

**The Highland Council**  
**Resources Committee – 26 August 2015**

Agenda Item	<b>8</b>
Report No	<b>RES/ 60/15</b>

**Employee Survey 2015**

**Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development**

**Summary**

The paper provides a brief summary of the results of Highland Council's 7<sup>th</sup> Employee Survey and outlines the proposals for reporting the results and addressing areas for further improvement.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Since 2000, Highland Council has conducted an Employee Survey approximately every 2 ½ years. It is undertaken by an independent survey provider who issues the surveys, receives the responses, analyses the results and provides an independent report.

The Survey was sent to every member of staff:

- An electronic questionnaire to all Highland Council staff with e-mail accounts including teachers
- A paper survey with a reply paid envelope to all other staff. The paper surveys were addressed to each individual and sent to their workplace. Staff without a Highland Council e-mail were also given the option to complete on-line by logging on to a secure website using their own devices.

Staff were given time to complete the questionnaire during working time.

BMG are the survey provider for the 2015 survey and were chosen through a process of competitive quotations.

- 1.2 The 7<sup>th</sup> Employee Survey was conducted in the week 20 – 27 April 2015 and was finally closed on 22 May. There was a total of 3831 responses giving an overall response rate of 36%, which is an increase of 3% points since the survey in 2012.
- 1.3 BMG report that, on this response rate, it is a highly robust dataset with 95% confidence that the responses are representative of those that would have been given by all employees had each completed a questionnaire to within +/-1.27%.
- 1.4 This paper provides a brief outline of some of the key findings. A more detailed analysis is provided in the final report from BMG - [Employee Survey 2015 Final Report](#).

## **2. Results**

- 2.1 The overall picture is extremely encouraging with a positive trend across most factors increasing the improvements demonstrated in 2012. Overall job satisfaction is 70% which is an increase of 3% since 2012 and 7% since the first survey. This is 2% above the public sector benchmark.
- 2.2 There are also increasing high levels of satisfaction with factors such as:
- Interesting work (84%) (+3% since 2012)
  - Approachable line manager (80%) (+4%)
  - Supportive colleagues (78%) (+4%)
  - Line manager knows his/her job (78%) (+5%)

79% of staff support the Council's organisational values.

- 2.3 The results have been analysed by Service and by sections within the Services. Comparison with previous Employee Surveys for these figures is not possible as Services have changed and this is the first survey we have identified responses to Head of Service/section level. However, this level of analysis does allow Services to focus on more specific data on staff views.

## **3. Satisfaction with job factors**

- 3.1 Overall satisfaction with many job factors has remained high with at least a 4% increase in satisfaction across most aspects of employment.

It is also very encouraging that the most significant increases have been in some of the lower scoring factors.

The proportion of staff expressing satisfaction with:

- Job security: 65% (+7%)
  - Feedback on your performance: 49% (+7%)
  - Morale in the workplace: 46% (+6%)
  - Receiving praise for good work: 50% (+6%)
  - Receiving guidance and support at work: 55% (+6%)
  - Working for a successful organisation: 50% (+7%)
  - Feeling valued and recognised: 51% (+7%)
- 3.2 Only two job factors remained at the same level of satisfaction as 2012. The proportion of staff stating that they are satisfied with:
- Working hours (76%)
  - Having sufficient resources to do your job (43%)

There was no decrease in satisfaction with any job factors.

## **4. Views of Line Management and Senior Management**

### **4.1 Line Management**

Views of line managers show a positive trend across all factors and include the highest scoring responses in the survey. 80% agreed that their line manager was approachable and 78% agreed that their line manager knew their job.

The largest increases in positive views of line managers are generally in areas concerned with listening and supporting staff:

- Listens to my ideas and suggestions: 68% (+7%)
- Appreciates the pressure I come under in my job: 66% (+9%)
- Acts on my ideas and suggestions: 52% (+9%)
- Does something about the pressure I come under in my job: 48% (+6%)
- Is committed to the Council: 70% (+6%)

### **4.2 Senior Management**

Views of senior managers still score lower than views of line managers but again it is very encouraging to see a positive trend across all factors, with some showing a significant increase.

- Senior managers keep employees informed of their views and decisions: 45% (+8%)
- I have confidence in the Senior Managers in my Service: 43% (+8%)

The proportion of staff disagreeing with the statement that senior managers are not interested in listening to staff opinion (40%) remains the same as 2012 and is also the same as the public sector benchmark. However, the number agreeing with the statement has dropped 2% to 27%.

## **5. Information and communications**

5.1 Views on communications in the Council have generally improved in each survey since 2000 with now 54% (+2%) of staff saying that they are fully or fairly well informed about the Council as a whole and 66% (+6%) about the Service they work in. This reflects the effort made to maintain a high level of communication with staff.

5.2 E-mail remains the most popular method of receiving information (53%), with personal contact from the line manager (36%) and face-to-face team briefings (30%). It is reassuring therefore, that there has been an increase in staff reporting that these methods are currently how they receive information.

