# Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire & Rescue Authority

## Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

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| Meeting | **Service Leadership Team Meeting** | Agenda Item | **6b** |
| Meeting Date | 20th February 2018 | Report Number | 18-036 |
| Report Authors: | Kim Jennings<br>Mark Stagg | | |
| Presented By | Mark Stagg Director of Transformation | | |
| Subject | **Employee Engagement Survey** | | |
| Type of Report: | **Discussion / Consideration** | | |

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

i. Re-communicate 2017 results (Attachment) and activities delivered that were delivered to address these (Section 3)

**ii.** Develop an action plan for future engagement that ensures these activities are part of BAU.

**iii.** Decide on Implementation for 2018

**iv.** Align with Business Year (and business planning)

Options

    a) Repeat same survey (same question bank)

        o People Insight

        o Benefits:

            ▪ Recognised, consistent & familiar format for employees

            ▪ Partial consistency with some other FRS

            ▪ provides consistent data to benchmark against (measure progress)

            ▪ can be used to focus & develop the links to business plans, identified projects & targeted topics to increase levels of engagement and involvement

- o Challenges:
    - Appetite and fatigue

b) Change our method of surveying employees (example 1)

- o Pulse survey using less questions that are quick and targeted for employees to complete. Surveys to be sent out in quick bursts.
- o Benefits
    - can capture any evolving shifts in employee sentiment, to check cultural temperature
    - available from People Insights
- o Challenges
    - theme led
    - can be inconsistent in terms of respondents

c) Change our method of surveying employees (example 2)

- o National FRS survey
- o Benefits
    - will allow benchmarking across sector
    - consistent national question framework
    - may be perceived as more relevant
- o Challenges
    - not yet available

d) Change our method of surveying employees (example 3)

- o Piggy back onto existing National Survey (ORC – Civil Service)
    - Could be used as reference benchmark since public document (see attachment)
- o Benefits
    - may be more cost effective (>294k participants, 98 organisations)
    - can benchmark against wider public sector
    - running for 8 years so good exemplars to model
- o Challenges

- - - may be difficult to pitch to workforce and unions

    - - may inhibit move to national FRS survey once available

  e) Rest for a year

    - o Benefits

      - - allows new CFO/CEO to take stock

      - - mitigates against survey fatigue

    - o Challenges

      - - Loses impetus

      - - Loses source of data

## 2.    BACKGROUND

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service are committed to employee engagement and giving employees a voice.

Our annual survey was one method introduced to measure employee's attitudes and beliefs concerning key employee engagement issues. The question set was modified after the first survey but has been consistent over the last two years. Workforce engagement is widely accepted as a critical driver for organisational success.

Research of key benefits of increase engagement across employees have shown:

- reduced absence levels

- lower staff turnover

- higher performance and standards

## 2a    SURVEY RESULTS 2016/2017

The survey results for the year ending March 2017 showed the following highlights:

*(more detail in Section 5)*

- Response rate 42% (up 1%)

  - o Commentary – with still less than half of colleagues (less than 40% uniformed) the validity of whole workforce opinion is reduced

- Engagement score 68% (up 5%)

  - o Commentary - Significant uplift

- Of the 68 questions 33 showed an improvement of 3% or more, 6 a decline of 3% or more

- o Positive indicators of progress – plenty of headroom to aim for

- There are 11 section within the survey (breakdown of results below) of these 6 showed an improvement of 3% or more. Of the other 5 (-2, -1, +2, +2, 0)

Results by Section (Theme)

- Goal Clarity 68% (up 4%)

- My Job 61% (up 4%)

- Employee Involvement 42% (down 2%)

- Teamwork 42% (up 6%)

- Learning and Development 49% (down 1%)

- Reward and Recognition 53% (up 3%)

- Management Effectiveness 46% (up 2%)

- Culture and Values 49% (up 3%)

- Change Management 40% (up 2%)

- Employee Support 62% - static

- Engagement Outcomes 61% (up 7%)

    - o Commentary – encouraging signs of progress qualified by some scores that have plenty of room for improvement and caveated by the 42% response rate.

3. **Actions Delivered by Section (Theme)**

**a) Goal Clarity**

- SLT working with middle management to create business plans, every department now has a departmental business plan.

