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| 20 September 2016 | | ITEM: 8 |
| Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | |
| Staff Survey 2016 | | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: Non key | |
| Report of: Jan Cox – Strategic Lead HR & OD | | |
| Accountable Head of Service: Jackie Hinchliffe - Director of HR, OD & Transformation | | |
| Accountable Director: Jackie Hinchliffe - Director of HR, OD & Transformation | | |
| This report is public | | |

Executive Summary

This report outlines the results of the 2016 staff survey, identifies the highest and lowest performing indicators and the priorities for action planning following the analysis of the results.

The 71% response rate demonstrated an excellent level of engagement.

There has been considerable improvement since the 2014 survey with positive changes exceeding the negative. A total of 27 indicators have significantly improved since 2014. Key areas of improvement include **PDRs, job security and awareness of support for health and wellbeing.**

Benchmarking has been used as a key analysis tool, this has shown:

- **66%** of the scores fall above the BMG public sector benchmark
- significantly more Thurrock employees believe the council is an equal opportunity employer compared to the BMG benchmark

High performing areas include:

- **Line Management**
- **Senior Management**
- **Performance & Development**
- **Customer Service**
- **Pay and Fair Treatment**

The weakest performing area of the survey is around Induction.

Analysis of the results has identified 6 council wide themes for action planning:

- **Employee Engagement**
- **Induction**
- **IT**
- **Motivation**
- **Change Management**
- **Communication (particularly across departments)**

These are supplemented by priorities for each of the directorates and embedded in the action plans.

The Corporate Workforce Group and Corporate Staff Forums will work with HR and OD to support analysis and actions identified by the directorates and through the council wide programme.

An ongoing communication and engagement plan will be maintained to demonstrate how the council is responding to the survey with a '**you said, we did**' campaign during November and March 2017. Governance is provided by the People Board with regular updates to Directors Board.

An annual pulse survey will take place to maintain the momentum of taking feedback from staff. This activity will continue to reassure the workforce, directors and committee that employee engagement continues to be a priority.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Committee to note and comment on the outcomes of the Staff Survey 2016 and the actions identified.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The 2016 staff survey was undertaken by BMG Research, an independent organisation, commissioned by the Council following a competitive procurement process. Using an external expert survey organisation ensures confidence in confidentiality and compliance with survey standards.

2.2 The survey went live on 11th April 2016 and ran for three weeks. The work was led by a project group made of key staff from across HR, OD and IT; the project sponsor for Directors Board is Jackie Hinchliffe.

- 2,080 employees were given the opportunity to complete a survey.
- A total of 1,475 responses were received, giving an excellent **response rate of 71%**, which is in line with the rate achieved in 2014 (72%).

- A total of 1,228 online responses were received, which is a response rate of 83%.
- 247 staff completed paper copies, which is a response rate of 41%.

2.3 The outcomes of the survey were provided to the council through presentations, a comprehensive corporate report and directorate reports. Direct feedback to staff has been conveyed through manager and staff conferences, posters and internal communications.

2.4 All Directors have led action planning workshops and Jackie Hinchliffe led the corporate action planning workshop. The key priorities identified are contained in this report.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Staff Survey - Results

3.1.1 Analysis of the outcomes of the survey was undertaken at all levels; a staff survey 'reportal' provides managers with the facility to assess results at a team level. The corporate level analysis focused on the highest and lowest performing indicators and identified the key priorities for the council wide action plan.

3.2 High performing indicators

3.2.1 Analysis of the high performing indicators focused on the highest scoring questions; the responses that have significantly improved since 2014 and the highest benchmark results. Highlights include:

- 27 significant improvements since 2014 with 17 improving by 5% or more
- 11% rise in staff feeling more secure in their job since 2014
- 10% increase in staff awareness of support via health and wellbeing.

3.2.2 Nearly four fifths of staff would like to be working for the council in 12 months' time (78%). This is unchanged from 2014 but does reflect resilience and confidence in Thurrock as an employer considering the significant changes in environment, workforce and budgets. This figure is also 3% higher than the BMG benchmark.

3.3 Highest scoring questions

3.3.1 The headline themes from the staff survey are set out below; they are the areas that consistently scored highest across the council.