There has also been a 9% increase (44%) in staff saying they receive Service newsletters. Only 13% of staff identify this as a preferred method of receiving information, but the increase in newsletters may have contributed to the high proportion of staff who feel well informed about their Service.

## **6. Training and Performance Improvement**

6.1 Views on training have improved since the last survey with an increase of 5%-7% across the questions. However, it is still only just over half of staff who feel that they receive training relevant to their current job (53%) and the right

amount of training to do their job well (52%). The proportion of staff stating that they receive training for career development, whilst improving, still remains lower at 37%.

- 6.2 Only 50% of staff state that they have received induction training, the same level as 2012. 62% of staff say that they have received an Employee Review (ERD) but this figure reduces to 52% when asked if they have received one in the last 12 months. This is well below the public sector benchmark of 74%.

## **7. Workload and Stress**

- 7.1 A number of questions were included in the survey exploring workloads and the level of stress experienced during work.

- 7.2 26% of employees stated that they have too much work to do. This is in line with results from 2012 (25%) and similar to levels reported in 2002.

- 7.3 The proportion of people saying that they experience high or above average levels of stress at work has shown a slight increase and is now 44% (+1%). However, of this figure, 15% say they experience a high level of stress which is a slight decrease from that reported in 2012.

The highest cause of stress remains 'too much work' (44%) (+4%) followed by 'lack of resources to do your job' (39%) (+4%) and 'too much bureaucracy' (38%) (+4%). Other factors have remained broadly the same since 2012 other than 'dealing with aggressive members of the public' which has dropped by 4% to 11%.

## **8. Change**

- 8.1 Staff perception of the management of change in the Council has consistently been a lower scoring area across all the surveys. Whilst this is still the case, it is very encouraging to see that there is a positive trend across all factors, with some showing significant improvements since 2012.

- I understand the need for change: 77% (+8%)
- I support the need for change: 56% (+8%)
- The reasons for change are well communicated to me: 32% (+5%)
- Staff are consulted on management decisions that affect them and their work: 28% (+6%)
- Change here is well managed: 25% (+6%)

However, these figures are still below the public sector benchmark.

## **9. Indexes**

- 9.1 As part of the survey analysis we requested BMG to analyse sets of questions that measured employees views in the following areas;
- Employee engagement
  - Health & wellbeing

- Fairer Highland

9.2 The index score for the Council as a whole presents a positive picture. The proportion of staff reporting positively against the:

- Employee engagement index – 59%
- Health & Wellbeing index – 55%
- Fairer Highland index – 71%

The survey also asked staff about whether the Council meets the Fairer Highland commitment - there is an organisational culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. 57% of staff agreed that the Council was meeting this commitment which was a significant increase of 13% on views expressed in 2012.

Each of these indexes has also been analysed for each Service and details of this and the questions used to create the index score are in the [Employee Survey 2015 Final Report](#).

## **10. Areas for Improvement**

10.1 Whilst the results of the Employee Survey are extremely encouraging there are still areas for improvement.

BMG's analysis has identified that staff rate 'being valued and recognised for the work they do' and 'morale in the work place' of high importance but satisfaction levels are lower for these than with other aspects of employment in the Council. Although, satisfaction with these aspects is higher than the public sector benchmark, it still indicates where improvement should be focused. Continuing to stress the importance of induction, employee review and training for all staff should contribute to improvement in these areas.

The results also demonstrate that there is still work to do in a number of areas to increase confidence in the change process and to improve how change is managed.

Finally, the Council's emphasis on creating mentally healthy workplaces needs to be maintained by building on good management practice, managing workload and minimising causes of stress.

## **11. Next Steps**

11.1 A high level summary of the results has been presented to staff through the Council's staff newsletter, In Brief.

11.2 Directors and Heads of Service have received the detailed breakdown of all the responses for their Service and sections and will have a presentation from BMG on 17 September 2015.

11.3 The Employee Survey 2015 Final Report will be available to all staff on the intranet.

- 11.4 Services will communicate their Service results to their staff and involve them in addressing areas of improvement.
- 11.5 A response to the results, which will address areas for further improvement, will be agreed with the Staff Partnership Forum and reported for approval to Resources Committee on 26 November 2015. Services will also work with their staff to agree an action plan for each Service, which will be reported to the relevant strategic committee.

## **12. Implications**

### 12.1 Gaelic

56% of staff state that they are supportive of the Council's promotion of the Gaelic language and culture; 3% speak conversational Gaelic and 10% basic Gaelic. The Gaelic Development Manager will deliver a more detailed survey of staff's Gaelic abilities and needs later this year.

### 12.2 Equalities

Responses to the questions in the survey are analysed by most of the protected characteristics and the data will be examined to identify whether there are any specific issues to be addressed.

### 12.3 Other

There are no risk, resource, legal, climate change, carbon clever or rural implications from this report.

## **13. Recommendations**

The Resources Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the results of the 2015 Employee Survey
- b) Note the plans for reporting the results
- c) Note that a response to the results, addressing the areas for further improvement, will be reported to Resources Committee in November and to specific service committees early in 2016

Designation: Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development

Date: 7 August 2015

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Background Papers: [Employee Survey 2015 Final Report](#)