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**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 10 MARCH 2020**

**SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2019**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 This report asks Committee to consider the 2019 employee opinion survey.

1.2 To ask the Committee to approve the actions arising from the results.

*(Please note that a further item on this agenda, update on workforce culture group work contains reference to actions that were aimed at addressing the issues arising from previous surveys).*

1.3 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 results of the 2019 employee opinion survey; and**

(ii) **approve the actions arising from the results and note the further item on this agenda, the update on the workforce culture group work.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Since 2006 Moray Council have regularly surveyed the workforce 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. .

- 3.2 Although originally undertaken by specialist survey providers, latterly the surveys have been designed, administered and analysed in-house as part of the council's efficiency measures.
- 3.3 This is the seventh whole workforce survey and it was undertaken in September 2019. The survey received 1,548 returns providing an overall response rate of 31%. This is a decrease on the 2017 response rate of 42%, however it matches the previous highest rate of 31% from 2015. Employees were encouraged to complete the online survey and paper questionnaires were distributed to staff without ready access to a computer at work. Particular emphasis was placed on encouraging completion within the Direct Services male manual front line workforce where much of the workforce culture work has been undertaken.
- 3.4 While results have been analysed to the same level as previously, the results are being cascaded through an employee booklet (as in previous years), a similar booklet for Elected Members with more detail and a front page summary plus spreadsheet of departmental results for the Central and Senior Management Team. The results have been made available to CMT-SMT and will be shared with service managers for further analysis and discussion. This work will be led by HR and any improvement actions will be considered on both a corporate level and service level depending on what is deemed appropriate.

#### **4. RESULTS**

- 4.1 The information in this report is supplemented by:

**Appendix A** – Previous Actions

**Appendix B** – Survey Headlines

**Appendix C** – Year on Year trends

**Appendix D** – Year Comparisons

##### Overview:

- 4.2 While the overall response rate has declined, it is encouraging to note that the trend of more positive and sustained results seen in both the 2015 and 2017 surveys continues across the majority of areas considered which indicates that the actions and programmes of work put in place as a result of previous surveys are continuing to have a long term positive impact. It is noted however, that there is a decline in the positivity in responses in some areas which will be a focus for action arising from these results.
- 4.3 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

- 4.4 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.

Highest and lowest scoring questions:

- 4.5 Four out of the five highest scoring questions were the same as the 2017 survey and were in relation to clarity on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace, enjoyment of work, clarity on duties and responsibilities, awareness of the challenges facing the council and of the appropriate channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour, bullying or harassment.
- 4.6 Poorest results were in relation to belief in elected members providing leadership for the Council, what elected members do, belief that the council will take action to address issues arising from the survey, communications from the council being open and honest, satisfaction with the leadership and direction received and that senior management have a clear vision of where the organisation is going.

Key improvements, sustained performance and areas for development:

- 4.7 The top 5 improvements since 2017 are in relation to line manager/supervisors passing information to employees effectively, motivating their teams, giving recognition and praise for good performance, overall satisfaction with the line management /supervision received and employees feeling able to approach their supervisor when they have a problem and they are confident that it will be acted upon.
- 4.8 Areas with no change are in relation to clarity around what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour in the workplace and an awareness of the appropriate channels for reporting this (also two of the highest scoring questions). The other two 'no change' questions are in relation to the lowest scoring questions about elected members providing leadership for the council and employees knowing what elected members do.
- 4.9 The areas which indicate the largest percentage decrease since 2017 include employees indicating their workload is generally manageable reducing by 5% points to 63%, recommending the Council as a good place to work reducing by 5% points to 57%, taking a pride in working for the Council reducing by 4% points to 71%, those having a development activity/session in the last 12 months reducing by 4% points to 69%. The following areas all reduced by 3% points: employee belief that the Council will take action to address the issues arising from survey reducing to 33%; belief that the Council is committed to developing a more positive workforce culture to 64% and that employees have the proper equipment to keep people safe and protect their health – 76%.

The overall engagement index score has reduced by 4% points.

### You and Your Job:

- 4.10 There is a small decline in the overall results for this section of between a 1 and 5% point decrease in employees reporting that they enjoy the work they do, morale being good, taking pride in working for the council, feeling motivated to do a good job and go the 'extra mile' and recommending the council as a good place to work. It is however interesting to note that despite these decreases, employees feeling valued and recognised for their work has increased by 3% points. While it is not possible to make a direct causal link between these results and the development activity with line managers and supervisors in relation to how they manage their teams, it would appear likely that this work is beginning to show results.