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|-----|--|
| 93% | I understand how my work contributes to the objectives of my team / service |
| 89% | I am clear about what is required of me in my job |
| 88% | I understand how my work contributes to the success of the council |
| 87% | Have had an annual PDR / appraisal with their manager within the last 12 months |
| 86% | My last PDR / appraisal accurately reflected my performance (where had an appraisal) |

3.3.2 A clear strength of Thurrock is the understanding staff have of how their work supports the objectives of their team/service (93%) and how it contributes to the success of the council (86%). Both statements have significantly improved since 2014. Significantly line managers are cited in supporting this understanding with a 6% increase since 2014.

3.3.3 The positivity continues with 9/10 staff being clear about what is required of them in their job role. This sees a 5% improvement in the previous result and a clear 3% above BMG Research benchmark.

3.3.4 Another notable area is around formal staff support and review in the PDR Process. Responses saw that 9/10 staff has had a PDR/appraisal in the last 12 months but more importantly 86% felt it was an accurate reflection of performance. This is a 16% increase from 2014 and 15% above the benchmark.

3.3.5 **Adults, Health & Housing** consistently demonstrate the most positive results in all of the above indicators.

3.4 Significant improvements since 2014

3.4.1 There are 17 areas of significant improvement measuring over 5% increase. These reflect review and continuous improvement across the council. Most important of these are around the formal support of PDR and job security. The confidence in a job that is supportive and secure is a powerful retention strategy.

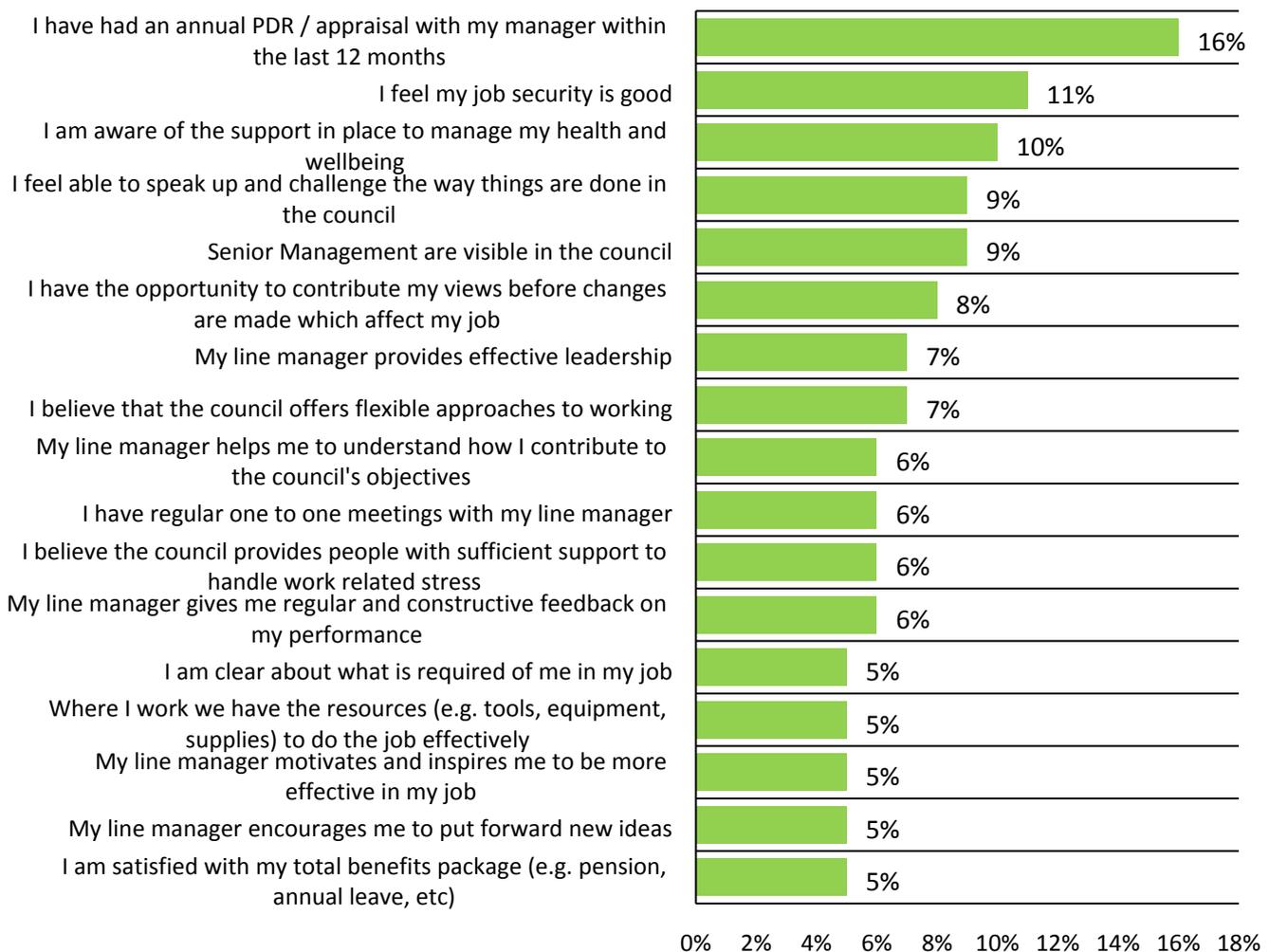
3.4.2 The fourth highest improvement is about challenging and speaking up about the way things are done in the council. This improvement shows a significant increase in and confidence that their views will be listened to.

