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**REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE 24 NOVEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY 2015**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CORPORATE SERVICES)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to consider and note the results of the 2015 Employee Opinion Survey and to approve the actions arising from the results. *(Please note that a further item on this agenda, update of the Employee Engagement Programme, contains actions aimed at addressing the response to the survey and that the work of the Workforce Culture Project will also contribute as approved at the meeting of this Committee on 14 April 2015 [paragraph 7 of the Minute refers].*
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (A) (32) (a) and (35) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the welfare policies and practices of the Council for employees.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee:**

- (i) consider and note the results of the 2015 Employee Opinion Survey; and**
- (ii) consider and agree the actions arising from the results, and note the further item on this agenda, the update on the Employee Engagement Programme that contains the majority of actions aimed at addressing the response to the survey.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In 2006 the Moray Council began surveying the workforce on a regular basis using opinion surveys to find out what employees felt about a range of employment related issues. Actions are identified based on the issues arising from each survey with planned actions and programmes of work designed to address the issues such as the Employee Conferences, interim and issue specific surveys, Employee Engagement Programme, and more recently the development of the Workforce Culture Programme. **Appendix A** contains a summary of the issues and actions from previous surveys.

- 3.2 Although originally undertaken by specialist survey providers, more recently the surveys have been designed and administered in-house as part of the council's efficiency measures.
- 3.3 This fifth whole workforce survey was undertaken in June 2015. The design of the survey was adapted to make it possible to focus in more depth on two specific topics (change and workforce culture) as well as continue to track responses to some core questions from previous surveys and use some, albeit limited, local benchmarking information for additional context.
- 3.4 The 2015 survey received 1,415 responses providing an overall response rate of 31% which is an increase from the 25% response rate from 2013 and moving towards the highest 36% response rate from 2011. Employees were encouraged to complete the online survey and paper questionnaires were distributed to staff who work without ready access to a computer at work. Response rates were monitored over the course of June on a weekly basis and further support was provided to sections with poorer response rates to improve the returns.
4. **RESULTS** (full report on the Members' Portal. Headline results and trends as **Appendices B and C**)

Overview:

- 4.1 This report summarises the main results of the survey for the Council as a whole. Insight into the departmental and service level variations are contained within the full report.
- 4.2 Encouragingly, the results of the 2015 survey are significantly more positive across the vast majority of questions contained within each employment related section than in 2013 which would indicate that the actions and programmes of work put in place as a result of previous surveys are beginning to have an impact.
- 4.3 It is of note that the percentage of middle or neutral responses has decreased in these results which may be as a result of a change to the answer options with a clear 'no view' category to choose from. This means that the responses are more definitive albeit sometimes this has meant clearly less positive as well as clearly more positive.
- 4.4 As with previous whole workforce survey results, it is very difficult to identify specific actions that will address areas identified for improvement as large surveys only provide a measure of satisfaction on general themes and are really only suitable to be used as the starting point for more targeted and focused work in specific areas as per the work being done by the workforce culture group on developing a positive workforce culture. Despite the more positive responses generally, as an additional measure to validate and understand the 2015 survey results more fully, the results have also been discussed at the recent employee conferences in Elgin and Buckie during discussion group sessions to try to establish and clarify the reasons underpinning the results.

Highest and lowest scoring questions:

- 4.5 Two of the top 5 highest scoring questions were additional questions asked this year in relation to workforce culture in that employees are clear what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and they are aware of the appropriate channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour or bullying. The other three top 5 responses were similar to previous surveys and related to employees enjoying the job they do, being clear on their duties and responsibilities and feeling respected by their colleagues.
- 4.6 Poorest results were in relation to employees feeling subject to unacceptable behaviour/bullying in the workplace, elected member leadership, relationships at work being strained, unrealistic time pressures and belief that the Council will take action to address issues arising from the survey.
- 4.7 Although the only question which also appeared in the lowest scoring results for 2013 and 2011, and while still relatively low, the response to elected member leadership has improved by 16% points this year which is a positive result.

Key improvements, sustained performance and areas for development:

- 4.8 The top 5 improvements since the 2013 survey are in relation to satisfaction with the leadership and direction received, being encouraged to improve own performance, belief that elected members provide leadership for the Council, satisfaction with communication in the Council and that training and development received helps employees do their job better. Areas of sustained performance with little change are connected to unrealistic time pressures, clarity on duties and responsibilities, strained relationships at work, enjoying work and recognition and praise from line managers for good performance. The main area for development is in relation to unacceptable behaviour or bullying in the workplace.
- 4.9 Given the high profile that unacceptable behaviour or bullying has been given since the 2013 survey it is seen as positive that the stigma of talking openly about such behaviour is being removed and employees feel more confident in highlighting through the survey results that this may be an issue for them (8% to 19%). The workforce culture group have considered the results and felt they reflect that the Council are starting to recognise the scale of the issue. Actions identified as a response to these results are addressed later in the report.

