

Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 29 January 2020

Report Title

Employee Opinion Survey 2019

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Ward(s) Affected

None

Report Summary

This report provides an overview of the outcomes of the Employee Opinion Survey that took place in the summer of 2019 and key actions identified.

Recommendations

1. OSMB are asked to note the Employee Survey results, particularly in relation to improvements made since the 2017 survey.
2. OSMB are asked to note next steps, including further work to explore results and co-create action plans to address areas for improvement (Corporately and within Directorates)

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Employee Opinion Survey 2019 Summary Results Presentation

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Employee Opinion Survey 2019

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council held its last full employee opinion survey in 2017 and BMG Research were commissioned to run the Staff Survey in 2019. BMG met with representatives from the Council to gain greater knowledge of the organisation and the objectives of the staff survey.
- 1.2 The previous questionnaire was used to enable the Council to benchmark and track progress against specific areas. In addition, 32 questions were identified that provided a direct comparator to surveys conducted by BMG with other Local Authorities.
- 1.3 The Survey was launched across the Council in June 2019. All 4,684 staff were given the opportunity to complete the survey. A total of 3,001 email invites were sent to staff, with 1,831 responses completed (61% response rate). A further 1700 paper surveys were shared with frontline staff to complete. The overall response rate was 45%; 1% higher than the response rate in 2017.

Response rates by Directorate

Directorate	Sent	Received	Response rate
Adult Care and Housing	1138	406	36%
Assistant Chief Executive	226	141	62%
Children and Young People's Services	940	483	51%
Finance & Customer Services	471	289	61%
Regeneration & Environment	1907	414	22%
Prefer not to say/Not provided	n/a	367	n/a
Grand Total	4684	2100	45%

- 1.4 Following analysis of the responses, BMG delivered an initial presentation to the Senior Leadership Team on the 21st August 2019 which provided a headline summary of the results.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The previous Employee Opinion Survey from 2017 allowed 73 questions to be directly compared with the 2019 Survey Results. Overall the Council has seen significant improvements against 57 questions and no areas have seen a reduction in scores since 2017; a further 16 have not changed significantly since 2017.

Comparison with the Staff Survey 2017

- 2.2 The following table provides a summary of the indicators seeing the largest positive changes since 2017. The largest improvement since 2017 is in relation to staff being satisfied with their total benefits package. Further to that significantly more staff would tell people that the Council is a good place to work.

Measures most improved since 2017 (Top 10 shown)	2019	2017	% change
I am satisfied with my total benefits package (annual/flexi leave entitlement, pension, etc)	66%	46%	+20%
I would tell people that the Council is a good place to work	61%	50%	+11%
The Council has an open and honest culture	47%	37%	+10%
I have opportunities for career development within the Council	42%	32%	+10%
The Council is a good employer	65%	55%	+10%
I would be comfortable challenging unacceptable behaviour and practices	68%	59%	+9%
I feel valued and recognised for the job I do	53%	44%	+9%
Staff at the Council work together to achieve its priorities	52%	43%	+9%
I feel the Council supports my health and wellbeing	54%	46%	+8%
I get the learning and development I need to do my job well	64%	56%	+8%

Comparison with the BMG Local Authority Benchmark

- 2.3 Thirty two questions allowed direct comparison with BMG's Local Authority (LA) benchmark. The benchmark used for this analysis is made up of over 50 UK wide local authority organisations. Of the 32 questions, 18 were significantly above the LA benchmark and 10 in line. Only four areas were below other authorities.
- 2.4 The table below shows the top 8 questions that significantly exceed the BMG LA benchmark. The largest positive differences are that staff agree that their job makes good use of their skills and abilities, as well as the proportion of staff that have had a PDR in the last 12 months.

Measures most significantly above the BMG LA Benchmark	2019	LA Benchmark	% difference
In my job I make good use of my skills and abilities	86%	71%	+15%
Have you had a Performance and Development Review (PDR) in the last 12 months? % Yes	88%	73%	+15%
My manager provides feedback on my performance both good and bad	75%	63%	+12%
The Council has an open and honest culture	47%	36%	+11%
I understand the vision and priorities of the Council	75%	68%	+7%
I understand the need for change in the Council	86%	79%	+7%
I am satisfied with my total benefits package (annual/flexi leave entitlement, pension, etc)	66%	60%	+6%
I would tell people that the Council is a good place to work	61%	55%	+6%

- 2.5 As stated, only four questions were significantly below the BMG LA benchmark. The largest difference to the BMG benchmark is the number of staff who agree that communications between units/departments within the Council are good.

Measures most significantly below the BMG LA Benchmark	2019	LA Benchmark	% difference
I think communications between units/departments within the Council are good	21%	42%	-21%
Senior management are sufficiently visible	42%	48%	-6%
Overall I am satisfied with my current job	65%	69%	-4%
I am able to strike the right balance between my work and home life	64%	67%	-3%

Highest and lowest scoring responses

- 2.6 This section provides a summary of the highest and lowest scoring areas from the survey. Over nine in ten staff agree that they look for ways to do their job more efficiently, also nine in ten staff agree their manager trusts them to do their job properly, both have remained stable since 2017. Approaching nine in ten staff agree that their job makes good use of their skills and abilities.