3.4.3 Changes in senior management and structure has not seen a negative impact in responses and visibility is another area of improvement with 59% agreeing senior managers are visible.

3.4.4 A significant 7% (75%) increase is seen in line managers providing effective leadership and a 3% increase (77%) of managers recognised for open and honest communications.

3.4.5 **Adults, Health & Housing** demonstrate some of the highest scores across the improved indicators; **Children’s Services and HR/OD** represent the highest levels of Senior Management Visibility; **HR/OD staff** are most likely to feel able to challenge the ways things are done and **Finance/IT** staff are most positive about support for work related stress.

3.4.6 The chart below illustrates the measures that have significantly improved since 2014.



3.5 Positive Benchmark Results

3.5.1 Benchmarking is a useful technique to effectively place the 2016 staff survey results into context with other similar organisations. The benchmarking figures shown below are based on BMG Research’s own database of results from more than 50 public sector organisations. The Council achieved results higher than the BMG benchmarking figures in 25 questions, an excellent achievement. The benchmarking figures shown below represent all the benchmark questions that scored 6% or more above the BMG benchmark. Of

particular note is the **+14% on awareness of council's long term goals and with opportunities to develop career.**

| Indicator | Thurrock | BMG benchmark | % difference |
|---|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Q9/6. I am satisfied with the opportunities I have to develop my career in the council | 50% | 36% | +14% |
| Q4/3. I am aware of the council's long term goals (council's 5 key priorities) | 71% | 57% | +14% |
| Q4/2. I understand how my work contributes to the success of the council | 88% | 76% | +12% |
| Q13/1. I have the opportunity to contribute my views before changes are made which affect my job | 49% | 39% | +10% |
| Q6/4. My line manager gives me regular and constructive feedback on my performance | 70% | 61% | +9% |
| Q5/2. I have confidence in Senior Management | 49% | 41% | +8% |
| Q8/1. I have enough information to do my job well | 79% | 71% | +8% |
| Q9/3. I have opportunities to develop new skills | 61% | 53% | +8% |
| Q5/3. I believe Senior Management has a clear vision for the future of the council | 52% | 45% | +7% |
| Q5/4. Senior Management provide effective leadership | 47% | 40% | +7% |
| Q2. Overall job satisfaction | 76% | 69% | +7% |
| Q1/7. I am proud to work for the council | 64% | 57% | +7% |
| Q9/1. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities | 76% | 70% | +6% |
| Q1/5. I can call on other people I regularly work with to help when things get difficult in my job* | 84% | 78% | +6% |

3.6 Low Performing Indicators

3.6.1 Analysis of the low performing indicators focused on the lowest scoring questions; the responses that have significantly deteriorated since 2014 and the lowest benchmark results.

3.7 Lowest Scoring Questions

3.7.1 The headline themes from the staff survey are set out below; they are the areas that consistently scored lowest across the council.

| | |
|-----|--|
| 28% | When changes are made they are usually for the |
|-----|--|

| | |
|-----|--|
| | better |
| 31% | Change is managed well in the Council |
| 32% | Our IT systems meet the needs of the business |
| 36% | Where I work there are enough staff to get the job done |
| 37% | I believe that action will be taken as a result of this survey |

3.7.2 In terms of the lowest scoring indicators in the survey; change management comes under scrutiny. Just short of **three in ten** members of staff feel when changes are made they are usually for the better (28%), and that change is managed well (31%), both are in line with 2014. However, the latter is significantly higher than the BMG benchmark of 28% (+3% points). Perceptions of whether the IT systems meet employee needs are in line with 2014 (32% cf. 31%), however agreement is significantly lower than the BMG benchmark of 54%.

