Report of	Meeting	Date
Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform)	Scrutiny Committee	Thursday, 24 November 2022

Staff Satisfaction Survey 2021

Is this report confidential?	No

Is this decision key?	Not applicable

Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out the findings of the Staff Survey 2021 and the action taken in response to feedback towards ensuring a strong, cohesive workforce and a positive culture.

Recommendations

2. To note the report.

Reasons for recommendations

3. To provide assurance on the action taken in response to the findings of the Staff Survey.

Other options considered and rejected

4. Not applicable.

Corporate priorities

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Thriving communities
A fair local economy that works for everyone	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places

Background to the report

6. The Staff Survey was conducted on behalf of the council by independent research agency NWA Research. The survey was completed in November and December 2021. Staff communication regarding the survey acknowledged that all staff had experienced a challenging year due to the pandemic along with a period of sustained organisational change. It reinforced a commitment to understanding areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in the post Covid environment.

7. This report provides a summary of the findings, improvement action undertaken and future plans to ensure that we are building a strong and cohesive workforce with a positive, upbeat culture.

Summary of findings

8. The full report from NWA is included at Appendix A.

9. To summarise, findings indicated satisfaction to be good across the majority of areas including staff being satisfied with their team and how they are managed with feedback of great support and culture across both, staff felt their contributions were valued and they understood the priorities of the council and their directorate.

Staff survey statements	All staff (SRBC)	Shared Services
My line manager is supportive during times of difficulty	90.4%	94.6%
My team always strives to do better	96.9%	97.3%
I understand how the priorities of the Council are met by the work of my directorate	81.1%	95.5%
I believe I can make a valuable contribution to the success of South Ribble Council	84.8%	93.7%

10. The areas of lower satisfaction were around communication within directorates, organisational culture and approach to managing change. However, across these areas there was generally higher satisfaction in shared services than other areas of the organisation.

Staff survey statements	All staff (SRBC)	Shared Services
The Council manages organisational change effectively	20.3%	46.7%
I feel that there is good two-way communication within my directorate	53%	82.7%
There is a positive and upbeat culture amongst people that work at the Council	31.1%	37.6%

11. Feedback reflected a significant period of disruption to working practices due to Covid, with staff in every council and sector faced with adjusting to new ways of working through technology. It also highlighted a legacy of uncertainty due to previous change initiatives.

Response

Staff Survey Action Plan

12. To demonstrate immediate action in response to the findings, a Staff Survey Action Plan was developed which identified a series of short-term actions to achieve five key objectives:

   a. Consistent management & performance Improvement
   b. Senior leadership visibility and engagement
   c. Improved staff engagement and internal communications, to better manage change
   d. Supporting new ways of working
   e. Employee-led interventions

13. Actions included:

   - A bespoke development programme for all managers based on best practise including structure for 1-2-1 meetings and supporting team performance.
   - A new performance review process through a digital system to ensure a consistent approach incorporating regular personal development conversations for all staff
   - Activity to increase SMT visibility including floor walks and staff engagement sessions
   - Additional internal communications resource to ensure excellent communications that make the best use of channels available to access all areas of the workforce
   - Briefing sessions for all teams on the transition to new terms and conditions

14. A full status summary is included at appendix B.

People Strategy – setting a clear vision and commitment

15. To ensure a longer-term vision and strategy for responding to the feedback from staff, we developed and launched the People Strategy. The People Strategy recognised that staff are our greatest resource and we need to make sure we provide an excellent employee experience, developing our people to have the right skills under exemplary leadership.