### Overall Job Satisfaction:

- 4.11 Overall job satisfaction resulted in 67% of employees indicating they were either fully or mostly satisfied in working for Moray Council however when making comparisons, it is important to note that the results in 2019 displayed a lower proportion of employees willing to share their views. As a result, comparison between satisfaction and dissatisfaction cannot be directly correlated
- 4.12 Satisfaction levels vary greatly within department levels however examining results out of the individual factors considered, feeling motivated, valued and recognised, taking pride in working for the Council, overall job enjoyment as well as recommending the Council as a great place to work, has the greatest impact over all other factors in terms of job satisfaction. Other relating factors include morale, as well as being satisfied by the line management received and being treated fairly and being able to approach line management when there is a problem. These factors have remained on the whole fairly consistent since 2017.

### Leadership and Senior Management:

- 4.13 Overall, this section shows some incremental improvements from the 2017 survey results. Belief that senior management demonstrate leadership and direction for the service and department and have a clear vision of where the organisation is going have both increased by 1% point to 51 and 47% respectively. As already noted, knowledge about what elected members do and belief that they provide leadership for the council are both static at 36 and 23% respectively. Seeing how their job links to the Council's objectives and priorities has increased by 4% (59%), overall satisfaction with leadership and direction has increased by 2% points (48%), awareness of the challenges facing the council over the next few years has increased by 4% points to 86% and the expectation that the council will have to change the way it delivers services because of these changes has also increased by 4% points to 82%.

### Supervision:

- 4.14 This section explores the next level of management and relates specifically to the day to day line management and supervision received. Consistent with

results from previous surveys, the opinions about line management are generally more positive than towards senior management. Each question in this section sees an improvement. 78% of respondents indicate feeling supported by their line manager /supervisor (an increase of 4% points), line managers pass information effectively has a 7% point increase at 77%, line management recognises and gives praise for good performance has improved by 6% points to 72%, line manager/supervisor treats me fairly and with respect has increased by 5% points to 84%, motivation has improved by 7% points to 68%, overall satisfaction with line management/supervision has improved by 7% points to 76% and as already mentioned, feeling able to approach their supervisor when there is a problem with confidence it will be acted upon has improved by 6% points to 78%.

#### Communication:

- 4.15 Views about how well informed employees feel, the communication between different parts of the organisation, the communication culture and the effectiveness of various communication methods have mixed results in this survey. Being kept well informed at team level, having the opportunity to participate in regular team meetings, team communications being open and honest and being kept informed about what is happening within the council have improved between 1 and 4% points to 70%, 74%, 70% and 54% respectively. In contrast, belief that the council will take actions to address issues arising from the survey, information received is easy to understand, communications from the council are open and honest, overall satisfaction with communication in the council has seen slight declines of between 1 and 3% points at 33%, 74%, 44% and 47% respectively.
- 4.16 These results indicate that while the team communications are good, there is room for improvement with the council wide communications.

#### Training, Performance and Development:

- 4.17 This section explores employee views of the opportunities and availability of training and development, as well as the performance development processes in place. There is a 3% point increase in employees feeling encouraged to improve their own performance at 72%, a 2% point increase at 65% of employees reporting that the training and development they receive helps them to do their job better, and a 1% point reduction at 58% of respondents reporting that they get the training and development they need to do their job effectively. There is a 4% point decline in the number of respondents reporting they have had an appraisal of some description in the last 12 months (e.g. ERDP, PR&D, professional supervision or appraisal). This decline is higher than the overall number of appraisals reported corporately in 2018, but does correlate generally with the overall reduction.

#### Change:

- 4.18 The council has undergone a number of significant changes in recent years including stream-lining, merging, restructures and modernising ways of service delivery to balance budgets. In the last 2 years, 60% of respondents reported experiencing change of some type, a 16% point increase on the

figure of 44% in 2017. Overall satisfaction with the way the change management process was handled has declined by 8% points to 34%.

- 4.19 Of those experiencing change 47% were satisfied with the level of communication and consultation and 53% received formal written notification of the proposals for change. 44% indicated they had the opportunity to contribute to the change through a consultation exercise which is a reduction of 1% since 2017; 88 % responded to the consultation which is an increase of 9% since 2017 and 46% felt their response was taken into account, which is a positive increase of 8% since 2017.

#### Workforce Culture:

- 4.20 This section explores issues related to creating a positive work force culture where morale is good, people are proud to work for the council and would recommend it to others. It is split into three sections: management and team, work related and behaviour related questions.
- Management and team – the questions in this section relate to believing line managers/supervisors care about employee well-being, feeling contributions are valued, trust that communications are open and honest, belief that the team is managed fairly and consistently, that the team co-operates and works well together and that employees feel respected by colleagues. This section received improved responses. All responses have improved between 1 and 5% points and sit between 72 and 83%.
  - Work Related – the questions in this section relate to having a manageable workload, unrealistic time pressures, a choice in deciding what to do at work, clarity on duties and responsibilities and whether relationships at work are strained. Having a manageable workload and clarity on duties and responsibilities have decreased by 5% points to 63% and 1% point to 87% respectively. 42% of employees feel they have Unrealistic time pressures which is an increase of 3% points from 2017, 33% feel they have strained relationships which is an increase of 2% points from 2017 and having a choice on the work they do has increased by 2% points to 33% in 2019.
  - Behaviours – this section asks about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, confidence they will be dealt with, believing the council is committed to developing a positive workforce culture, harassment and the channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour. All the responses are either the same or improved other than belief that the council is committed to developing a more positive workforce culture which has seen a 3% point decline to 64%. Both negative statements regarding being subject to harassment and unacceptable behaviour/bullying in the workplace saw a decline of 1 and 2% points respectively which is an improvement.