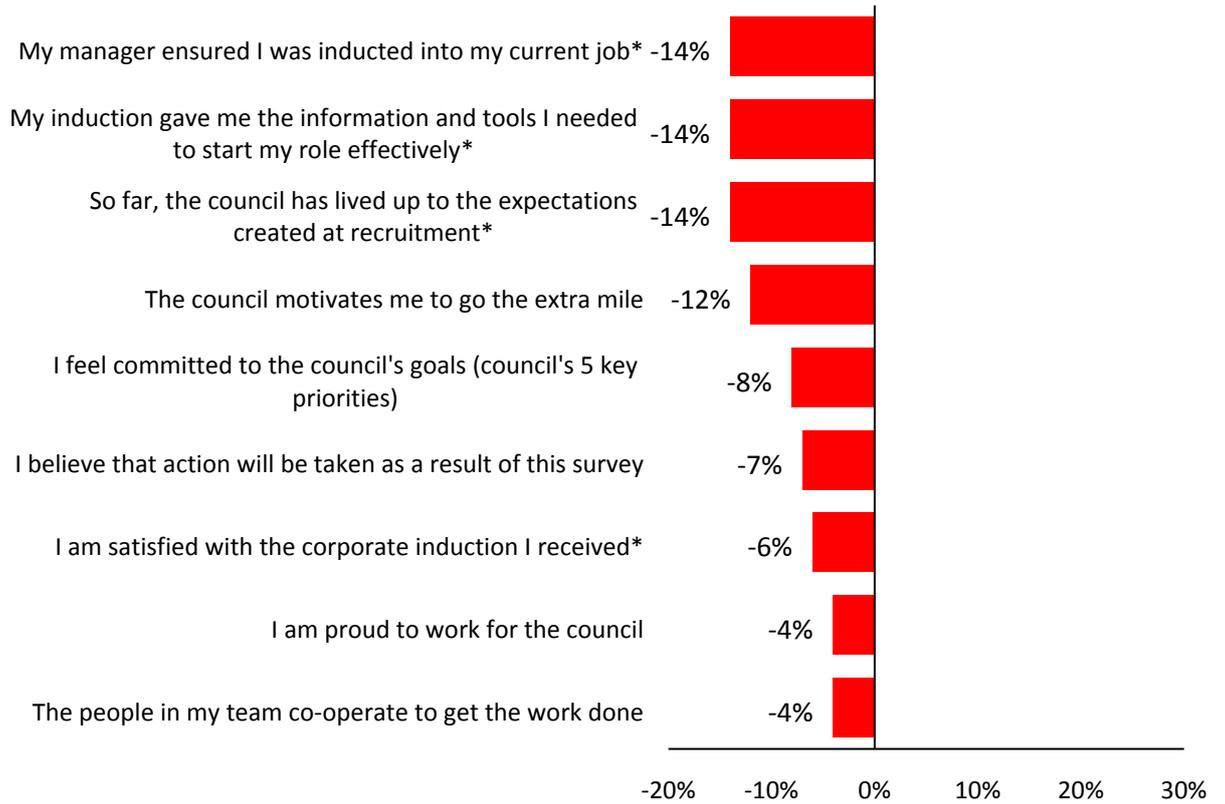
3.7.3 An area that is important in both instilling confidence in staff and also to keep staff interested for future surveys, is that staff believe action will be taken as a result of the survey. Just short of **two fifths** of staff believe action will be taken (37%), which is significantly below 2014 (-7% points) and significantly below the BMG benchmark (-3%)

