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To: Personnel Committee

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Subject: 2019 Staff survey report

Classification: **Unrestricted**

SUMMARY: This report sets out the headline results from this year's staff survey, and the next steps for distribution and action-planning.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The new format KCC Staff Survey was introduced in 2018, giving us baseline data to monitor a set of indicators for the organisation across 13 themes.
- 1.2 The 2019 Staff Survey ran for a period of three weeks from 8 to 28 October.
- 1.3 All 8460 KCC staff had the opportunity to take part in the staff survey and 4,400 (52%) took part – an increase of 1% from 2018.
- 1.4 The staff survey results can be seen here:
<https://kentcountycouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/KNet/documentsmain/Staff%20Survey%202019.pdf>
- 1.5 This year's survey results show positive movement in all themes, with nine of those being statistically significant positive increases. The biggest positive increase is for Learning and Development.
- 1.6 In a change to last year and in response to feedback, Casual Relief and Sessional Staff (CRSS) were invited to participate in the survey and their returns are included in the response rate figures. However, because casual staff are managed differently and the purpose of producing reports is to support appropriate action planning, the survey reports do not include the responses from CRSS. These will be reported on separately.
- 1.7 The 'free topic' question was focussed on carers this year. This is reported in the main KCC report (the statements that all KCC staff could answer) and the characteristics report (statements that only carers responded to).

2. 2019 results against 2018 actions

2.1 This year's responses show statistically significant increases in the positive responses for most of the areas of focus that formed the 2018 CMT and whole KCC action plan:

- Learning, development and career opportunities
- Wellbeing and work/life balance
- Leadership and managing change
- Employee voice: Innovation, ideas and the opportunity to challenge
- Feeling valued by the wider organisation
- Strengthened manager conversations

2.2 Another area of focus over the last year has been our **employee package**. This has been promoted through our corporate communication channels and via discussions at management meetings and staff forums. The result for employee satisfaction with the total employee package has seen a slight decrease in positive responses (-0.4%). This is not a statistically significant change; however, it is an area we will continue to focus on throughout the year in our action planning. It may be that raising awareness has raised expectation in the context of personal experience, so it will be important to continue to focus on effective development of the manager-led conversations.

3. Highlights from our preview action plan

3.1 Looking across all 13 themes of the survey, there are indicators throughout that better conversations are happening. Directorates have done a considerable amount of work on the importance of the manager and the role of the first line manager and the benefits of this are showing in the results.

3.2 In correlation with the 2018 action plan, a number of statements that had the lowest positive results within their section last year have seen the biggest increases in positive responses this year:

My Work

While still an area for improvement, staff feel more involved in the decisions that affect their work. There has also been a significant increase in positive responses for staff feeling able to prioritise and complete their work in the time expected.

Resources and Workload

Positive responses about achieving a good work/life balance and making use of flexible working opportunities have also both significantly increased.

Learning and Development

All four statements in this section have seen a significant increase in positive responses.

It is worth noting that the statement 'There are opportunities for me to develop my career within KCC' had the lowest percentage of positive responses last year. There has been targeted communications and engagement activity over the last year, encouraging colleagues to take responsibility for their career development and asking managers to make it a regular topic of conversation. While this remains an area with room for improvement, positive responses against this statement have increased more than any other statement in the section.

My Team

This remains an area of very high positive responses and, notably, the statements around innovation and collaboration have seen a significant increase.

My Manager

All 13 statements in the 'My Manager' section have seen a significant increase in positive responses.

The biggest increase is for 'I feel empowered by my manager to do my job' and this ties in with the earlier statement about staff feeling more involved in the decisions that affect their work.

This section also shows the link between better manager conversations and the increase in positivity about career development. The statement 'My manager helps me identify what I need to do to develop my career in KCC' increased positive responses by 4.1%.

Also, in this section are the statements to monitor our approach to managing performance through regular feedback and conversations. The increase against these statements is again evidence that better conversations are happening.

Inclusion and Fair Treatment

Most notable in this section is the increase for the statement 'I feel valued for the work I do'. The increase closes the gap between feeling valued by your line manager and feeling valued by KCC.