16. The People Strategy (appendix C) aims to achieve the following outcomes:

   • A high performing workforce with the right skills and expertise to meet future priorities
   • A committed and talented workforce that are 'home grown' and continually developed to support retention
   • Staff are engaged and knowledgeable with high levels of satisfaction and overall wellbeing

17. Following a high profile launch programme in September we have made good progress on successfully delivering the following:

- Launched our People Strategy with communications programme, engagement and team based activities to encourage staff to get involved.
- Recruited 4 graduates to start 'growing our own' in harder to recruit areas
- Developed a graduate development programme to providing support, mentoring and extended learning
- Worked with staff to identify their top three social activities including yoga classes, walking group and an all staff Bake-Off to deliver in the New Year
- Launched Development Days for staff to have dedicated time for their development as a team and individually

18. A status summary is included at appendix D.

Approach to organisational change

19. The staff survey highlighted feedback around improving our approach to change. The focus has been on how we communicate change to staff, promoting transparency and consistency by engaging with staff as early as possible to help shape proposals. For example we have:

- Briefed all staff on our transformation programme and what this means
- During phase three shared services we applied an extended pre consultation to give more time for staff feedback
- Briefed staff on the application of Change Policy and set up a dedicated working group.

Improved communication

20. The survey also highlighted the need to address challenges with technology to enable better working practices. A dedicated programme team has been established to oversee the workforce aspects of the project alongside the technical delivery by the ICT team. Progress includes:

- A clear programme developed so staff know when changes are going to go live, including a timeline infographic
- Regular all staff briefings and updates from the Director on progress and what to expect next
- A communications plan developed to make sure staff are getting the right messages at the right time and are clear on the benefits of the programme
- Established a cohort of 'information champions' to share key messages with their wider teams and to test out the new kit and systems to provide feedback for how we can improve

Pulse Survey

21. A pulse survey was put in place to capture frequent feedback every 6 months to understand how staff are feeling, what is working well and where we can improve. This aims to ensure that staff have more frequent opportunities to feedback alongside the more detailed staff survey every two years.

22. The Pulse Survey was conducted in June 2022:

- For SRBC staff, the results demonstrated an increase in satisfaction, particularly in staff understanding their service from 81% to 91% and staff satisfaction from 22.9% to 59.7% compared to the staff survey in 2021.
- For shared services staff, satisfaction across the four questions was higher compared to the rest of the organisation. For phase one staff, they showed increased level of understanding, and staff satisfaction remained consistent compared to the staff survey in 2021.

23. We conducted an additional Pulse Survey with only Shared Services staff in September 2022, this was to reflect our commitment to ensuring we manage organisational change effectively and check in with this group of staff following a period of change.

24. Results showed consistent satisfaction for Phase One compared to June 2022 and for Phase Two there was a significant increase in understanding of service, role and general satisfaction compared to June 2022. For Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits in particular, findings showed a 39.4% increase in those who agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their job. This is likely linked to improvements in capacity within the service following recent recruitment and additional time to embed the newly shared services. We continue to hold regular focus groups with the team to ensure that satisfaction is further improved.

Staffing and capacity

25. Change activity across an organisation generally increases staff turnover which is a useful metric for organisational health. Turnover for 2021/22 was comparable with the majority of our local peers at 16.36% and significantly lower than Ribble Valley, Rossendale, and Pendle who reported 22-29.5%. Turnover for 2022/23 is projected to be even lower at 12%.

26. Organisational change has created positive opportunities for staff and attracted new talent to the organisation. Over the last five years, the head count of the organisation has typically been between 290-300, increasing to 350 in 2022 with the insourcing of waste and 469 including leisure.

Climate change and air quality

27. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

Equality and diversity

28. The Equality Framework sets out the council's commitments to staff and all staff initiatives are assessed as necessary.

Risk

29. Staffing and workforce related risks are captured in the councils Strategic Risk Register.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

    30. No comment

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

    31. No comment.

Appendices

Appendix A – Full staff survey report from NWA
Appendix B – Short term action plan status
Appendix C – People Strategy
Appendix D – People Strategy action plan status.

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Victoria Willett (Director of Change and Delivery)	victoria.willett@southribble.gov.uk	01772 625625	14.11.2022