3.8 Measures that have Deteriorated

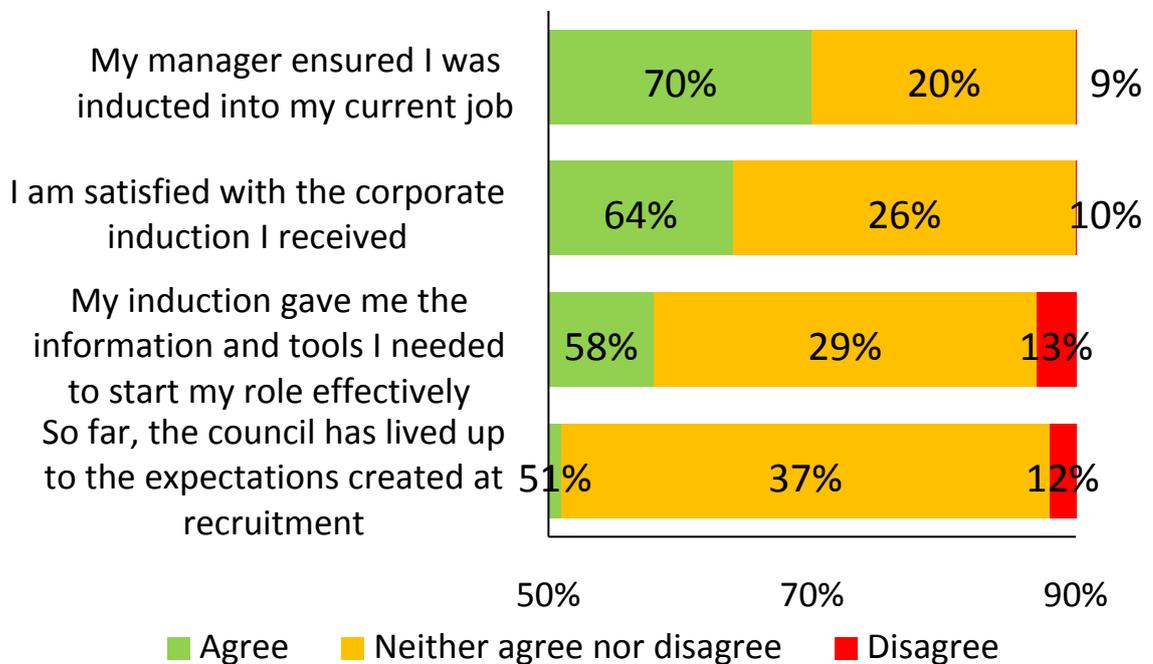
3.8.1 There are 9 measures that have significantly deteriorated since 2014. The largest drops in agreement are in relation to the induction process. Significantly fewer members of staff agree their manager ensured they were inducted into their current job, that it gave them the information and tools needed to start their job and that so far, the council have lived up to expectations (all -14%).

3.8.2 Furthermore significantly fewer staff agree that the council motivates them to go the extra mile (-12%).

3.8.3 The 9 measures that have significantly deteriorated since 2014 are set out below



3.9 Four questions relating to the on boarding of staff are in this 9 as set out below.



Whilst Induction has a significant drop from 2014, it is worth noting that for all the indicators the majority of staff provided positive responses, **the lowest results for the four indicators are in Children's Services.**

3.10 Negative Benchmark Results

3.10.1 A with positive benchmarks these provide an indication of how the council are performing against similar organisations.

| Indicator | Thurrock | BMG benchmark | % difference |
|--|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Q3/1. Where I work we have the resources (e.g. tools, equipment, supplies) to do the job effectively | 55% | 58% | -3% |
| Q3/2. Our IT systems meet the needs of the business | 32% | 54% | -22% |
| Q4/7. I believe that action will be taken as a result of this survey | 37% | 40% | -3% |
| Q7. Poor performance is dealt with effectively in your team* | 49% | 53% | -4% |
| Q8/5. Communication between departments I work with is effective | 45% | 57% | -12% |

3.10.2 As can be seen the areas that perform least well are IT meeting the needs of the business and Communication between departments.

3.11 Results – Summary

3.11.1 Overall there has been some clear headway made since the 2014 survey, with significant positive changes clearly outweighing the significant negative changes.

- Most notably in terms of the level of PDRs, job security and awareness of support around health and wellbeing.
- Similarly, many of the scores across the survey fall above the BMG public sector benchmark.
- Certain areas within the survey have performed well;
 - **Line management** – all scores have significantly improved since 2014.
 - **Senior management** – whilst results are generally in line with 2014, visibility has noticeably increased and agreement is significantly higher against comparable benchmarks.
 - **Performance and Development** (excluding Inductions) – results are in line with 2014. However opportunities to develop new skills, career development and the job making good use of employees skills and abilities are significantly above the BMG benchmark.

