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**REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE 24 OCTOBER 2017**

**SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2017**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To ask the Committee to consider and note the results of the 2017 employee opinion survey
- 1.2 To ask the Committee to approve the actions arising from the results.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (27) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to formulating, supervising the implementation of and review as necessary the policy and practices of the council for all employees in relation to the recruitment, training and development, health, safety and welfare and practices of the Council.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee:-**

- (i) considers and notes the results of the 2017 employee opinion survey;**
- (ii) considers and approves the actions arising from the results; and**
- (iii) notes the further item on this agenda, the update on the employee engagement and workforce culture programmes that will bear the responsibility for the majority of actions aimed at addressing the response to the survey once more detailed analysis at service level is complete.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In 2006 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 coming out of each survey with planned actions and programmes of work designed to address the issues. These have included the employee conferences, interim and issue specific surveys, the employee engagement programme and more recently the workforce culture programme. A summary of the issues and actions from previous surveys is attached as **Appendix 1**.

- 3.2 Although originally undertaken by specialist survey providers, more recently the surveys have been designed, administered and analysed in-house as part of the council's efficiency measures.
- 3.3 This is the sixth whole workforce survey and it was undertaken in June 2017. The design of the survey continued an adaptation from 2015 allowing more in-depth focus on specific topics as well as continuing with a core framework of questions allowing identification and monitoring of trends. This year the specific focus remained on experience of change and workforce culture.
- 3.4 The 2017 survey received 1,959 responses providing an overall response rate of 42%. This is the highest response rate in the history of the surveys and an 11% increase from the 31% response rate in 2015. Employees were encouraged to complete the online survey and paper questionnaires were distributed to staff without ready access to a computer at work. Looking at individual services, there was a significant increase in responses within Waste and Lands and Parks where the workforce culture work has focussed.

#### 4. **RESULTS**

##### 4.1 **Overview:**

- 4.1.1 This report summarises the main results of the survey for the Council as a whole. Insight into the departmental and service level variations is also contained within the full report with more detail contained within departmental summaries. The full report is on the members' portal. Headline results and trends as **Appendices 2 and 3**).
- 4.1.2 It is encouraging to note that the trend of more positive results seen in the 2015 survey is continuing across the vast majority of areas considered within the survey which indicates that the actions and programmes of work put in place as a result of previous surveys are having a long term positive impact.
- 4.1.3 It is also worth noting that the continuing absence of the 'no view' option has had an impact on reducing the percentage of middle or neutral responses providing a more definitive set of responses, which is helpful in identifying areas of strength and those where development actions are required
- 4.1.4 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 best used as the starting point for more targeted and focused work in specific areas e.g. the work being done in relation to developing a more positive workforce culture.

##### 4.2 **Highest and lowest scoring questions**

- 4.2.1 Four out of the five highest scoring questions were the same as the 2015 survey and were that employees are clear what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the work place, they enjoy the work they do, they are clear what their duties and responsibilities are and they are aware of the

appropriate channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour, bullying or harassment. The fifth question related to employees being very aware of the challenges that face the council over the next few years.

4.2.2 Poorest results were in relation to belief that the elected members provide leadership for the council, knowing what elected members do, belief that the council will take action to address issues arising from the survey and in relation to communications and leadership and senior management having a clear vision of where the organisation is going.

4.2.3 The less positive results in relation to elected members may be due to the timing of the survey which was in June, following the period of change from the local elections which saw a large number of new councillors elected with which the workforce generally would be less familiar.

#### **4.3 Key improvements, sustained performance and areas for development**

4.3.1 The top five improvements since the 2015 survey are in relation to employees having had a development activity / session in the last 12 months (e.g. ERDP, PR&D), being able to see how their job links to the council's objectives and priorities, believing the council is committed to developing a more positive workforce culture, taking pride in working for the council and trusting their line manager/supervisor to communicate openly and honestly with them. Areas of sustained performance are connected with employees enjoying the work they do, being aware of the appropriate channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour, bullying or harassment, feeling respected by colleagues and team communication being open and honest. The main areas for development with the largest decreases since the 2015 survey are in relation to knowing what elected members do.

4.3.2 Given the high profile that unacceptable behaviour, bullying and harassment has been given since the 2013 and 2015 surveys, it is encouraging to note that less employees feel subject to unacceptable behaviour or bullying in the workplace (16% in 2017 compared to 19% in 2015), with 11% of employees feeling subject to harassment in the workplace. This is a new question for the 2017 survey and comparable results will be noted in future surveys.

#### **4.4 Summary index scores**

4.4.1 An effective method of summarising the variations in views is to develop an index score for each broad theme covered by the survey. Using a calculated average figure, the 2017 results show that opinions about health and safety, line management and day to day jobs are more positive than views on leadership and management and experience of change. The index scores differ between departments and the full report contains more detail on this.

#### **4.5 Engagement index**

4.5.1 Using a model to present the level of employee engagement at Moray Council, the index shows that overall engagement has continued to increase from 65% in 2013 and 70% in 2015 to 73% in 2017 with four out of five

employees still motivated to do a good job and go the extra mile when required.

#### **4.6 You and Your Job**

- 4.6.1 Responses compare favourably with the 2015 showing sustained levels of positive responses with the largest positive improvement in taking pride in working for the Council.

#### **4.7 Leadership and Senior Management**

- 4.7.1 Responses are slightly below but very similar to the 2015 results.

