Report to: **Personnel Committee**

Date of Meeting 28th January 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Staff Survey - Update

Report summary:

This report provides Members with an overview of the findings from the recent staff survey, highlighting key themes, areas of strength, and areas requiring improvement, alongside actions being taken.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget   Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework   Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That the Personnel Committee note findings and acknowledge action being taken based on employee voice.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure members are informed of progress and can see action being taken, which underpins the people strategy and associated action plan.

Officer**:** Gemma Roberts, Assistant Director – People & Performance

Portfolio(s) (check which apply)**:**
☐ Assets and Economy
☐ Communications and Democracy
☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
☐ Environment - Operational
☐ Finance
☐ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Equalities impact assessment will be undertaken for specific actions as part of the implementation of the strategy.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information n/a

Link to Council Plan

Priorities (check which apply)

☐ A supported and engaged community
☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services
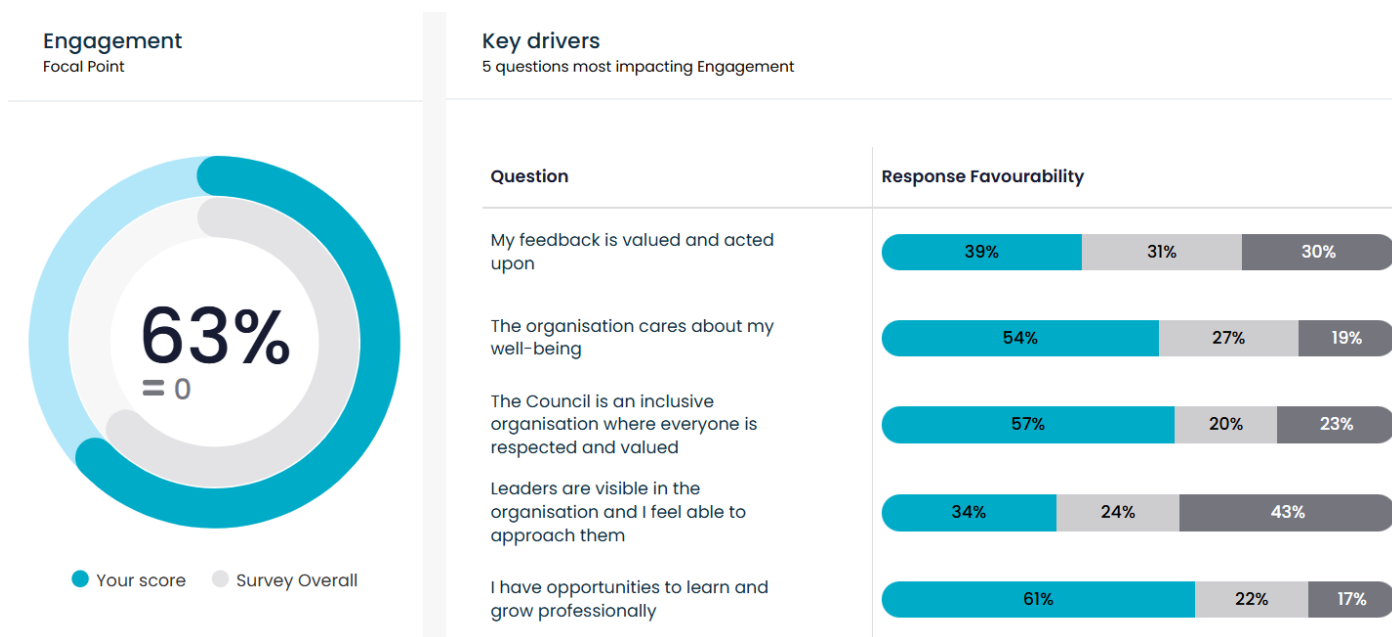
1.0   Background

The staff survey was conducted across the organisation to gather feedback on engagement, wellbeing, leadership, and working environment. The survey included both quantitative ratings and qualitative comments, enabling a comprehensive view of employee experience.

The survey ran for 4 weeks, closing on 12th August. We had a 60% return rate. Due to staff concerns around anonymity we only asked staff to state which directorate they were in.

We have engaged People Insights, a company who specialise in surveys to support with analysis.

2.0   Headline Results

2.1   People Insights have grouped our engagement questions and provided an overarching engagement rating of 63%. Alongside this it has identified the five questions most impacting on engagement for those that responded to the survey. This is detailed below.

