



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

Item 18/26

MEETING	Finance & Governance Committee
DATE OF MEETING	31 July 2018
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Staff Engagement Survey 2018
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For information
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>As Members may be aware, the Service conducted its second staff engagement survey during February of this year to enable comparisons against the previous year.</p> <p>The survey has indicated a very positive direction, reflecting the improvements we have made since the last survey. Officers have established a clear programme of communicating these results and engaged staff in delivering improvement actions at both a corporate and specifically tailored departmental level. These actions are monitored through our performance management arrangements.</p>
RISK ASSESSMENT	Failure to ensure an engaged workforce may impact on staff retention and morale which in turn may undermine the performance of the Service and wider governance arrangements.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None for the purposes of this report
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the key findings of the staff engagement survey conducted in February 2018</li> </ol>

BACKGROUND PAPERS	Results from the Eyes and Ears Staff Engagement Survey 2018, available from Democratic Services if required.
APPENDICES	None
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Service's continued commitment to employee engagement, the 'eyes and ears' staff engagement survey was conducted for a second year between 29 January and 2 March 2018. This has provided a useful measure of our direction of travel since the last staff survey.
- 1.2 To maintain consistency, the same independent company was commissioned to conduct the survey on our behalf. This has enabled us to maintain confidentiality of the process for our staff and make comparisons from last year's results, as well as providing us with a valuable benchmarking opportunity across local government.
- 1.3 The survey was supported by a significant internal communications campaign, encouraging staff to get involved. This started with promoting the progress made against the improvements agreed from last year's survey. The communications campaign included the:
  - Chief Fire Officer reminding staff in his video message
  - Articles in the Weekly Update and on the Intranet;
  - Promotion at Leadership Forums
  - Flyers sent to all workplaces
  - Frequently asked questions published
  - Reminders included in payslips

Staff received the survey link by email as well as reminder emails during the survey. They were engaged through their department heads and participation in the eyes and ears engagement forum. Staff were able to complete the survey electronically from any device with an internet connection, at work or at home.

- 1.4 The results were independently collated and analysed by the company and were presented to Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Heads of Department at the end of March 2018. The results have been benchmarked against other local authorities who conduct similar surveys. The findings have also been broken down to both a corporate and departmental level. This has enabled a targeted analysis to identify more specifically focused improvement actions. Managers have communicated to their teams what these results mean and have engaged them in developing local solutions to address the key areas for improvement within their departments.

## 2. Key Findings

- 2.1 The response rate increased from 42% in 2017 to 60% in 2018 and likewise our levels of engagement have improved from 66% in 2017 to 70% in 2018. The results show significant positive organisational attributes and these are a good reflection

on the current position for the Service, and recognition of the work that has been put in place since the last survey.

## 2.2 Areas to celebrate

- Since 2017 engagement has improved and a third of attitudinal questions are notably higher than 12 months ago
- Engagement has stayed the same or improved and there has been strong improvement in central departments
- 80% of staff are proud to work for the Service and would speak positively about it
- More individuals are openly recognising that the Service cares about their safety and wellbeing
- There have been some significant improvements regarding attitudes to innovation and collaborative working within the Service
- An increasing number of colleagues are believing action will be taken following on from the survey.

## 2.3 Areas for continued focus

2.3.1 As would be expected for any organisation, particularly one that has seen significant change as a relatively new Service, there are key areas of focus determined by the independent company:

- **ensure staff at all levels are clear on what the Service's plans are for the future and understands the role they must play in these; are kept well informed about decisions affecting them.**

Delivery teams for People Service, Service Support and Community Safety have already been established to enable decision making at the right level. These teams also consider staff suggestions, ensuring a systematic and transparent feedback loop. A presentation has been delivered to the Leadership Forum and to the Station Managers Leadership programme covering Corporate Governance. It is expected that managers cascade this to their teams to improve understanding of our vision and corporate governance arrangements. Information is also promoted and available on CONNECT, the staff intranet and a robust internal engagement plan is monitored quarterly to ensure a clear and co-ordinated approach.

- **work with individuals and staff in the on-call staff group to understand the challenges they face in gaining a better work/life balance and work together to design potential solutions**

Working groups have been established with on-call staff as part of the on-call review programme and implementation of the salary scheme. Work life balance will be a focus area for one of these groups.

- **create a more consistent approach for promotion and career progression and ensure that everyone is aware of the learning available to all areas of the Service**

Managers have been consulted on their views for the future of promotion processes, recognising the frustrations some are experiencing as a result of aligning processes. As part of our emerging approach to talent management, changes to the promotion process have included role hopping. The development pathway for corporate staff has also been published, providing clarity on the opportunities available to staff. Further work is being progressed to improve and maximise the use of the e-learning platform and plans are in place to strengthen our approach to strategic workforce planning, with stronger links to workforce transformation.

- **review senior leader's workplace visits and speak with staff to see what they would like from them**

The results from the eyes and ears survey have already been taken to the staff eyes and ears feedback forum, providing the opportunity for staff to give their views on potential solutions. Changes will be introduced to enable SLT to make informal workplace visits throughout the year, with Area Management teams responsible for delivering the key corporate messages at more regular meetings. This will also include area based question time sessions to be able to better coordinate local issues, outside of the phone in sessions with the Chief Fire Officer.

### **3. Delivering the improvements**

- 3.1 The Service is committed to seeing a difference from the survey and ensuring that there is real value in the actions we take to improve. All the key issues identified in the survey have actions identified in the Service Delivery Plan. This plan flows from the Community Safety Plan and drives Service performance at departmental and station level.
- 3.2 A clear programme of support has been established for managers to communicate and engage with their staff. There are clear timescales around the process and actions to include within departmental action plans. Focussed workshops will also be carried out with teams where results are falling below the Service averages.

- 3.3 In addition, the Service has established a Leadership Forum whereby SLT and Heads of departments meet every month to corporately monitor and coordinate our response to these important issues. Feedback is being reported back to staff on a quarterly basis and at a local level monthly through departmental and team meetings where specific local action is necessary.

#### **4. Summary and Key Points**

- 4.1 It is pleasing to note that there are many positive results arising from the feedback. Whilst many improvements are already in place or being progressed, there are several clear areas for improvement to be delivered over this year. The Service has established a clear programme of developing and delivering actions at corporate and departmental level.

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