

EMPLOYEE SURVEYS AND ACTION PLAN

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main purpose of this report is to advise the Policy and Resources Committee of a series of employee engagement activities and surveys that are underway.

The council carries out a regular employee survey on a two year cycle, which provides valuable information about employee engagement, employee morale and the overall health and wellbeing of our workforce. This year we have also carried out a stress audit and a short questionnaire on employee morale. The surveys will be complemented by a series of employee focus groups, where more in depth questioning and exploration of issues will be carried out.

Findings from these surveys will be analysed and compiled into a report, in line with the Audit Scotland Action Plan. The report to a future Policy and Resources Committee will be accompanied by an action plan addressing the issues.

Employee engagement is a key determining factor in the performance of an organisation and, as the council is predominantly a people organisation, this is an essential element of our approach to managing our staff and supporting them to deliver excellent services.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report advises the Policy and Resources Committee of the employee engagement and survey activity that are currently underway, the combined findings of which will be reported to a future Policy and Resources Committee accompanied by an action plan.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- i. Note the current employee engagement and survey activity that is currently underway
- ii. Note that employee engagement is an important contributor to organisational performance
- iii. Note that an integrated report with the findings of these surveys and the associated focus groups will be brought, with an action plan, to a future Policy and Resources Committee.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Employee engagement, informed by workplace environment and workplace relationships is widely recognised as an important contributor to employee performance. As a people organisation, the council places significant importance on ensuring that employees are regularly consulted on issues and that management action is put in place to address any that arise. As a service delivery organisation, the council recognises the importance of providing appropriate support to our employees to deliver excellent services. The council's HR and Organisational Development Strategy sets out the approach and the actions that we are taking to provide that support.
- 4.2 Included in the HR and OD Strategy is a commitment to carry out regular engagement activities with our employees. One of these mechanisms is through survey and questionnaires. The council carries out a regular, two yearly employee survey, the last of which was issued in 2012. The question set is comprehensive and covers a range of questions to ascertain the level of engagement of our employees with the council as their employer. The regular nature of the survey and the use of the same baseline questions provides us with an opportunity to identify trends in employee feedback over time and identify where actions that have been put in place have had an impact.

- 4.2 The 2014 Employee Survey is currently underway. It is carried out by an independent organisation and all responses are confidential. The survey is provided as an email link to those employees with IT access and a hard copy is sent to all employees who do not have IT access at work.
- 4.3 Once the survey is closed, results are collated by the contractor and provided to the council for analysis, comparison with previous years and the development of an action plan.
- 4.4 This year we have also carried out a stress audit as part of a series of actions agreed by SMT to address attendance levels across the council. Stress was identified in our analysis as one of our most common reasons for sickness absence on an ongoing basis. The question set in the stress audit shares some similarities to those in the employee survey and provides management with information on employee wellbeing and morale in the workplace in addition to particular indicators of stress.
- 4.5 The stress audit was again carried out by an independent contractor, issued to all employees either via an email link or hard copy and was entirely confidential. The results were then collated and sent to the council by the contractor. Initial analysis has been carried out and a series of focus groups are planned, facilitated by the contractor, to identify areas for more detailed investigation, analysis and specific actions.
- 4.6 The third piece of survey work carried out was a short survey on employee morale. This was an online survey carried out by the council and the results are being collated along with the other survey findings.
- 4.7 The results from all of these employee engagement activities will give an overall perspective on the current levels of engagement and morale amongst the workforce and will be an important driver for management in reviewing current activities relating to workforce management and also for putting improvement actions in place.
- 4.8 The combined findings of these activities will be presented to a future Policy and Resources Committee, with an accompanying action plan.
- 4.9 This will provide members with the reassurance that there are clear plans in place to maximize employee engagement, morale and wellbeing and to contribute to overall improvement in performance and the ongoing delivery of excellent services.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Employee engagement, morale and wellbeing are essential to employee performance and to the delivery of excellent services. The council is undertaking a full and comprehensive set of employee engagement activities to assess current levels of engagement and areas for improvement. These will be reported in full with an accompanying action plan to a future Policy and Resources Committee.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy: No issues directly from this paper, but some policies may require to be reviewed in light of the findings.
- 6.2 Financial : None all costs contained within current budgets
- 6.3 Legal: The council has a duty under the Health and Safety at work Act (1974) to provide a safe and healthy work environment. This duty includes taking action to mitigate the risk of work related stressors.
- 6.4 HR: Low engagement, morale and wellbeing is likely to have an impact on HR processes and the overall health and performance of the organisation.
- 6.5 Equalities: The stress audit was carried out in accordance with the council's equality duties.
- 6.6 Risk: Failure to communicate and act on the results of the survey findings could potentially risk a further reduction in staff morale.
- 6.7 Customer Service: Low levels of staff morale, engagement and wellbeing have the potential to impact on the ability of employees to work to their full potential and may impact on the level of service received by our customers.

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