Most positive scoring areas	2019 (% change from 2017)	2017	BMG LA Benchmark (% difference)
I look for ways to do my job more efficiently	94% (0%)	94%	No comparison
My manager trusts me to do my job properly	90% (0%)	90%	No comparison
I have a clear understanding of the standard of performance expected of me	89% (+1%)	88%	No comparison
In my job I make good use of my skills and abilities	86% (+4%)	82%	71% (+15)
I am subject to personal harassment at work in the form of unkind words and behaviour (Disagree)	86% (+3%)	83%	No comparison
I understand the need for change in the Council	86% (-1%)	87%	79% (+7%)

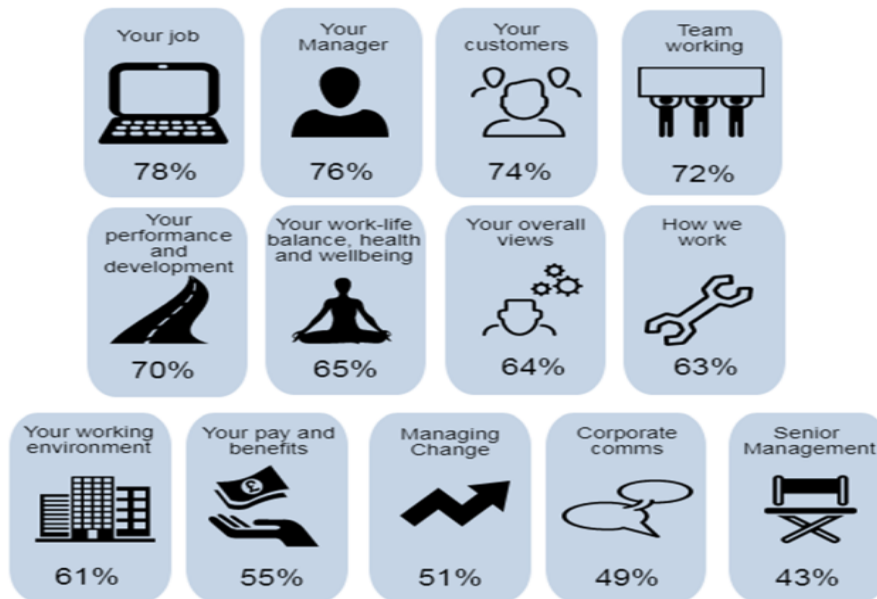
- 2.7 In terms of the lowest scoring indicators in the survey, 20% of staff agree that communications between units/department within the Council are good, with 37% that actively disagree with this. This has increased since 2017 but is some way behind the LA benchmark. Additionally, three in ten staff agree that they understand what other departments in the Council do, further highlighting opportunities to strengthen understanding of work across the Council.

- 2.8 Perceptions of senior management is also an area that offers opportunities for improvement; with 38% agreeing that Senior Management lead by example in demonstrating the Council's values and 39% of colleagues agreeing they have confidence in senior managers at the Council. However, both of these areas have improved since 2017 and are broadly aligned with the BMG Local Authority benchmark.

Least positive scoring areas	2019 (% change from 2017)	2017	BMG LA Benchmark (% difference)
I think communications between units/departments within the Council are good	21% (+3%)	18%	42% (-21%)
I understand what other departments in the Council do	30% (+1%)	29%	No comparison
I believe that action will be taken on the findings identified in this survey where possible	34% (0%)	34%	34% (0%)
Senior management lead by example, demonstrating the Council's values	38% (+3%)	35%	35% (+3%)
I have confidence in the senior managers of the Council	39% (+5%)	34%	40% (-1%)

Survey Overview by Themes

- 2.9 A simple and effective way to assess where the RMBC staff feel their organisation is performing well and not so well is to group the questions within themes and give each theme an index score.
- 2.10 The list below shows the 13 themes covered by the 2019 survey with the index score calculated as the average (mean) level of agreement to each question within that theme in the questionnaire.



3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The staff survey results demonstrate the positive progress across the Council since the last survey in 2017, with many areas having improved and showing a positive direction of travel. No areas have declined corporately compared with the 2017 Staff Survey. The workforce is increasingly engaged with the Council's vision, strategy and they understand where the Council is heading, including its challenges. Perceptions of openness and honesty are increasing and the Council has seen positive change in terms of observed behaviour and values. However, there are several areas for improvement and future action planning, both Council-wide and within Directorates.

Communications

- 3.2 Further exploratory work is being done within directorates and corporately to fully understand the issues, seek colleagues' views and to formulate action plans to improve inter-directorate and Council wide communications and corporate understanding.

Senior Management

- 3.3 There has been progress since 2017 around the perception of senior managers in the Council but this continues to be a priority area. The Rotherham Leader development programme will continue to build leadership and organisational change capability across the Council and staff workshops have been used to explore how senior managers can be used to improve communications within and across service areas.

Job Satisfaction & Work-life balance

- 3.4 Metrics in this area are slightly below the BMG LA benchmark. Responses show Directorates with greater job satisfaction generally have greater pressures. This needs to be explored further through focus groups in order to identify how practices in Directorates with more positive responses in these areas have achieved these results so that good practice can be shared across the Council. It is important that staff feel their work is worthwhile and a corporate volunteering initiative may help in this regard, something which has been identified through Working Together employee engagement events.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Regular consultation has taken place with Trade Unions. Results have been discussed corporately and within directorates.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Five further workshops were delivered during December with 54 colleagues from across the Council. These focused on improving communications, perception of senior management, job satisfaction and work life balance. The content of those discussions and suggestions will form the basis of a corporate action plan that will be shared in early 2020. Directorates are separately using their results to identify best practice and areas for improvement.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 None

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 None

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 Engaged employees, who have good quality jobs and are managed well are happier, healthier and more fulfilled both at work and in their home lives. Employees with higher engagement are more likely to drive productivity, provide better services and be innovative.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Clients of Adults and Children's Services will benefit from better quality services delivered by higher motivated employees.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no equalities or Human Rights Advice associated with the report.

11. Implications for Partners

11.1 There are no implications for partners.

12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 Failure to act on areas of low engagement could result in higher turnover, higher sickness absence and lower quality services to be delivered.

13. Accountable Officer(s)

Shokat Lal Assistant Chief Executive
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