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**REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PULSE SURVEY 2022**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the results from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Pulse Survey 2022 and for Committee to approve the actions arising from the report.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III B (24)(c) and (25) 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 the Committee:**

- (i) **consider and note the results of the 2022 mental health and wellbeing pulse survey; and**
- (ii) **approve the actions arising from the results**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Since 2006 Moray Council have regularly surveyed the workforce on employment related issues. Due to the pandemic in 2020 it was considered essential to measure and understand the impact of the pandemic on the workforce to enable the Council to support staff during the recovery phase. Therefore, at the start of 2021 it was decided to complete a specific mental health and wellbeing survey instead of the usual employee survey. As with the employee survey, actions designed to address the issues were identified based on the survey results. These fed into the workforce culture and employee engagement programme. The following provides a summary of the actions arising from the 2021 survey:

- Continue to disaggregate the results to an incremental bespoke approach specific to each service.
  - Focus engagement and culture activity on improving the knowledge and management of mental health, increasing mental health awareness, communicating change effectively and improving the management of workload and time pressures.
  - Progress discussions with management teams on survey results.
  - Development of monitoring arrangements via the workforce planning process.
- 3.2 Given the wider reported impacts of the pandemic on the psychological wellbeing of individuals a shorter mental health and well-being pulse survey was undertaken in June/July 2022. The aim was to collect information during the pandemic recovery phase and to identify whether the issues identified in the 2021 survey remained the same. The survey was designed, administered and analysed in-house.
- 3.3 The survey was available electronically with paper copies available to employees with no ready access to a work computer. It contained nine questions which were structured to measure progress from 2021 and to assess whether the themes of work being undertaken still remained the priority areas of focus. 797 returns were received providing an overall response rate of 15.8%. Education provided the lowest return rate and this could be attributed to the timing coinciding with the end of the school year.
- 3.4 Results have been analysed and are being cascaded via an employee booklet and departmental results and improvement actions will be considered on both a corporate level and service level. Actions will feed into workforce culture and service planning processes.

#### 4. **RESULTS**

The results to the pulse survey have been analysed and reported at corporate and service levels and, as in previous surveys there are variations in the issues that emerge at departmental/service level. The information in this report is supported by **Appendix A** which outlines the main findings, emerging themes and actions.

##### Overview:

- 4.1 The pulse survey displays an overall improving picture in terms of how supported the workforce report feeling and how well they have been able to manage their mental health and wellbeing during the recovery from the pandemic.
- 4.2 The results are generally positive and specific examples where the responses indicate that progress is being made are: feeling safe in the workplace, having a good work life balance and a higher number of respondents saying no to having experienced a mental health issue in the past year that required professional support. **Appendix A** provides more detailed results against each question theme.

- 4.3 In summary the results show in general the workforce has managed the impact of Covid well, however, there are specific service themes which require support and intervention in order to make improvements. Four services report comparatively higher results for attention: Roads and Fleet; Waste; Education: Teachers; and Education Resources and Communities: Libraries. This corresponds with last year's results.
- 4.4 It is also evident that there are areas that require improvement work such as anxiety about workload and employees' mental health being well looked after which are embedded in the wider aspects of our positive workforce culture activities, although they may require further focus within specific teams and services.
- 4.5 Although this was a pulse survey with fewer questions, it is evident from the survey results that the main themes arising from the 2021 survey remain relevant and the 2022 results confirm that our focus of work remains appropriate and relevant.

### Actions

- 4.6 The immediate areas for action remain per the 2021 survey results and are specifically in relation to improving awareness of mental health, training staff to have a better understanding of how to support staff and their mental health, reviewing communications particularly across frontline services, finding ways to improve workload management and providing clarity on about future work practices.
- 4.7 A key focus for the immediate future is to complete the workload management toolkit pilot, evaluate the effectiveness and then roll out the final version to the wider workforce. Other areas identified in the last results are now incorporated into the Workforce Culture Action Plan including training solutions and interventions to support managers with improving their knowledge and skills of the management of mental health, with training being offered both in house and via the Flexible Working Fund provision and improving communications across frontline services.
- 4.8 The departmental analysis and related improvement actions and timescales will be identified and agreed with Heads of Service as part of the workforce planning process. This will ensure the 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. 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 Plan and 10 Year Plan, and sets out how the Council will meet the challenges in making best use of its 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.

### **(c) Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **(d) Risk Implications**

There is a risk of decreasing staff morale should no action be taken as a result of the survey findings. These are heightened at this point due to the recovery from the pandemic and the long term impact on mental health still not yet fully manifested.

The complex nature of mental health and the multiple factors that influence individual situations combined with the long term nature of establishing a cultural shift in behaviours are factors in evidencing the impact of actions put in place and demonstrating change.

### **(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. However, the resource for employee engagement and culture work was reduced as part of savings made for the 2019-20 budget and given the increased requirement for support this will limit the speed in which progress can be made.

### **(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) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

There are no climate change or biodiversity impacts arising from this report.

**(i) Consultations**

The content of this report has been considered by the corporate management team and the results will also be considered by the Trade Unions.

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 following this committee.

**6. CONCLUSION**

**6.1 The results of the 2022 mental health and wellbeing pulse survey contain evidence of an overall improving picture in our recovery from the pandemic and confirms the areas identified in last year's survey remain the key areas for improvement and action.**

**6.2 It is proposed that further work is undertaken with departments and services to identify solutions.**

**6.3 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.**

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Background Papers:

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