

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 27 MARCH 2019
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION
AUTHOR: GRAEME WORRALL

SUBJECT: STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY CORPORATE
ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update to Members on progress regarding the corporate action plan developed following the 2017 staff survey.

Recommended: That

[1] Members note the contents of the report.

Background

2. Following the 2017 Staff Engagement Survey, officers undertook an exercise to solicit feedback from across the organisation to determine if the results mirrored the experiences of staff and to inform the development of action planning to resolve key issues.
3. This resulted in the development of both local action plans and a corporate action plan to address the findings of the staff engagement survey. Local action plans are specific to each particular fire station or department, with actions progressed locally via Station Managers or Service Delivery Managers and reported to the Staff Engagement Group, which consists of members of Service Management Team, Service Delivery Managers and On-Call Support Officers.
4. Progress against the corporate action plan is regularly monitored at meetings of the Staff Engagement Group. It was also agreed that progress against the corporate action plan would also be reported to Staffing Committee on a six-monthly basis. This is the second such update, following on from the previous report to the October 2018 meeting of the Committee.

Information

5. The corporate action plan, available for staff to view on the Service's intranet, is structured into four overarching themes; Recognition and Feeling Valued; Management Accessibility and Visibility; Communication and Change; and

Common Sense Principles. Progress highlighted at the previous meeting is outlined below:

6. Recognition and Feeling Valued

- a. The format of the STAR Awards has been redesigned to enhance the feeling of recognition; with the reintroduction of categories to recognise excellence in a number of areas, moving the event to night-time and providing attendees with the option of bringing guests. The nomination window for the 2019 STAR Awards has already been opened to enable individuals to nominate their colleagues in a timely way.
- b. The retirement policy has been amended to enable retirees to request a buffet lunch and/or the attendance of a Principal Officer to deliver a retirement presentation to recognise their service.
- c. A recognition section has been introduced into the Green Bulletin staff newsletter, which enables staff to recognise the good work undertaken by colleagues.

7. Management Accessibility and Visibility

- a. Principal officer video blogs have been introduced to provide updates to staff and improve communication. These are scheduled to be issued on a quarterly basis.
- b. The Chief Fire Officer has commenced a programme of visits to each team across the organisation to engage with staff. In addition, the approach to staff consultation regarding the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan has been revised.

8. Communication and Change

- a. A review of content on electronic learning platforms has been undertaken to ensure that it reflects current practices and procedures.

9. Common Sense Principles

- a. Changes to the requirements of staff to hold Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) qualifications in relation to eligibility to enter a promotion board process were made following staff feedback. This has meant that the minimum requirement to enter a process is for a candidate to possess the IFE Operations Paper. However, in recognising the benefit of having a full qualification, candidates with the full qualification are able to bypass the requirement to undertake written assessments as part of the process.
- b. To help reduce the number of temporary positions across the organisation, two promotion boards were held during Spring and Autumn 2018, while a significant number of firefighters who were in temporary

positions following the mass redeployment process in 2016 were offered permanent postings.

Additional Progress

10. The following section outlines the further progress since the last update to Members.
11. Recognition and Feeling Valued
 - a. Changes to the policy for retirement gifts have now come into effect. The new policy provides retirees with more flexibility as to how they would like their retirement to be recognised. Four retirement 'packages' have been introduced, based upon length of service of the individual.
 - b. Within each package, in addition to a standard framed certificate and silver lapel pin, retirees are able to select a gift or gifts of their choice up to a maximum amount of credit, again dependant on length of service ranging from under 20 years (maximum value of £205) to 30 years and over (maximum value of £400).
 - c. In order to improve the timeliness of recognising good performance, a series of local recognition budgets were introduced in December 2018. Under the initiative, each Service Delivery Manager (covering Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington) and the respective heads of department for Prevention, Protection and Organisational Performance and Operational Policy and Assurance have each been provided with a £1,000 budget and an associated corporate credit card to enable the quick recognition of good performance by staff.
 - d. Human resources are currently determining a preferred training provider to extend the provision of mindfulness training across the Service in order to promote the mental health and wellbeing of staff.
12. Management Accessibility and Visibility
 - a. The programme of Chief Fire Officer visits to all teams has nearly concluded, with the CFO visiting support staff teams over the next couple of weeks. Feedback from all of these visits, as well as over 70 visits conducted to support the draft annual action plan consultation, is being compiled into a report for consideration by Members.
 - b. In addition, future programmes of visits for the CFO and Assistant Chief Fire Officers are to be scheduled in to cover future years, as well as wider Service Management Team (SMT) visits to cover the staff consultation on the next draft Integrated Risk Management Plan.

13. Communication and Change

- a. A review of internal communication methods has been undertaken by the joint corporate communications team, which incorporated a survey of staff to solicit feedback. The recommendations from this review are now subject to a further consultation with staff to ensure that they agree with the recommendations prior to their implementation.
- b. A new “Who Do I Turn To” campaign was launched during anti-bullying week. This involved a high-profile awareness campaign using posters and internal communication channels, as well as workshops available for managers to help identify and manage harassment and dignity at work issues. A new section has also been introduced on the Service’s intranet, with a visual banner display on the homepage itself. This section provides for a single easily accessible directory of information, guidance and support for staff regarding the promotion of health and wellbeing, personal health and safety and dignity at work issues.

14. Common Sense Principles

- a. Several actions within the corporate action plan relate to the on-call duty system. These are being incorporated into a wider programme of change to improve the on-call duty system to assist in the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters.

15. Ahead of the launch of the next staff survey, scheduled for Summer 2019, a communications campaign and update newsletter will be delivered to provide information to staff on the changes made as a result of the survey. This will enable staff to see how their feedback and opinions have directly led to changes in a number of areas across the organisation.

Financial Implications

16. Several actions that have been progressed thus far have implications regarding tax liabilities, e.g. in the provision of retirement gifts, local recognition budgets. Following discussions with the Treasurer and Finance, to avoid the individual retiree or members of staff bearing personal liability for the tax due, a PAYE Settlement Agreement (PSA) has been entered into with HMRC. The PSA enables the Service to bear the tax liability instead of the individuals.

Legal Implications

17. None

Equality and Diversity Implications

18. None

Environmental Implications

19. None

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: STAFF SURVEY CORPORATE ACTION PLAN
UPDATE REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE STAFING COMMITTEE ON 31 OCTOBER
2018**