- Business Plan Reviews

- Management Briefings (Monthly)

    - o Follow up material from briefings

- H&S Briefings

- Team Meetings

- Leadership Forums

- Your Voice updates

**b) My Job**

- Appraisal training

- Coaching programme rolled out

- Staff recognition schemes

- Day in the Life process

- Relaunch of the appraisal process in April 2017

**c) Employee Involvement**

- Your Voice

- Communications (Blogs, visits, briefings, news bulletins)

- Managers briefing

- JNCC & regular leadership forums

- Governance change consultation

- Change panel

- Reward and recognition process

**d) Teamwork**

- Cross team working (Grenfell)

- One team – celebrating our people awards

- Day in the Life

- EP/ECFRS collaboration

- Essex Showcase ( KP)

- Team competition – UKRO

- Female Taster Session (Recruitment)

- Essex Pride

**e) Learning & Development**

- Development and launch of  accredited Management Development Programme

- Skills for Justice Accreditation of Operational training programmes

- Talent Pool process including training of assessors and feedback to all applicants

- Management Induction for new managers

- Appraisal re-launch

- Launch of Induction process

**f) Reward & Recognition**

- Celebrating our People Annual Awards (based on cross workforce input)

- Special Performance Recognition Awards

- Longs Service medals and awards

- Thank you Thursday

**g) Management Effectiveness**

- Management development programme

- New manager induction

- Coaching programme rolled out

- Talent Pool process

- SLT development days

- Governance change consultation

- PFCC station visits

- Managers briefings Including PFCC presentation

- Operational information intranet page

- Station Visits

- Development days

**h) Culture and Values**

- Dignity at Work Policy introduced (co-authored with Unions)

- Dignity at work workshop for managers

- Dignity at Work Advisor Training

- Disciplinary & grievance decreasing across the year

- Informal grievance resolution increasing

- Dementia training

- Unconscious bias workshop

- Day in the life

- Charity Tuesday

- Commencement of Professional and Inclusive Workplace visits

- Recruitment taster days

**i) Change Management**

- Change Board/Panel

- Managers briefings – well attended

- Your Voice

- Leadership forum

- Station visits

- CFO Blog

**j) Employee Support**

- Family friendly policies introduced

- Mental Health Awareness Week

- International Day Against Homophobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT)

- Coaching scheme went live

- TRIM went live March 2017

- Carers Week

- Health and Safety Audits delivering

**k) Engagement outcomes**

- Professional and Inclusive workplace team

- Thank you Thursday

- Reward and Recognition schemes launched

## 4.  Further Analysis

The survey has been designed to measure the extent to which our employees are engaged and alongside this to measure the drivers of employee engagement *(i.e. the things that when done well tend to engage employees).* These have been analysed and results compared with other organisations who take part in the same questions with

People Insights. As a benchmarking group the relevance is questionable as this is an unknown spectrum of employers, organisational size and sector.

The most valid process within the current survey is to benchmark against ourselves but maintain track against what is possible.

Examples:

Engagement score 68% (increase of 5%) – This result shows a significant uplift. We need to reinforce.

Against People Insight benchmark (-11%). Against Civil Service (+6%)

Response rate: 42% (increase of 1%) - This result show a marginal increase.

Against Civil Service (-25%)

**5. Data**

**a) Five most positive responses, which we are doing well and should celebrate.**

- I care about the future of the ECFRS = 91%

- Reporting safety events is important to ECFRS = 88%

- I am clear about what I am expected to achieve in my job = 82%

- My immediate manager treats people fairly and with respect = 81%

- My immediate manager makes time for me = 81%

**b) Five weaker responses, which may need attention to make all feel better engaged.**

- Fire Authority Members engagement well with staff at ECFRS = 9%

- I feel that ECFRS consider the impact on me and other people when making decisions = 19% (being addressed through section 3k) above

- I believe action will be taken as a result of this survey = 20% (promote section 3)

- A lot is done to help staff prepare for and cope with change = 18% (section 3k)

- Different parts of the Service work well together = 25% Section 3d)

**c) Individual question headlines**

Top 10 improvements

- I have a good sense of job security 31% (up 16%)

- I understand the Service strategy and objectives of Essex County Fire and Rescue Services (ECFRS) 70% (up 12%)

- I see evidence that ECFRS staff are not risk averse 34% (up 8%)

- I am proud to say I work for ECFRS 69% (up 6%)

- Change within my team is well managed 57% (up 7%)

- We are good at sharing ideas to make things work better 58% (up 7%)

- If asked, I would recommend to friends and family that ECFRS is a good place to work 40% (up 7%)

