights into how it can *“create a culture that supports and enables a flexible, skilled, engaged and diverse workforce”* as set out in the Workforce Strategy and Employee Charter. It is aligned to the people priorities outlined in the Workforce Strategy.
10. The 2015 Survey was opened in May and ran to to July 2015. The Survey was designed in consultation with, and informed by feedback from, the recently developed network of Cardiff Staff Ambassadors, whose role is described below. A copy of the Survey Questionnaire is attached for Members’ information at **Appendix A**.

11. The survey continued the streamlined approach followed in 2013, with just 12 questions, including one free text question. The questions focused on key priority areas for the Council (The Employee Charter, Council Values, Performance Management and the Council's four key priorities), and on topic areas such as Employee Voice, Learning and Development, and Health and Wellbeing.
12. The survey contained a mixture of previously asked questions and the introduction of new questions, each linked to recognised enablers of employee engagement and the Workforce Strategy. This approach enabled both trend analysis of previous lines of inquiry, and the establishment of new benchmarks to measure progress throughout the implementation and evaluation of the three year Workforce Strategy.
13. The Survey applied to centrally employed staff only, with a separate survey to be developed for Schools, as suggested from an analysis of best practice approaches. A target response rate of 40% across all Directorates was agreed by Senior Management Team, with incentives used to increase response rates. It was also agreed not to distribute hard copies of the Survey to all staff with payslips, providing a significant cost saving.
14. An extensive communication and engagement plan was developed to raise awareness of the survey and its purpose and to encourage employee participation. The Ambassadors played a key role in helping to engage with sectors of staff across the Council who traditionally had not participated. Survey Post Boxes were delivered to a number of Council buildings to ensure employees without access to a computer in work were able to take part.
15. The survey was further promoted via internal communications and employee engagement activity, including six staff roadshows held in June 2015 across various Council buildings. Additional survey roadshow sessions were also delivered by HR, leading to increases in completion at depots such as Lamby Way, where almost 100 surveys were completed.

16. 51.6% of the Council's employees (excluding School staff) responded to the survey, seen as the largest response to date.

17. In a recent employee briefing the Council Chief Executive Paul Orders has said that:

- a. He has personally read all 952 "free text" comments, and has indicated his commitment to working with all employees to make improvements over the coming months and years.
- b. The results highlight some real challenges in specific areas across the Council. He would be working closely with senior management team to ensure measures are put in place to help staff in these areas to feel more supported in delivering their services and creating better working environments.

18. Reports have been prepared for each of the Council's 10 Directorates, identifying issues pertinent to that Directorate. In addition, the overall results of the Survey have been detailed in a Corporate Report (attached at **Appendix B**), which has been shared with all employees and key stakeholders, and which includes:

- A one page overview of results. The report uses the RAG (red, amber, green) approach to prioritise and classify results.
- A brief overview of methodology.
- A one page (page 5) summary of results, with indicative recommendations.
- A one page (page 6) trend analysis comparing results for 2013 and 2015. Of the 10 questions, it is possible to track the trend analysis for four of the questions, but not possible to do this for the remaining six.
- Detailed description of responses to the 11 questions in turn (pages 7 – 27), on each occasion detailed and summary results, and a selection of free text comments.
- A one page (page 28) analysis of variations in responses to the survey questions across all Council Directorates, demonstrating the nuances of response and the issues of greater relevance to individual Directorates.

- At page 29 an analysis of the ideas and suggestions contributed by employees to help the Council save money and improve services.

19. The Council will, following further engagement with staff, identify '*Make the Difference - Corporate Commitments*' which will become the priority areas of focus and action in the months ahead. An engagement tool is being used to facilitate discussions between managers and staff on what the Commitments should be.

20. An Ambassador Task and Finish group will develop the Make the Difference Commitments for the organisation, supported by HR. The priority areas will then be taken forward as part of the Workforce Strategy and through the Council's established forums (including Senior Management Forum, Cardiff Manager Forum, and the Ambassador Network) and other key stakeholders including Trade Unions.

21. A *Managers' Guide* has been developed for distribution with Directorate Reports, outlining best practice approaches for Directors and managers in developing next steps with employees to address findings in the Directorate Reports.

Cardiff Ambassadors Network

22. The Council's Chief Executive has, since taking up his position with the Council, committed himself to improving communication and engagement between the Council's management and its employees. He has personally led an "Employee Voice" series of roadshows and engagement, introduced a number of in-depth "Have Your Say" opportunities for employees to give feedback on the issues important to them, and met a number of employees one to one.

23. As part of this programme, a network of Cardiff Ambassadors has been created. The Network enables employees at all levels of the organisation to voluntarily take up a role in promoting employee engagement, and feed good ideas from the front line of service delivery to inform corporate management.

24. The Ambassador network is key to supporting the delivery of the Council's employee engagement agenda. Through the Ambassador Network the Council seeks to ensure that the Council is also hearing from those in the 'harder to reach' areas and inviting them to participate in activities under the Employee Engagement agenda.

25. Prior to the May roadshows the Chief Executive asked Directors to seek employee volunteers to facilitate table discussions at these events. A number of volunteers came forward and there are currently 153 Ambassadors, spanning each Directorate and representing a mix of grades and teams.

26. Since the Employee Roadshows in May, Ambassadors have been instrumental in helping to ensure that more employees are involved in the work being done to support the Organisational Development programme and drive forward the engagement agenda.

27. Through the Ambassador workshops and follow up activity employee feedback has been used to inform the development of:

- The Council's new set of Values.
- A May 14 Roadshow Action Plan.
- An Internal Communication and Engagement Strategy, including a programme of engagement activity.
- A Role Outline for Ambassadors.
- The Employee Charter for the Council.
- The Employee Survey 2015.
- The Employee Ideas Forum.

28. Employee Ambassador Task and Finish groups have also been established to take forward key areas of work around Procurement, the Employee Survey and Employee Ideas.

29. To support the scrutiny of the Employee Survey, representatives of the Ambassador Network have kindly agreed to attend this Committee meeting, provide their feedback to Members, and answer Members' questions.

Scope of Scrutiny

30. The scope of this scrutiny is to test the results of the Employee Survey, and the organisation's approach to employee engagement around the Survey. From the Survey results and the evidence provided at the meeting, Committee Members will be asked to provide their feedback to the Cabinet Member and officers as part of the evidence base informing next steps in implementing improvement actions.

Way Forward

31. At the meeting, Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance, may wish to make a statement. HR / Organisational Development officers will give a presentation to take Members through the results and proposed actions/developments emerging from the responses. Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the following officers, and staff representatives:

- Philip Lenz, Chief Human Resources Officer;
- Lynne David, HR People Services;
- Katie Richards, Organisational Development Team HR;
- Helen Witham, Communications Team;
- Council employees who have volunteered to become Cardiff Ambassadors.

Legal Implications

32. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this

report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

33. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to

(1) Note the content of this report and appendices,

- (2) Consider whether the Survey results and employee engagement activities paint a forward looking picture of the Council, and provide their feedback to the Cabinet Member and officers; and
- (3) Decide whether it wishes to take any further actions, or request any further information.

MARIE ROSENTHAL
Director of Governance and Legal Services
30 September 2015