Engagement — Focal Point: 63% = 0

Your score / Survey Overall

Key drivers — 5 questions most impacting Engagement

Question	Response Favourability		
My feedback is valued and acted upon	39%	31%	30%
The organisation cares about my well-being	54%	27%	19%
The Council is an inclusive organisation where everyone is respected and valued	57%	20%	23%
Leaders are visible in the organisation and I feel able to approach them	34%	24%	43%
I have opportunities to learn and grow professionally	61%	22%	17%

2.2   What's going well

Teamwork and manager support
84% agree their team works well together
79% feel supported by their manager
Work-life balance and flexibility
72% agree the organisation supports a healthy work-life balance
Meaningful work
75% find their work fulfilling and meaningful

2.3   Areas for improvement

Leadership visibility and communication
34% agree leaders are visible and approachable
39% believe feedback is acted upon
Workload and capacity

54% feel their workload is manageable
Bullying and harassment
27% reported witnessing bullying or harassment in the last 12 months, however, 65% reported they are confident in raising issues of bullying or harassment.

3.0   Action being Taken

3.1   Initial communication to staff

There has been ongoing communication with staff on how we are considering the results of the staff survey. This included initial communication providing all percentage responses, infographic and initial 'you said, we have or will' responses. Through the launch of the people strategy and action plan we have been clear how the staff survey has informed this work. Communication will be ongoing to ensure we improve staff view on their feedback being acted upon.

3.2   Senior Leadership Team (SLT) away days

As part of the SLT away days' time was spent reviewing and considering the survey results and how these influence our priorities as a leadership team. This resulted in the introduction of leadership commitments, see point 3.4 below).

3.3   People Strategy

The launch of the people strategy is a key action, and the live action plan shows how staff voice is being incorporated. Alongside this there is an action to introduce an ongoing feedback loop to ensure people feel heard. This includes the creation of two staff led groups gaining insights direct from staff. We delayed development and launch of the people strategy to allow the staff survey to take place and be fully considered in its development.

3.4   Leadership commitments

Following feedback, we introduced a leadership commitment for each theme of the people strategy. This demonstrates commitment to staff and accountability. In addition, all SLT members have made a people pledge, these have been published on the one team east devon hub. We will have this, alongside progress on the people strategy as a standing item on the SLT meeting agenda.

3.5   Directorate specific actions

Each directorate has identified three priorities specific for their directorate based on directorate specific feedback. The areas of focus for each directorate are provided at appendix 1.

3.6   Bullying and Harassment Training

A wholesale review of mandatory training is underway. As part of this we have changed the frequency requirement for our harassment, bullying and victimisation training from 3 to 2 years. In addition, new preventing sexual harassment in the workplace training was introduced in November 2025. It is positive that 65% of staff feel confident in raising bullying and harassment and given this we want to take the opportunity to explore responses further. Gaining a better understanding of what is sitting behind responses to this question, so consideration can be better given to what next steps.

3.7   Workload and Capacity

Work has taken place with Cabinet to consider organisational priorities, and this has influenced Directorate Plans, which now include a section with agreed areas where work will stop/pause. Directorate SLT's continue to priorities and are taking a more considered approach to resourcing requirements. Work will continue and plans include further exploration of responses on workload and pressure to gain a greater understanding to inform what action may be needed in this area.

3.8   Monitoring and Evaluation

People Focused, as our new people strategy is the key anchor for acting upon the results of the staff survey. The 'Focusing on Action', action plan, clearly details where feedback from the staff survey has influenced proposed action. The strategy has measurables for each theme and there will be an ongoing process of monitoring, evaluation and reporting linked to the people strategy actions. This will include regular reporting to SLT and updates at Personnel Committee. As mentioned, we also plan to do further surveys to understand key aspects in more detail and will commit to annual staff surveys moving forward. This will allow us to understand how staff are feeling, which will be key alongside the backdrop of Local Government Reorganisation.

We recognise that culture change and resulting visible improvements are a gradual process, therefore we will need to remain focussed on consistency in our approaches whilst keeping a clear vision for the future and our desired outcomes.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications from this report. (SD)

Legal implications:

This is an important survey that gives us important feedback on the way that staff are feeling. It is therefore important that we take due consideration of and act upon the outcome of that survey. This report outlines the positive steps that are being taken. MW

Appendix 1

Housing & Health
1. Having the tools and resources needed to do the job effectively
2. Feeling that feedback is valued and acted upon
3. Having a realistic and manageable workload

Place
1. Senior Leadership Team visibility and openness
2. Capacity and workload management
3. Resources and equipment to do the job effectively

Finance
1. Finding work meaningful and fulfilling
2. Feeling connected as a team
3. Being connected to your line manager

Governance
1. Gaining a greater understanding of responses to bullying and harassment
2. Feeling informed about updates and changes
3. Finding work meaningful and understanding what is expected

Examples of action to be taken to address these priorities

- Connecting to the frontline – back to the floor
- Being clear on what is expected but also what not to do
- Decision making matrix to go live

- Review opportunities for process simplification, remove non-value activity to support the release of capacity
- Directorate away days
- Regular team meeting with Director and Assistant Director presence
- Monitor and report on key measures relating to the customer charter
- Frequent Director drop-in sessions
- Directorate specific pulse surveys, where appropriate (ensuring we do not generate survey fatigue)