

Agenda Item	17
Report No	HC/28/20

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** The Highland Council

**Date:** 10 September 2020

**Report Title:** Employee Engagement Wellbeing Action Plan

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer (Resources & Finance)

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Highland Council and our trade union partners are committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce. During this period of unprecedented challenge, it is even more important that we listen to our employees' views on how we have managed through the pandemic, and that we continue to involve them and their representatives as we work through recovery and build a Council for the future.
- 1.2 Findings from the recent Employee survey were shared with members at Highland Council on 30 July 2020. The resultant action plan set out at **Appendix 1** has been developed in partnership with our trade union partners to address the key learning points from the survey within the framework of the wider engagement strategy, (**Appendix 2**).

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
  - i. note the Employee Engagement Wellbeing Action plan at **Appendix 1**

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resources** – Any resource implications will be met from existing Service budgets.
- 3.2 **Legal** - There are requirements around managing the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce as contained within current employment legislation.

3.3 **Community Impact** (Equality, Poverty, Rural) - Impact Assessments will be undertaken of any new or revised policies because of this action plan.

3.4 **Sustainability / Climate Change** – no implications

3.5 **Risk** - A failure to effectively manage the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce risk legal penalties, loss of employee engagement, adverse publicity and loss of reputation as an employer of choice.

3.6 **Gaelic** – no implications

#### 4. **Background**

4.1 The first objective of our Workforce Planning Strategy 2017-23 is to *‘Position engagement at the heart of everything we do; cultivate our excellent long-standing partnerships with Trade Unions, listen to our employees, communicate regularly and consult meaningfully with Community Planning Partners’.*

4.2 During this period of unprecedented challenge caused by the C19 Pandemic, it is even more important that we listen to our employees’ views on how we have managed through the pandemic and that we continue to involve them as we work through recovery and build a Council for the future.

4.3 Our employees’ exemplary response to the challenges of the past 3 months has been reflected in their response to the recent Employee Survey. A response rate of 44% for a survey of this type at this difficult and busy time is remarkable and significantly higher than previous surveys.

4.4 The Survey was designed with a number of objectives in mind:

- Welfare check of all employees
- Check effectiveness of corporate communication
- Check levels of confidence in our leadership approach
- Understand barriers to effective home working
- Capture lessons both positive/negative

4.5 This was not intended to be a standalone survey and forms part of a wider engagement strategy designed to involve the workforce and our trade union partners in every aspect of our recovery (**See Appendix 2**). Future surveys, developed in consultation with our trade union partners, will focus on:

1. **Volunteering Survey:** Targeted survey to engage and consult stakeholders on their experiences of volunteering before and during the C19 pandemic and their appetite for continuing or increasing this on an ongoing basis.
2. **Leadership and Culture Survey:** Linking in with the Recovery Programme theme, Surveys to engage with stakeholders to seek their views during the period of the C-19 Pandemic on leadership, planning, decision making, communication, and support provided. To engage with stakeholders on the effect that the pandemic has had on the culture of the Council; how to build on the positive changes and address the negative changes.
3. **Aftercare Survey:** Surveys to engage on the aftercare requirements of stakeholders who have been directly affected by the C19 pandemic either through being ill themselves and having residual health problems, have

been affected by their role in the delivery of services to others, have been bereaved as a consequence of the pandemic or have other residual needs that can be addressed by the Council

4. **Delivering Improvement Survey:** Surveys to engage with stakeholders and consult on the measures that the Council can take to drive improvement as we recover from the C19 Pandemic. Views will be sought around the 11 key priorities of the Recovery Programme.

## 5. Action Plan

- 5.1 Further analysis of the survey data found that the return was balanced and as expected in terms of responses based on gender, age and Service. The data was found to be representative of the wider workforce and an excellent foundation for action planning.
- 5.2 The action plan set out at **Appendix 1** was developed in partnership with our trade union partners to address the key learning points from this survey within the framework of the wider engagement strategy, (**Appendix 2**), reported to Highland Council on 30 July 2020.
- 5.3 Progress on the action plans will be taken to a future Corporate Resources Committee to allow for Member scrutiny.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer - Resources and Finance

Date: 31 August 2020

Authors: Elaine Barrie, Head of HR  
Jon Shepherd, Head of ICT  
Murdo MacDonald HR Manager