- Morale in my immediate team/watch is generally high 44% (up 7%)

- Working here makes me want to do the best work I can 73% (up 6%)

- I understand how the work I do helps ECFRS to achieve its strategy and objectives 73%   (up 6%)

  - Commentary – these are all significant gains however some low headline scores show scope for considerable improvement

Top 10 reductions

- I understand the need for changes at ECFRS given the challenges faced by the Authority 80% (down 8%)

- I have seen action being taken as a result of the previous staff engagement survey 18% (down 6%

- My last appraisal meeting was useful in helping me improve how I do my job and show where I'm performing well 34% (down 5%)

- My workload is reasonable 60% (down 4%)

- I am able to strike the right balance between my work and home life 60% (down 3%)

- I am comfortable to speak up and constructively challenge how things are done 51% (down 3%)

- I have acceptable stress and anxiety levels at work 49% (down 2%)

- I believe action will be taken as a result of this survey 20% (down 2%)

- I understand that reporting safety events is important to ECFRS 88% (down 1%)

- I have the knowledge and skills I need to do my job 80% (down 1%)

  - Commentary – only 6 questions have a downward shift of more than 2% (which is generally considered as stable or within the margin of error). This however does not detract from key areas for attention based on actual levels

of engagement, eg: significant progress in certain areas should not diminish the attention given to a generally low scoring area.

## 6.    Communication ahead of 2018 Survey?

- Produce presentation on Section 3 and 4

- Features in daily news in run-up

- Desktop notification

- Engage leaders & departmental managers in setting scene and encouraging participation

- Use leadership forum and managers briefing to design improvement plans

- Use Inclusive and Professional workplace visits to demonstrate survey as opportunity to contribute.

Challenges:

- ongoing concern about confidentiality – include in presentations and FAQ

- voluntary process cannot be imposed

- avoid managers being set targets for participation in what is a voluntary process

## 7.    COSTS

**People Insight 2017 Survey**

£13,085.00 including feedback

## 8.    Action Planning for Line Managers

For 2018 consider making staff survey actions an objective within appraisal process.

Example at Appendix 1.

*Appendix 1*

**EXAMPLE  Tool to utilise  - The action planning process for department/teams use.**

1. Discuss

 Encourage comments and discussion from all team members by asking open ended questions.

2. Prioritise

 Decide with your team what is most important to address from the  employee survey. Focus on    matters that you as a manager can influence.

3. Plan

 Decide what will be done, by whom and by when.

4. Review

 Improvement is a journey, not an event. Review and follow up to ensure people are completing their tasks which, in turn, should result in actual improvements in the next employee engagement survey results.

Example agenda you may wish to use

 **AGENDA**

 Meeting focus: Our  employee engagement survey results and next steps

 1. Welcome

 2. Review agenda and meeting objectives

 3. Discussion: our employee engagement survey results

• *Your thoughts and/or feelings (e.g. Are you surprised?)*

• *Our strengths to celebrate*

• *What are our areas of priority?*

 4. Next steps: action planning

 5. Timelines

 6. Any other business

 7. Thank you

Discussion: our employee engagement survey results

Generate discussion among your team focusing on the engagement driver items of your employee engagement survey that are important to your organisation.

Ask your team:

•Do the results on any particular item surprise you?

•Are the results on a particular item reflective of how you feel now as a team?

•What were you thinking about when you answered this item?

•What would a rating of 5 "strongly agree" look like in your work environment?

•What are we doing that makes this a strong/weak result?

•What do we need to do to improve on this item?

***Action planning example***

| ACTION PLAN | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Work unit name: | Manager's Name: | |
| Survey item: | ☐ Opportunity | ☐ Strength |
| Rationale: | | |
| Business objective to impact: | | |

**PLAN**

| | |
| --- | --- |
| This is what we'll do: | |
| These people are responsible: | |
| Timeframe when this will be done: | |
| This is what success looks like: | |
| This is how we'll measure success: | |

We will review our progress on this date: _____

| | |
| --- | --- |
| This is the progress we have made: | |
| Comments: | |

We will review our progress on this date: _____

| | |
| --- | --- |
| This is the progress we have made: | |
| Has the business objective been met? | ☐ Yes  |  ☐ No |
| Comments: | |

 After you have completed your action plan which details the priority areas to be addressed, what will be done, by whom and by when, it's a good idea to conduct a review.

***Ensure that your organisation's improvement is a journey and not an event***