

Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14 December 2016

Your Say – Staff Survey 2016 update and headline results

Recommendation

That the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee review this report which provides an update on the Your Say, staff survey 2016 results, noting in particular the positive responses received and the increased Employee Engagement score of 70%.

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the initial results of the 2016 'Your Say' survey
- Provide an update against actions identified in the 2014 survey
- Share plans for the next steps

1.2 On the whole the results are positive with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the questions that are comparable, having seen an improvement since 2014. Of the questions that have gone down compared to 2014, none have reduced by more than 3 percentage points.

1.3 'Your Say' was launched on Thursday 30th June, running for 3 weeks until 21st July.

2. Progress against actions identified from 2014 survey

2.1 The last full staff survey was in 2014, with a shorter "pulse survey" conducted in 2015, focusing on 10 questions. The subsequent actions taken as a result of these surveys (based on employee feedback and involvement, best practice and expert advice) have included:

- The development and implementation of an Employee Engagement Strategy 2015-18.
- Support of local level action planning with guidance produced for managers.
- The development of a 'You Said, We Did' communications campaign to highlight progress since 2014 and to reinforce message that feedback from staff is listened to, valued and responded to.

- Consultation on how to better engage with hard to reach areas of the business.
- A review of how the demographic data is captured and used to make improvements.
- The identification of engagement best practice within WCC and shared via case studies and tools.
- The introduction of the Employee Engagement Index as a measure on the Management Information Dashboard.

3. Survey Questions

3.1 Following the 2014 survey, a review was undertaken and the questions were revised. Questions were retained which help to measure progress against the OOP ambitions, namely that staff are highly skilled, supported and provide excellent customer service, there is effective management of resources and change is managed effectively.

4 Response rates

4.1 It can be seen from chart 1 below that the response rates have improved overall from 2015, achieving 47% across WCC, with increases in both People and Resources Groups. To put this into context the ORC benchmark response rate for local authorities is 59%.



Chart 1 Response rate by year

4.2 In order to obtain the highest response rate the starting point was to adopt a 'digital by default' approach. Service managers from each area of the organisation were consulted where there are staff without WCC email addresses, site based or peripatetic colleagues.

4.3 1225 paper copies were distributed and 272 returned, giving a 21% response rate. This however masks a range of paper response rates from 7% - 67% when broken down by team. Paper copies were also sent with details of how to complete the survey on-line.

Over half (9 out of 15) Business Units did achieve a response rate above the ORC benchmark and the Physical Assets Business Unit in Resources, which has a high number of site based staff in catering and cleaning / caretaking, response rate rose from 10% in 2015 to 30% in 2016.

5. Employee Engagement Index

5.1 Employee engagement is a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success, and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being. It is about how to create conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential.

5.2 A recognised model provided by ORC is used to generate the engagement index for the third year.

Generating an Employee Engagement Index allows us to:

- Measure progress over time
- Provide opportunity to benchmark with local government
- Allow comparators to other organisations
- Identify areas of good practice across the organisation to share
- Utilise the data alongside other metrics (e.g. sickness absence, financial performance, customer service etc.) to target support

5.3 The Employee Engagement strategy targeted a 3% increase in the index by 2016 which was achieved with a 2016 result of **70%**. This compares favourably with the ORC benchmark for local government which is 62%.

	WCC 2012	WCC 2014	WCC 2016	ORC Median score 2016	WCC variation to median 2016
Employee Engagement Index %	66%	67%	70%	62%	+8%

Table 1 Employee Engagement Index by year
Chart 2

6. The Results

The key findings from high level data analysis for WCC include:

Question no.	Question	Result
Top 3 highest scoring questions		
Q.2	I understand how my work contributes to the success of my service/team	93%
Q.1	I am clear about what I am expected to achieve in my job	90%
Q.26	The people I work with cooperate to get the job done	86%
Lowest 3 scoring questions		
Q.51	As a result of the 2014 survey, I have seen positive changes at work	27%
Q. 37	Poor performance is dealt with effectively where I work	44%
Q.48	The County Council manages change effectively	46%
Top 3 most improved questions 2014 - 16		
Q.12	I receive the learning and development I need to do my current job	+11%
Q.3	I am recognised and acknowledged when I have done my job well	+10%
Q. 9	My physical working conditions are satisfactory for my role	+10%
Questions with the greatest reductions 2014 - 16		
Q.39	I am aware of the Council's long term goals (e.g. priorities / values etc.)	-3%
Q.30	I am satisfied with communications within my Group	-2%
Top 3 highest questions above ORC benchmark		
Q.6	I have the right materials and equipment to do my job well	+23%
Q.46	I am satisfied with the benefits of working at the county council	+22%
Q.29	I think it is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done at work	+21%