## Employee Engagement Wellbeing Action Plan

Objective	Action	Executive Lead	By when
1. Support employee wellbeing and welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Mental Health Representative programme and publicise the service to all employees</li> </ul>	HoHR	October 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and publicise a package of tailored support for employees experiencing ongoing wellbeing and mental health challenges, (through the Employee Assistance Programme).</li> </ul>	HoHR	October 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all new homeworkers carry out a Display Screen Equipment assessment, carry out on-line training and are provided with suitable equipment.</li> </ul>	All ECOs	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and publicise on-line training for employees now working from home. "<i>Staying home and Working</i>" and "<i>Working from home – Ergonomics</i>"</li> </ul>	HoHR	September 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead the project to ensure a safe and sustainable return to new ways of working</li> </ul>	ECO – P&H	November 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all managers complete "<i>Mentally Healthy Workplaces</i>" on-line training</li> </ul>	All ECOs	October 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and publish "<i>Health &amp; Safety Guide to Working at Home</i>", (noting the home workers are often lone workers)</li> </ul>	HoHR	September 2020
Objective	Action	Executive Lead	By when

2. Support employee engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and carry out a programme of engagement on the following themes: Leadership &amp; culture, After care, Volunteering, Delivering improvement.</li> </ul>	ECO – R&F	March 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain ‘visibility’ of the Executive Leadership Team across all areas of the Highland Council.</li> </ul>	Chief Executive	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage the focussed, timely release of information and guidance to the workforce through email, staff newsletters, and social media platforms.</li> </ul>	C&R Manager	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in partnership with the trade unions in the delivery, analysis and action planning of the engagement programme</li> </ul>	HoHR	March 2021
3. Build capacity of managers to support safe return to workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop on-line training for managers “<i>Preparing for the new normal</i>”</li> </ul>	HoHR	August 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure completion of online training “<i>Preparing for the new normal</i>” by all managers and supervisors</li> </ul>	All ECOs	September 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop safe induction material to support managers</li> </ul>	HoHR	August 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop on-line training to support managers and supervisors managing home workers</li> </ul>	HoR	August 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all managers complete on-line Risk Assessment Training</li> </ul>	All ECOs	November 2020

Objective	Action	Executive Lead	By when
4. Address barriers to recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support employees in moving ICT equipment from offices to homes</li> </ul>	HoICT	August 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide employees with additional equipment, WiFi adapters, phones, etc</li> </ul>	HoICT	August 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the capacity for home working from 500 to 2000 employees</li> </ul>	HoICT	August 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and roll out of Microsoft Teams to all users</li> </ul>	HoICT	August 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rollout “softphones” allowing access to Avaya telephony system at home from computers</li> </ul>	HoICT	August 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide 4G MiFi devices to staff and pupils with no home Internet access</li> </ul>	HoICT	August 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide remote assistance for users having ICT issues</li> </ul>	HoICT	Ongoing

End

## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

### C19 Recovery – Stakeholder Survey Strategy Overview Phase 1 – 3

#### Stakeholders

- Employees (schools based)
- Employees (not schools based)
- Elected Members
- Volunteers

#### Survey/Engagement

**Return to Work (Schools) engagement:** Managers to engage and consult with stakeholder on key topics relating to the return to work in school-based settings

**Return to Work (Non-Schools) engagement:** Managers to engage and consult with stakeholder on key topics relating to the return to work in non-school settings

**Shielding engagement:** Managers to engage and consult with stakeholders who are shielding on issues relevant to their employment.

**Wellbeing and Welfare Survey:** All employee survey to engage and consult with stakeholders on the impact that the C19 pandemic has had on their wellbeing and welfare including; financial, mental and physical health and wellbeing, bereavement, addictive behaviours, domestic abuse. To consult on support that can be provided and services that can be accessed.

**Volunteering Survey:** Targeted survey to engage and consult stakeholders on their experiences of volunteering before and during the C19 pandemic and their appetite for continuing or increasing this on an ongoing basis.

**Leadership and Culture Survey:** Survey to engage with stakeholders to review the effectiveness of leadership during the period of the C19 pandemic including their views on planning, decision making, communication, and support provided. To engage with stakeholders on the effect that the pandemic has had on the culture of the Council; how to build on the positive changes and address the negative changes.

**Aftercare Survey:** Survey to engage on the aftercare requirements of stakeholders who have been directly affected by the C19 pandemic either through being ill themselves and having residual health problems, have been affected by their role in the delivery of services to others, have been bereaved as a consequence of the pandemic or have other residual needs that can be addressed by the Council

**Delivering Improvement Survey:** All employee/member/volunteer to engage with stakeholders and consult on the measures that the Council can take to drive

improvement as we recover from the C19 Pandemic. Views would be sought around the 11 key priorities of the Recovery Board.

