REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 10 MARCH 2020

SUBJECT: WORKFORCE CULTURE UPDATE

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

1.   REASON FOR REPORT

1.1   To ask the Committee to bring the Culture Working Group to a close.

1.2   This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (27) and (30) 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 workforce culture update; and

(ii)   approves the proposal to bring the Culture Working Group to a close.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   Following issues of victimisation and harassment raised in the 2013 employee survey various actions were taken in relation to the bullying and harassment reported, one of which was a further specific survey to gather information on the nature, source and extent of the issues and discussions with the trade unions.

3.2   The results of this second survey were considered at the special meeting of Moray Council on 2 July 2014 (paragraph 11 of the minute refers). The Council agreed to:

(i)   develop and implement a programme of cultural change

       (ii)   remit to a working group of councillors, officers and trade union representatives to develop and implement the action plan and monitor progress, and

       (iii)   that additional resources will be allocated and that the specific requirements needed to develop or implement the agreed solutions will be reported back to policy and resources committee for approval.

3.3   As a result of the above, the Workforce Culture Group was established in September 2014. The group progressed a number of actions as well as developing a work plan aimed at delivering the desired changes.

3.4   The group began by discussing the issues from the survey results and the experiences of members of the group, particularly the trade union representatives who could report information from the workforce anonymously and in a confidential environment. This open and frank exchange was crucial to developing a common understanding of the current workforce culture and to identifying the changes that might provide improvement.

3.5   The group established the overall purpose of the work as: creating a positive workforce culture where morale is good, people are proud to work for The Moray Council and would recommend it to others. In support of this, eight specific aims were developed and for each of these the outcome to be achieved and how success would be measured, see Table 1.

3.6   <u>TABLE 1: Summary of Aims, Outcomes and Measures</u>

	Aims	Outcomes	Measures
1.	Create a common understanding of un/acceptable behaviour	All employees and councillors are aware of the standards of behaviour required	Revised policy/definitions that people can tell us about
2.	Establish behavioural leadership roles and standards for officers and members	Positive behaviour is demonstrated from the top of the organisation	Staff report that managers care about their well-being – can report examples
3.	Create a culture where the contribution of every employee is valued	There is an environment of mutual respect across all services and levels	Public statements by council employees and members about the council, its services and employees are positive
4.	Develop systems and circumstances to ensure that cultural issues are addressed proactively and when specifically raised	Employees are listened to and believe they are being heard and that action will be taken	• Increase in percentage of people reporting B&H • All reported bullying is acted upon timeously • Employees and trade unions report that they are comfortable raising concerns and confident will be dealt

			with
5.	Review and enhance communications to ensure these are open and honest and recognised as such	There is trust between employees, managers, trade unions and councillors	Over 50% of workforce complete the employee survey
6.	Ensure that the issues arising from the 2013 and 2014 employee surveys are addressed	Reduced bullying and harassment and more positive working environment	Improved results reported in next survey
7.	Address issues of workload to ensure that it is reasonable and manageable for all jobs	Workloads are manageable. No employee faces undue pressure because of an unreasonable workload	Some things are not done as a result of a decision not to prioritise them
8.	Enhance the people management skills of all managers and supervisors	Managers are enabled and encouraged to manage workforce positively	More positive responses to management questions in survey

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1   Assessment of the work undertaken in the work plan as directed by the Workforce Culture Group shows that substantial and sustained progress has been made against the majority of the original outcomes.

4.2   This indicates a marked change in approach from the council's managers and employees in terms of their expectations regarding the development of a positive workforce culture, and an appropriate time to consider the future direction and governance of the culture work.

4.3   Conclusions and recommendations of how to progress each element of the culture work are contained within **Appendix A.**

4.4   Overall, this indicates that the majority of the residual work can be regarded as business as usual and subsumed within the core work of the Organisational Development (OD) and Human Resources (HR) teams.

5. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

5.1   The Culture Working Group has been in place since July 2014.   Normally a working group is a short term temporary arrangement to address a specific issue or attain a specific outcome.

5.2   As the majority of the culture work is in practice being absorbed into the day to day work of the HR and OD teams, it seems an opportune time to review the role of the Culture Working Group.

5.3   The workforce culture and engagement activity is a core part of the corporate workforce strategy and governance and accountability sits within the HR, ICT

and Organisational Development service with oversight by Elected Members on a 6 monthly and annual basis as part of the normal performance management arrangements.

5.4   It is proposed therefore that the Culture Working Group is brought to a close.

6.   **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a)   **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**
The work noted in this report supports the Council in achieving the objectives and priorities in the Corporate and 10 Year Plan, and sets out how the Council will meet the challenges in making best use of our workforce and resources. In particular, the actions will ensure continued progress towards the aims of ensuring an engaged workforce with 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 ongoing and planned in relation to employee engagement and workforce culture continues to provide a solid 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 places on the people working in the public sector to deliver the reforms identified by the Christie Commission including the principles of Fair Work. The links to workforce planning and thereby to demonstrating best value are also important considerations for the council.

(c)   **Financial implications**
There are no financial implications arising from this report.

(d)   **Risk Implications**
The risks associated with workforce culture are 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**
While there are no direct staffing implications arising from this report it should be noted that the resource for employee engagement and culture work has been reduced as part of saving proposals for the 2019-20 budget.

(f) Property
There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
There are no equalities or socio-economic impacts arising from this report.

(h) Consultations
The content of this report has been considered by the central management team, senior management team and the Culture Working Group.

Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer has also been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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.

A copy of this report will also be provided to the managers at the Personnel Forum.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The Culture Working Group was set up to respond specifically to workforce culture issues raised in an employee survey.

7.2 Following five and a half years of activity with the development and implementation of a programme of work spanning eight main themes related to workforce culture, it is proposed that this work is now considered 'business as usual', any future actions will be part of the engagement and culture work and the Culture Working Group is disbanded.

Author of Report: Frances Garrow
Background Papers:
Ref: Employee Opinion Survey (P & R 05-11-13)
                                    Employee Survey (The Moray Council 2 July 2014)