Summary index scores:

- 4.10 Using a calculated average figure to illustrate the variations in employee views for each broad theme within the survey, the 2015 results show that opinions about workforce culture, their jobs, supervision, training, performance and development and communication are more positive than views on leadership and senior management and change. The index scores differ between departments and the full report contains more detail on this.

Engagement index:

- 4.11 Using a simplified model still based on three of the original indicators, this index shows that overall engagement has increased from 65% in 2013 to 70% with four out of five employees motivated to do a good job and go the extra mile when required.

Key driver analysis:

- 4.12 Assessing key influences on overall satisfaction, the results of the key driver analysis show that feeling valued and recognised for their work, feeling able to recommend the Council as a good place to work and feeling motivated to do a good job and go the extra mile when required are all important factors for overall job satisfaction.

You and Your Job:

- 4.13 Almost nine out of ten employees say they enjoy the work they do, eight out of ten feel motivated and willing to go the extra mile and seven out of ten take pride in working for the Council. These compare favourably with the 2013 results. All the areas where employees reported feeling less positive in 2013 have improved: feeling valued and recognised, recommending the council as a good place to work and morale being good.
- 4.14 Benchmarking against a neighbouring authority shows 'good morale' is slightly lower than the 49% in Moray, as is 'feeling valued and recognised for their work' compared to 57% at Moray.
- 4.15 The cumulative responses from You and Your Job were used to calculate overall job satisfaction which increased very slightly to 67%. This is comparable to the job satisfaction rating of 70% from the neighbouring authority in the benchmarking information.

Leadership and Senior Management:

- 4.16 Around half of employees believe that senior management demonstrate leadership for their service and department and that they have a clear vision of where the organisation is going. In addition to this, around half of employee could also see how their objectives link into the Council's objectives and priorities. There has been an increase to slightly over a quarter of employees believing that elected members provide leadership for the Council and understanding of the role of elected members has also improved to just over half of respondents. Approximately half are satisfied overall with the leadership and direction they receive which is a significant increase from 2013.

Line Management / Supervision:

- 4.17 Responses about line management and supervision continue to be positive and improve year on year. Around three quarters of employees agree they

are supported by their line manager / supervisor, are passed information effectively and treated fairly and with respect. Overall, two thirds are satisfied with the line management they receive. Slightly less employees are positive about praise and recognition and motivation from their line manager / supervisor, however these still show a positive change from 2013.

Communication:

- 4.18 As in previous surveys there was a mixed response towards communication. Two thirds of employees feel they are kept informed about what is happening within their team which is an increase from 2013 and that communications are open and honest.
- 4.19 In contrast, just under half of employees feel they are kept informed about what is happening within the Council and that communications are open and honest all of which are improvements from 2013. Seven out of ten employees feel information is easy to understand and overall satisfaction with communication from the Council has increased this year. The lowest scoring question was in relation to belief that the Council would take action to address issues arising from the survey although this too was an increase from the similarly worded question from the 2013 survey.

Training, Performance and Development:

- 4.20 Seven out of ten employees feel encouraged to improve their own performance and around three out of five employees feel that the training and development they receive enables them to do their job better and that they have the opportunity to receive training and development they require to undertake their job effectively, all of which are improvements from 2013. More than half of employees report they have had an appraisal in the last 12 months which is a rise from 2013.

Change:

- 4.21 Over three quarters of employees are aware of the challenges that face the Council and expect that the Council will need to change the way it delivers services because of these changes. Two thirds feel supported by their line manager through change, and while less than half feel satisfied with the way the change management process was handled this too is an improvement.
- 4.22 Additional questions were asked in relation to change to which two thirds of employees responded. Of that almost half said they were given the opportunity to contribute to the change through a consultation exercise. Out of this, more than three out of four employees responded with just over half finding it useful while only a third felt their responses were taken into account.

Workforce Culture:

- 4.23 To support and inform the work of the workforce culture working group that was established in September 2014 in response to issues of victimisation and harassment raised in the 2013 survey an additional series of questions were

asked in this year's survey containing a mix of previously used and some new questions. This will allow analysis and evaluation of the current position regarding a positive workforce culture, enable the working group to further explore feedback from the workforce and allow evaluation of the impact of measures from the workforce culture work plan.