#### Employee Engagement:

- 4.21 Employee engagement is the discretionary commitment and enthusiasm people give to the council, their services and their colleagues meaning we can provide better services and it matters to employees that the council does well. Disappointingly, each of the four measures in this set of results sees a

decline: pride in working for the council is sitting at 71% (-4%), feeling motivated to do a good job/go the extra mile is at 79% (-2%), would recommend the council as a good place to work is at 57% (-5%) and belief the council will take action to address the issues arising from the survey is at 33% (-3%). Given the prolonged period of austerity, budget difficulties and uncertainty for many employees within those services most often impacted by the requirement for budget savings, these results are perhaps not surprising. Nevertheless, this is of concern to the council and some consideration is required about how to address these concerns.

#### Health & Safety:

- 4.22 In order to form a baseline and measure the culture of Health and Safety within our workplace, this new section was introduced in 2017. In 2019 a new question was added to consider the mental health of employees. 80% of respondents reported that their health and safety is well looked after at work (an increase of 2% points) and 57% report feeling involved in decision regarding health and safety. 76% (-3%) feel involved in decision regarding health and safety. An additional question was added to this year's survey to set a baseline that will allow the council to monitor and track trends in the future. The question asks whether employees feel their mental health is sufficiently supported to which 53% of respondents agreed.

#### Benchmarking:

- 4.23 Benchmarking with other local authorities has not proved possible due to the lack of availability of up to date data.

### **5. ACTIONS**

- 5.1 While these results provide a picture of responses to the survey questions at a corporate level, as in previous surveys there are distinct variations at departmental / service level which will be discussed and managed, with improvement actions and timescales identified and agreed with Heads of Service.

#### Summary:

- 5.2 The 2019 results show that while there are broad areas where there is a sustained improvement in feedback there also continue to be some discrete areas where further consideration is required in order to develop actions which will bring about potential improvements. These are specifically in relation to elected member activity and leadership, employee engagement and corporate communications and managing change.
- 5.3 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 and 2017, 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 allowed

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.

- 5.4 While it is clear that the 2019 results are mixed, the responses indicate that progress is being made in some areas and that the culture of the organisation is beginning to change. It is however also 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 The main area for ongoing concentrated development work appears to be in relation to corporate communications, appraisals, understanding of the role of elected members and senior leadership and managing workload and time pressures. It is proposed that the overarching theme for action plans is centred around improving the corporate communications with the workforce, including in relation to the vision and direction of senior leadership for the council, having regular appraisals or workplace discussions and improving the understanding of elected member roles. This will be supplemented by specific actions within departments and services as noted in 5.3.
- 5.7 Therefore, actions will be:
- Continue to disaggregate the results to an incremental bespoke approach specific to each service
  - Focus engagement and culture activity on improving corporate communications, health and safety, workplace discussions and managing workload and time pressures
  - Work to promote and inform on the role of elected members
  - 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 within services

## **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**

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 and the lower response rate and rise in less positive results in some areas are clear indications that the workforce is feeling less positive and less resilient compared to two years ago.

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**

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.

The headline results have been seen by the central and senior management teams, the Admin Group and Group Leaders, managers at the Personnel Forum and considered by the Trade Unions.

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 with a view to seeking their input to any action plans developed.

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

An employee booklet will be available on interchange for the workforce with access to a paper version available for employees without ready access to a work computer.

An elected members' booklet will be available on the members' smi site.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

**7.1 The results of the 2019 employee survey contain a mixture of positive and improved results in some areas and some declining results in others with a decline in the overall 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.**

Author of Report:	Frances Garrow
Background Papers:	Elected Members Booklet (either attached or on smi site)
Ref:	Employee Opinion Survey (P & R 24-01-17) Employee Opinion Survey (P & R 24-11-15) Employee Opinion Survey (P & R 05-11-13) Employee Opinion Survey (Full Council 28-09-11) Employee Opinion Survey (P & R 02-06-09)
Appendices:	Appendix A – Previous Actions Appendix B – Survey Headlines Appendix C – Year on Year trends Appendix D – Year Comparisons