My wellbeing

Positive responses have increased against the statements in this section that evidence KCC cares about staff i.e. staff are able to discuss any issues and believe positive action will be taken.

As a consequence, the biggest increase in this section is against 'I believe that KCC cares about the wellbeing of its staff'. It remains the statement with the least positive responses in this section but has increased by 5.3%

Organisational culture

The responses this year show that staff feel more able to challenge the status quo and to try new ideas. There is also a significant increase in positive

responses to the statement 'I feel able to challenge inappropriate behaviour in the workplace'.

Organisational Objective and Purpose

The responses under this theme have remained static with no significant change reported. The statements in this section do have some bigger percentages of 'neither' responses, suggesting that there is still opportunity to strengthen staff understanding of and connection to broader objectives.

The lack of movement could also be symptomatic of the focus on line manager relationships over the last year

Leadership and managing change

Seven out of the nine statements have seen a statistical increase in positive responses, showing incremental change.

However, the responses this year suggest that connection to senior leadership and decision-making beyond immediate team continues to be an area to improve.

The percentages of 'neither' responses are high compared to other areas, suggesting that this feedback is about visibility of, and access to, senior leadership.

Pay and benefits

There has been a significant increase in the statement 'I feel appropriately paid for the job that I do'.

As noted above, there has been a slight decrease for both statements about employee package and TCP although neither are statistically significant.

Employee engagement

The statements in this section show that the gap has marginally closed between staff pride and attachment to KCC and their pride/ attachment to their service.

Overall, employee engagement has increased by 2.9%, which reflects an improvement in the lived experience of staff.

My plans for the future

All statements have significantly increased, showing that fewer staff currently want or have plans to leave KCC.

Caring responsibilities

This was a new set of statements introduced this year, following a discussion at CMT, so there are no comparators with last year.

- 3.3 The responses show that there is an opportunity with this year's action plan to raise awareness of our support for employees who are carers.

3.4 The statements that were asked of those who identify as being a carer were included last year as part of the 'About you' questions. As with last year, these will be reported on separately as part of the characteristics report.

4. 2019/20 action plan priorities

4.1 This year's report indicates that focus should remain on those areas identified last year as they continue to represent the areas with opportunity to improve:

- Professional and career development
- Link to decision making at a local level
- Connection to broader decision making and understanding of our political environment
- Strengthened manager conversations
- Line of sight between individuals and strategic objectives
- Support for innovation and challenge
- TCP
- Connection to senior leadership

4.2 There is already activity underway to explore awareness of last year's changes to TCP and this will make use of 2019 staff survey reports to effectively target additional engagement activity and support.

4.3 In addition to the topic areas outlined above we will also be developing several collaborative networks to build on the activity of the Middle Manager/Your Voice Group (that we nickname the T200). Business Change and technology adoption will be a central feature of our engagement work and will be targeted specifically to engage our customer-facing workforce to ensure they are supported to make effective use of the tools at our disposal.

4.4 The programme plan detailing timelines, actions and activities is being developed now that Divisional and Service Level data has been cascaded.

5. Ongoing actions

5.1 Directorate and divisional reports were shared with managers before the Christmas break.

5.2 Service-level reports were issued from week commencing 06 January. Characteristic reports at whole-KCC and directorate level are due to be complete by early February.

5.3 Directorate action planning to support conversations in each service is underway. From March 2020 we will share Directorate Planning with staff using engagement channels to connect what staff have told us with what action we have taken.

5.4 The second phase of staff engagement and communication activities regarding the whole KCC data and actions will be shared with staff early in

February and communication will be ongoing throughout the year to evidence action against key indicators.

5.5 Manager toolkits have already been shared alongside the data sets to support action planning. In addition, we are developing a new hub on KNet for managers and staff to ensure information, advice, guidance and development support are collated, easy to find and in the long term we hope this will be interactive to support collaboration. The core work will be ready to launch for the start of objective setting late in March.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Personnel Committee are invited to discuss and note the staff survey outcomes and the report including the areas of focus for development of the 2019/20 corporate action plan.

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