- Management and team: Four out of five employees feel respected by their colleagues and three out of four staff believe their line manager cares about their well-being and that their team co-operates and works well together, all improved results.
- Work-related: Nine out of ten of employees are clear what their duties and responsibilities are, over two thirds feel their workload is generally manageable, approximately half of employees feel they have a choice in deciding what work they do whilst just over one third feel they have unrealistic time pressures and just under one third agree that relationships at work are strained. The majority of these results generally reflect those of the previous survey.
- Behaviour: Over nine in ten employees are clear on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace and eight out of ten are aware of the appropriate channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour or bullying. Two thirds of employees are confident that unacceptable behaviour will be taken seriously and dealt and believe the Council is committed to developing a more positive workforce culture. One fifth of respondents reported feeling subject to unacceptable behaviour / bullying in the workplace which is an increase from 2013. Since 2013 some work has been done to raise the profile of the development of a positive workforce culture which may have helped staff feel more able to answer questions about their experiences of poor behaviour. These results can be seen as an indication that while this appears to be beginning to work, there is nevertheless a significant amount of work still to be done to identifying and addressing the underlying issues.

#### Employee engagement:

- 4.24 Nearly four in five employees feel motivated to do a good job and go the extra mile when required which compares favourably to 2013. Seven out of ten take pride in working for the Council and just under two thirds would recommend the Council as a good place to work, while just over one third believe that action will be taken on the findings of the survey.

## **5. ACTIONS**

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Council continue the approach of a programme of activity to address issues rather than a set of narrow specific actions as this is more likely to be beneficial across a larger section of the workforce and would appear to be having an impact given the more positive results of this year's survey.

5.2 However, it is also evident from the departmental summaries that underneath the positive corporate results there are wide variations in responses to the different employment themes within the survey across the various sections of the Council's workforce. It is therefore proposed that the survey results are analysed and discussed at departmental and service level with Heads of Service and third tier managers as part of the annual workforce planning process. This will mean the results will be interpreted and thereafter the resultant actions agreed paying close attention to the service and workforce specific issues that may appear to be the driver for the less positive results in certain services and reported back to this Committee at a later date referencing links with both the Workforce Culture Group and Workforce Planning reports in March 2016.

5.3 Therefore, actions will be:

- Disaggregating to incremental approach bespoke to each service e.g. for up to 200 employees
- Development of a performance target for survey results
- Focus engagement activity on areas with lowest survey results
- Adaptation of solutions to suit services
- Develop proposal(s) and timeline to progress with manageable sections of the workforce following discussions with management teams on survey results
- Include monitoring arrangements

## 6. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Moray 2023: A Plan for the Future/Service Plan/Health and Social Care Integration**

The work proposed in this report is linked to Sections D and E of the Corporate Plan that sets out how the Council will change to meet the challenges and how we will make best use of our staff and resources.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, it is possible that bullying and harassment in particular situations could lead to legal challenges against the council.

The work that is underway and planned in relation to employee engagement provides a firm foundation from which to develop further work to address the cultural issues identified in this report.

It is also important to recognise the importance that the Scottish Government has placed on the people working in the public sector to deliver the reforms identified by the Christie Commission. The links to workforce planning and thereby to demonstrating best value are also important considerations for the council to consider.

**(c) Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**(d) Risk Implications**

As with previous survey reports, there are risk implications related to decreasing staff morale should no action be taken as a result of the survey findings. These are heightened during periods of significant change or sustained austerity, such as the Council is currently experiencing.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

**(g) Equalities**

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

**(h) Consultations**

A copy of the survey report has been distributed to the corporate and senior management teams and positive feedback has been received.

The headline results were also discussed at two of this year's employee conferences as referred to within the body of the report.



A copy of this report and the survey results has been considered by the workforce culture working group and they are satisfied that work is progressing in the right direction to address the issues. The Trade Union representation on the workforce culture working group acknowledge and accept the findings of the survey and that the results put the issues into perspective, although they have not noted an increase in complaints from their members.

A copy of the results and this report will also be provided to the Trade Unions for discussion and consultation at the next scheduled Trade Union Officer Group and Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers meetings with a view to seeking their input to any action plans developed.

A copy of the results and this report has also been provided to the managers on the Personnel Forum and a verbal update on feedback received is available.

Feedback will be sought from all groups to influence the development of any actions being proposed.

The final full report is available on the smi site for elected members and senior managers and will be available on the intranet for the workforce with access to a paper version available if required for employees without ready access to a work computer.

A summary of the results has also been prepared (see **Appendix B**) and this will be distributed to all employees either electronically or in paper format.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The results of the 2015 employee survey contain the positive results in almost areas which is a significant improvement from the previous survey results, plus the response rate improved.**
- 5.2 It is proposed that further work is undertaken with department and services as part of the annual workforce planning process and feedback from the employee conferences.**
- 5.3 Any actions will become either part of the current Employee Engagement Programme or Workforce Culture project, or set up as distinct pieces of work specific with the services where the issues are prevalent.**

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Background Papers: Full survey report is on Elected Members Sharepoint site  
Ref: Employee Opinion Survey 2013 (P & R 05-11-13)  
Employee Opinion Survey 2011 (Full Council 28-09-11)  
Employee Opinion Survey 2008 (P & R 02-06-09)

Appendices:   A – Summary of previous survey issues and actions  
                  B – Survey Headlines  
                  C – Survey Trends