Lowest 3 questions below ORC benchmark		
Q.40	I am motivated and inspired to contribute to the aims of the organisation	-19%
Q.20	I believe my last appraisal was of value to me	-13%
Q.37	Poor performance is dealt with effectively where I work	-7%

Table 2 - Key findings

6.1 When considering the trends over time for the survey questions, the following can be noted:

- Improvement were seen in the results of 31 (75%) of those questions where comparisons were possible
- No change was recorded in 5 questions (12.5%)
- Results were lower in 5 questions (12.5%)
- 10 questions were either new or amended - therefore comparison are not possible

On the whole the results are therefore positive with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the questions that are comparable, having seen an improvement since 2014. Of the questions that have gone down compared to 2014, none have reduced by more than 3 percentage points.

6.2 Comparison with ORC benchmark

The ORC analysis is generally favourable with 79% of the questions that can be benchmarked being inline or above the median for local authorities. 30 of the Your Say questions do not have an ORC benchmark available.

	Above benchmark	In line with benchmark	Below benchmark	N/A (benchmark not available)
No. of questions	21	2	6	30
% of benchmark questions	72%	7%	21%	-

Table 3 ORC benchmark

6.3 Themes identified from the Open Text questions

Initial analysis of the open questions ('What is the best thing about working for WCC?' and 'What one thing would you change to improve WCC as a place to work?') has been undertaken by themes and the results of the top three for each question are shown below. The analysis in themes will be continued to Business Unit level and included within the reports distributed. The verbatim comments will also be shared with relevant subject matter experts, Heads of Service and service managers.

What is the best thing about working for Warwickshire County Council?	No. comments	
Top 3 themes identified	Count	% making comment
Team of people I work with	480	35.5%
Child friendly, work life/balance	255	18.9%
Improving peoples outcomes, making a difference, caring	205	15.2%

Table 4 Best thing comment themes

What one thing would you change to improve WCC as a place to work?	No. comments	
Top 3 themes identified	Count	% making comment
Better communication/interaction	181	13.6%
Inadequate management/management understanding/support	129	9.7%
Poor pay/benefits/sick/holiday	119	8.9%

Table 5 Change comment themes

7. Communications Plan

7.1 In 2015 a short, 6-question, pulse survey was circulated. Following this pulse survey, an intranet poll revealed that 52% of respondents had not seen any results. Therefore a key action for this project is to ensure that results are visible, cascaded to all and used as a basis for celebration and action.

There is an expectation that by 31 December 2016 results will have been shared by managers, discussions with staff will have taken place and action plans developed at team, service and Business Unit level. These expectations will be clearly communicated and feature in the cascade process.

A toolkit for managers and e-learning will be available to provide support

8. Next Steps

8.1 Short term

- Cascade the results throughout the organisation - currently in progress
- Analyse the corporate level results to develop an action plan with Customer and Transformation Board input
- Assist leaders and managers to gain insight from their results and develop Group, Business Unit and local action plans through range of resources and OD/HRBP support
- Group Employee Forums to consider group results and comment themes to identify potential solutions
- Report back to Customer and Transformation Board on progress in February 2017

8.2 Longer term

- Involve employees to explore feedback and generate solutions through the group employee forums and listening/focus groups to target areas with high/low employee engagement or response rates
- Continue to agree targets for employee engagement at WCC, Group and BU level
- Use engagement index alongside absence / turnover etc. to diagnose 'health' of teams and target interventions to improve wellbeing/absence
- Continue the work to embed the Employee Engagement strategy including how to improve "employee voice" within the organisation
- Explore different options of measuring employee engagement in future - best practice indicates a desire from organisations for more immediate feedback than annual/every 2 years surveys.
- For future employee engagement surveys, explore options to improve the transparency of results to support ownership and accountability
- Review how to engage with hard to reach areas of the organisation whilst demonstrating principles of digital by default.
- Continue to identify ways of increasing the response rate

9. Conclusion

9.1 There is much to celebrate from these results, from the engagement index increase to the trend data of predominant improvements. Staff appear to understand the contribution they make and value the cooperation of their colleagues.

9.2 The survey data gives an insight into the opinions of staff which can be used to continue to support motivation and morale, which will ultimately impact on business results.

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Other members: