

Report to: Finance, Resources and Corporate Committee

Date: 05 April 2022

Subject: **Staff Engagement Update**

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Combined Authority's approach to staff engagement, and progress to date following the last staff survey.

2. Information

Staff engagement within the Combined Authority

- 2.1 The Combined Authority recognise that staff engagement is key to having a happy, motivated and productive workforce.
- 2.2 It is essential that we have effective and inclusive staff engagement to help us continually improve the work culture, reduce staff turnover, increase productivity and promote good health and wellbeing for individuals within the organisation.
- 2.3 We want staff to feel enthusiastic about the Combined Authority, have a sense of belonging, and be afforded flexibility in order to help us deliver our organisational objectives.
- 2.4 The Combined Authority offer a number of different engagement opportunities for staff to get involved in helping to shape the organisation, encourage

teamwork and the sharing of ideas, and get a clear understanding of the things that matter to staff.

- 2.5 A number of formal and informal mechanisms exist, giving staff a wide range of opportunities to get involved in a way that best suits their individual preferences. These include, but are not limited to:
- The Employee Engagement Panel provides a permanent staff group, who can represent staff interests across the organisation and provide a forum for genuine two-way dialogue between staff and senior management. This group acts as a forum for collecting wider information and feedback from staff across all parts of the organisation and provides a decision-making forum for some issues which impact upon staff, or which staff have a particular interest in. Membership is representative as far as possible, of the workforce and is sought on a voluntary basis. There is dedicated space for the Panel on the staff Intranet and all staff are invited to raise suggestions or ideas via a feedback form or direct contact with the Panel.
 - All Staff Engagement Events are held on a regular basis and recorded to allow equality of access to staff who are unable to attend at the time. These allow the organisation to communicate key messages, provide updates, and seek opinion and suggestions.
 - There are a number of very active Staff Networks that give staff the opportunity to shape the culture and behaviours within the organisation and enhance our culture of inclusivity such as: The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff network group (Embrace), a Gender Equality Group, an LGBTQIA+ group (Proud@WYCA), and the Disability Inclusion Staff Network Group (WeCAN).
 - The Combined Authority seek staff feedback and ideas via an annual Staff Survey, following which an action plan will be drawn up seeking to further improve the staff experience.
 - The Combined Authority work closely with our Trade Union colleagues to help shape the direction of travel and ensure that members voices are represented within key areas of the business. Trade Union colleagues regularly update their members on progress and offer opportunities to feed back and be part of a collective staff voice.
 - Staff workshops and feedback sessions are regularly held within Directorates to seek more in-depth views and communicate key messages, for example, following the publishing of staff survey results.
 - Your Voice Engagement Hub seeks to encourage staff to complete surveys, participate in discussion forums and speak to members of the Consultation and Engagement team around proposed initiatives.
 - Regular Team Meetings, Staff Appraisals and 1-2-1's with managers support opportunities for information to be cascaded and feedback captured, and to encourage collaboration and support staff wellbeing.

- Special interest topics and events are held on a thematic basis to allow staff to access information about topics that they may find interesting, and meet staff and partners that they might not necessarily come into contact with through day to day activity. For example, in March a session was held and all staff were invited to find out more about charitable support at the Combined Authority. All staff are able to access 3 days of paid leave to do some volunteering under the Combined Authority Terms and Conditions, and the Combined Authority recently announced this year's nominated charities (Simon on the Streets and Yorkshire Air Ambulance) and encouraged staff to get involved.
- There are a number of health and wellbeing schemes such as the Mental Health First Aiders network, Employee Assistance Programme, Carers Wellbeing Programme and Financial Wellbeing that are designed to support staff with issues both inside and outside of work. These provide opportunities for staff to seek support and guidance from colleagues or professional support agencies and partners and the Combined Authority actively encourage staff to access support where needed, and feedback to their managers where reasonable adjustment and support might positively impact on their work experience.

Findings from the staff survey

- 2.6 461 Members of staff (65%) completed the most recent all-staff survey. The results were independently assessed and the results compiled.
- 2.7 This was a confidential survey to find out how people feel about working for the organisation and things that we can do to continually improve the staff experience.
- 2.8 The questions that received the highest positive response levels include those on pride in work done by the individual, enjoyment of their role, the courteous and professional attitude of their colleagues, and that they are supported to work flexibly.
- 2.9 In areas of the staff survey that we would like to improve, it can be seen to be more towards the extrinsic factors, those things that are the work situation external to the role tasks of the individual. Corporate processes, communication from senior management, understanding what others in the organisation do, and how corporate decisions are made. There are opportunities for us to look further towards opportunities for progression and perceived value of the team's role in the wider organisation
- 2.10 There is a majority who identified as understanding the role of the Mayor, and their functions / powers, and how an individual's role supports their priorities / pledges.

- 2.11 The results of the HSE Stress Survey, recently carried out by UNISON have also been analysed and have been published by UNISON and this was taken into account in our resulting actions and improvement plan.
- 2.12 We know that the last 24 months have been particularly challenging, with unprecedented changes in the organisation alongside the pandemic. We are committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff and we continue to work with UNISON to identify and address issues.
- 2.13 This includes taking a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying or harassment, and a commitment to becoming a beacon for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 2.14 We take the results of both these surveys extremely seriously and a series of follow-up discussions have taken place in order to look at next steps and developing an action plan to address the surveys.

Progress to date

- 2.15 Following analysis of the Staff Survey a number of actions have been taken in order to work with staff to identify areas for improvement and develop an improvement plan to address these areas.
- 2.16 The Employee Engagement Panel reviewed the results at their meeting on 15 December and prepared recommendations for our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Senior Management Team (SMT).
- 2.17 SLT and SMT then initiated a series of feedback sessions which took place at a team and directorate level to further discuss the results, recommendations and look at actions and priorities to address the survey results.
- 2.18 Feedback is currently being collated and an improvement plan compiled by the Corporate Planning and Performance Manager, who will seek advice and guidance from colleagues with specialist subject knowledge such as Human Resources, the Staff Networks and Employee Engagement Panel.
- 2.19 Ideas and feedback from Elected Members have been received at various Boards and Scrutiny Groups in terms of specific areas contained within the Staff Survey such as staff recruitment and retention and flexible working, and this will be incorporated and reflected within the Action Plan.
- 2.20 A draft high level 'One Page Guide' has been developed to aid wider discussion and on-going engagement with staff, as the improvement plan is finalised.
- 2.21 A communications plan will be developed to ensure that staff across the organisation are kept updated with progress ('you said, we listened') and provide further opportunities to give feedback.

- 2.22 We will continue to share progress with you and seek feedback at future FRCC meetings in order to strengthen our organisation for the future.
- 2.23 The improvement plan will focus on addressing feedback in all areas of the Staff Survey (as listed below), and form part of the overall approach to staff engagement going forward:
- My role
 - My team
 - Leadership
 - Our organisation
 - Our culture & identity
 - Our values & behaviours

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 There are no climate emergency implications arising directly from this report.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 One of our key objectives is to deliver our Inclusive Growth Framework in order to reduce inequalities in our communities. Inclusive growth and equality, diversity and inclusion will remain embedded throughout the action plan.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The Equality and Diversity aims of the organisation will be embedded throughout the action plan that is developed subsequently to this report and reported on at an annual basis.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Committee notes the update on the approach going forward, and progress to date, and considers the information provided.

11. Background Documents

11.1 There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Staff survey one page guide