- In addition the proportion of employees that have regular one to ones and have had a PDR in the last 12 months has significantly increased from 2014, and the latter is significantly above the BMG benchmark.
 - **Customer Service** – results remain positive, and perceptions of commitment to customer satisfaction and the quality of customer service have both significantly improved since 2014.
 - **Pay and Fair Treatment** – satisfaction with the benefits package and the council offer of flexible approaches to work have significantly improved since 2014. Furthermore, significantly more Thurrock employees believe the council is an equal opportunity employer compared to the BMG benchmark.
- Finally the weakest performing area of the survey is in relation to inductions at the council. All measures have significantly decreased since 2014 and are least positive amongst employees in Children’s Services.

4. STAFF SURVEY – RESPONSE

- 4.1 Conducting a staff survey provides the council with a clear indication of how staff feel about all aspects of their employment. Of critical importance is responding to the survey; developing clear actions plans; communicating outcomes and actions and demonstrating change.
- 4.2 Following receipt of the results action planning workshops, led by Directors, have been held by all Directorates and for the council. These have identified agreed priorities and actions to respond. The agreed priorities are:

Council wide priorities:

- **Employee Engagement**
- **Induction**
- **IT**
- **Motivation**
- **Change Management**
- **Communication (particularly across departments)**

Children’s Services have prioritised:

- **Change and communication**
- **Work life balance**
- **Induction**

Finance and IT have prioritised:

- **Visibility/access to senior managers**
- **Change**
- **Perspectives on pay and opportunity**
- **Communications**

Environment and Place have prioritised:

- **Interdepartmental communications**
- **PDR'S and local induction**
- **Development opportunities**
- **Senior management visibility**

Adults, Housing and Health have prioritised:

- **Change**
- **Communications**
- **Senior leadership visibility and management**
- **Inductions**
- **Resourcing/pay and conditions**
- **Bullying, Harassment and discrimination**

HR, OD and Transformation have prioritised:

- **Communication between departments**
- **Developing new skills**
- **Managing Poor performance**
- **Line manager motivates me**
- **Training and development helps job**
- **Satisfaction with training**
- **Work gives me a sense of personal satisfaction**

4.3 COMMUNICATION

4.3.1 A clear communication plan in advance of the survey helped drive the high response rate. The results have been communicated through:

- Posters campaigns, Insight, Thurrock Manager, In-form and staff notice boards
- Manager & Staff Conferences
- Directorate Management Teams, Team meetings

4.3.2 A similar communication and engagement plan is in place to develop and deliver action plans this will also include:

- You said, we did campaign, will run November 2016 and March 2017

- Focus groups
- Corporate Workforce Groups & Staff Forums

There will be a “pulse” annual survey to temperature check progress with all staff.

The communications channels will continue to be used through 2016 and 2017 to update staff and provide key messages on progress of action.

5. GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 The existing infrastructure of DMTs, Boards and Corporate and Directorate Workforce Groups and Staff Forums will develop, manage and monitor the response to the survey. People Board will provide the overall governance of the delivery of action plans; additionally Directors Board will retain overall accountability.

6. Reasons for Recommendation

- 6.1 To advise the committee of the outcome of the 2016 staff survey and demonstrate the council’s continued commitment to employee engagement and continuous improvement

7. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 7.1 An engaged and productive workforce is critical to the continued delivery of services for residents and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children. Impact on policies will be determined through outcomes of action planning, none are proposed at this stage.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Carl Tomlinson**
Finance Manager

The report provides an update on the 2016 staff survey results and therefore does not result in any direct financial implications. However, the planned action outlined in the report will have to be met within existing budgets.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Dr. Paul Field**
Senior Governance Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer

This report is for noting and does not raise any legal implications in its recommendations. Any changes to employment conditions that may be considered in due course will have to follow established policies relating to consultation.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**
Community Development and Equalities Team

The corporate staff forums are working closely with HR and OD to assess any potential diversity and equality implications. They have access to the staff survey responses and can filter by protected characteristic. No implications have been identified at this stage.

9. Appendices to the report

No appendices attached.

Report Author: Wendy Allen,
Manager People and Organisational developmentHR,OD and Transformation