#### **4.8 Supervision**

- 4.8.1 Responses towards line management and supervision have improved marginally compared to 2015 and are generally more positive than the results for senior management.

#### **4.9 Communication**

- 4.9.1 As with previous surveys, there was a mixed response towards communications with these results almost identical to the 2015 results.

#### **4.10 Training, Performance and Development**

- 4.10.1 Most notably, nearly three quarters of employees state that they have had an appraisal of some kind in the last 12 months which is a significant increase from 2015.

#### **4.11 Change**

- 4.11.1 Views relating to change consultation are in line with 2015 with only marginal fluctuations.

#### **4.12 Workforce Culture**

- 4.12.1 Following the introduction of a specific workforce culture section within the 2015 survey comprising some new and previously used questions, the 2017 results begin to allow for the analysis and evaluation of the impact of measures from the workforce culture work plan.

- Management and team: Approximately three quarters of employees feel that they trust their line manager / supervisor to communicate openly and honestly with them (73%), and a similar proportion (77%) believe their line manager / supervisor cares about their well-being and that their team co-operates and works well together (76%). The majority of the results were between a 3 and 5% improvement from 2015.

- Work related: Around nine in ten (88%) employees are clear what their duties and responsibilities are, although only half (48%) feel they have a choice in deciding what work they do which is a 3% decrease from 2015. In comparison to the 2015 results there was little variation between having a manageable workload and having realistic time pressures with a fluctuation of +/- 1% at 68% and 39% respectively.
- Behaviour: It is encouraging to note that all results in this section have seen an improvement, including a positive decrease in the number of employees feeling subject to unacceptable behaviour / bullying in the workplace (16% from 19%). Almost all employees are clear on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace (97%) and that they are aware of the appropriate channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour or bullying (82%). In response to an additional question, 11% of employees reported feeling subject to harassment in the workplace which is slightly less than the unacceptable behaviour / bullying response which is comparable.

#### **4.13 Employee Engagement:**

- 4.13.1 Three in four (75%) employees take pride in working for the council, a 5% increase compared to 2015. Four in five employees (81%) feel motivated to do a good job and go the 'extra mile', and three in five employees (65%) would recommend the council as a good place to work, all positively increasing since 2015. Just over a third of employees (36%) believe that the council will take action to address issues arising from the survey which is a 3% decrease from 2015.

### **5. ACTIONS**

- 5.1 In terms of responses to survey results, historically the council has put in place a range of large scale programmes of activity likely to have a larger impact across the majority of the workforce. In 2015, based on the wide variations in responses to the different employment themes within the survey across the various sections of the council's workforce, it was decided to work closely with departmental Heads of Service and third tier managers as part of the workforce planning process. This would allow interpretation of the results within the context of specific services and teams with resultant actions agreed and owned by the managers whilst being supported by the workforce culture team where necessary.
- 5.2 While it is clear that the 2017 results are generally positive responses that indicate that progress is being made and that the culture of the organisation is beginning to change, it is evident that there are still areas that require significant improvement with work still to be done in embedding the wider aspects of a positive workforce culture within specific teams and services.
- 5.3 It is proposed to continue to use this strategy to enable targeted work to take place in the specific areas of the council that are flagged up as having less positive results.

5.4 When cross referenced with the engagement and culture work (reported in a separate report to this Committee), the residual area for ongoing concentrated development work for establishing and embedding behavioural change is related to leadership and management. When considering this in conjunction with the 2017 survey results it is proposed that the overarching theme for action plans is centred around improving the skills, competencies and behaviours of managers in terms of managing their teams, but also in developing the leadership qualities that are required to enable and empower them to take their services forward during the forthcoming period.

5.5 Therefore, actions will be:

- Continue to disaggregate the results to an incremental bespoke approach specific to each service
- Focus engagement and culture activity on building the leadership and management capacity within and across services, particularly within the services with the lowest survey results
- Adaptation of solutions to suit services
- Development of proposals and timelines to progress with manageable sections of the workforce following discussions with management teams on survey results
- Development of monitoring arrangements
- Development of a performance target for survey results
- Work to promote and inform on the role of elected members

## 6. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Moray 2026: A Plan for the Future and Moray Corporate Plan 2015 - 2017**

The work proposed in this report is linked to Section D of the Corporate Plan that set out how the Council will meet the challenges, how we will make best use of our workforce and resources. In particular, it would ensure continued progress of the aim of ensuring there is a positive workforce culture.

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report although it is possible that bullying and harassment in particular 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 continue 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 and/or sustained austerity, such as the council continues to experience.

The risks associated with workforce culture are also around the consequences of leaving the culture issues unaddressed and the complexity and challenge of dealing with behavioural issues.

The developmental nature of the work combined with the long term nature of establishing a cultural shift in behaviours means there are long term maintenance requirements to be accommodated before a permanent step change in culture can be achieved.

**(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**

The contents of this report have been considered by the corporate and senior management team.

The headline results were also available for viewing by employees at the recent employee conferences.

A copy of the results and this report will 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 will also be provided to the managers on the Personnel Forum and feedback will be sought from all groups to influence the development of any actions being proposed.

The full final 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 4**) and this will be distributed to all employees either electronically or in paper format.

**7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The results of the 2017 employee survey contain positive and improved results in most areas and with a significant improvement in response rate.**
- 7.2 It is proposed that further work is undertaken with departments and services as part of the annual workforce planning process.**
- 7.3 Any actions will become part of the engagement and culture work, or set up as distinct pieces of work specific to the services where the issues are prevalent.**