
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR GOVERNANCE & LEGAL SERVICES

2017 MEMBERS ANNUAL SURVEY

Reason for this Report

1. To provide the Standards and Ethics Committee with the analysis of information gathered from the 2017 Members Annual Survey that fall within the remit of the Committee.
2. For the Committee to consider any trends or matters that should be further considered by the Committee.

Background

2. In 2016, the Chairs of the Standards and Ethics Committee and the Democratic Services Committee agreed that a Member Exit Survey be undertaken to enable lessons to be learned about the experiences of Councillors during their five year term of office, and reasons for leaving or not standing for re-election.
3. All Elected Members (81) who had held the Office of Councillor during the period 2012 to 2017 were invited to participate in the Exit Survey in early 2017.
4. The Standards & Ethics Committee 22 March 2017 (Min No: 30) considered the responses from the Exit Survey 2017 and one of the recommendations was that a repeat survey of the Elected Members from May 2017 be undertaken at the end of the 2017. This would allow the Committee to review and analyse responses and any trends.
5. The draft 2017 Member Annual Survey 2017 was considered and approved by the Democratic Services Committee 10 October 2017 (Min No: 43) and included questions from the June 2016 Annual Member Satisfaction Survey and the Member Exit Survey March 2017 for comparator analysis.

Issues

6. All 75 Councillors were invited to complete the survey either electronically or in hard copy from 30 November 2017 to 2 January 2018. 47 out of 75 Councillors (63%) answered all or part of the survey. 21 Councillors of the 47 who responded were newly elected in May 2017.

7. The Exit Survey, March 2017 provided Members feedback on the previous five years in office, in particular views of Members who had indicated that they were not standing for re-election or had resigned from the Office of Councillor during the term.
8. The 2017 Annual Survey provided Members feedback mainly on the Members Induction and to establish training and development needs, as well as identify some of the challenges Members may have encountered during the first six months of their term of office.
9. The 2017 Annual Survey had again encouraged Members to give feedback and have an opportunity to raise issues around their views on behaviours within the Council setting and the support provided when incidents may occur.
10. A detailed analysis of 2017 Annual Survey questions 19 – 26 *Knowledge and/or experience of unacceptable behaviour* are set out in **Appendix A**.
11. **Appendix A (Charts 10 – 18)** provides detailed analysis of Elected Members experiences by gender and age profile. The Committee will note that more female respondents in both Exit and Annual Survey experienced bullying, discriminatory or some form of unacceptable behaviour than their male colleagues.
12. The results in Chart 9 show that the number of Members elected in May 2017 who have experienced bullying is 7, experienced discrimination is 5 and experienced other unacceptable behaviours 7. During the previous administration (as shown in the Exit Survey 2017), the number of Members indicated that they had experienced bullying was 14 and / or discrimination was 12.
13. When asked whether Members (both male and female) reported incidents they have witnessed or experienced (Chart 18), the majority of respondents indicated that they did not report these, and reasons for not reporting included: -
 - Political environment reinforces the prevalence of bullying.
 - Part of the culture.
 - Covert nature of behaviour difficult to report.
 - Did not result in any change.
 - Incidents happened in presence of Monitoring Officer and other Members who were in the position to act on such displays of poor behaviour.
14. The results from the 2017 Annual Survey showed that 2 respondents who *had experienced an incident* had reported this to the Group Whip. Other respondents in this category reported their experience to the Monitoring officer (1 respondent) and/or to an undisclosed person (1 respondent).
15. The 4 respondents who *had experienced an incident* had differing levels of satisfaction with the responses. The one reported to Monitoring Officer was satisfied and of the two who reported to the Group Whip, one was not satisfied and the other did not provide a response.

16. Two respondents in this current term who had *witnessed an incident* cited that they had reported this to the Monitoring Officer. Of these two respondents, one stated that they were satisfied with how this was dealt with, however the other respondent did not provide a response.
17. As only a very small proportion of respondents (4 out of 15) in the new term chose to report incidents, the Committee may wish to explore the reasons or constraints as to why most (11 out of 15) chose not to report these to their Group Leader or Whip, or the Monitoring Officer and whether there is a need to clarify existing processes or whether there are any other concerns around reporting.
18. Set out in **Appendix B** are the key themes arising from the responses and comments and potential action/s that the Monitoring Officer suggests or can assist with, along with comments received from Party Group Whips on what can be put in place to address issues raised from the 2017 Annual Survey.

Legal Implications

19. There are no direct legal implications arising from the content of this report.

Financial Implications

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

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended

- (1) to consider the analysis of the responses received from the 2017 Member Annual Survey that fall within the remit of this Committee;
- (2) to consider potential actions to support responses received; and
- (3) to consider whether any areas require further consideration by the Committee as part of its 2018/19 Work Programme.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance & Legal Services

6 June 2018 v1.0

Appendix A – Member Survey Autumn 2017 Results

Appendix B – Action Sheet 2018

Background papers

Member Survey Autumn 2017

Minutes of Standards & Ethics Committee 22 March 2017