



## Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

### Lewisham Council Staff Survey 2022

**Date:** 15 September 2022

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Atika Mohammed (Head of Insight, Transformation & OD).

### Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to: present the results of the Council's 2022 All Staff Survey which took place this summer. The survey and presentation were conducted by an independent research agency (MEL Research).

Members of Safer Stronger Communities Select committee are recommended to consider, note and comment on the presentation including the next steps.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

- **14 February 2022** – Report to Chief Executive to approve procurement of staff survey.
- **21 February to 21 March 2022** – Competitive tendering process and award of contract to MEL Research.
- **April to May 2022** – Survey design.
- **6 June to 13 July 2022** – Staff survey undertaken.
- **30 August 2022** - Report shared with Cabinet Lead.
- **5 September 2022** – Report presented at Mayor’s/Chief Executive’s meeting.
- **6 September 2022** - Report presented at Cabinet Briefing.
- **6 September 2022** – All staff receive report via standalone email.
- **15 September 2022** – Report presented at Safer Stronger Communities SC.

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. Fieldwork was carried out over June and July 2022. In total, 1471 members of staff responded to the survey (54% of all staff). The purpose of the survey was to understand staff perceptions and views on a broad range of organisational issues.
- 1.2. The attached presentation presents the results of the survey. The findings from the survey will provide robust data to support senior leadership, services, HR and OD to improve the way we work. The results also provide a benchmark to gauge progress on the Council’s improvement journey.
- 1.3. Next steps include further engagement with staff to understand specific issues raised and the development of an action plan(s) to address these issues.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of Safer Stronger Communities Select committee consider, note and comment on the presentation including the next steps.

### 3. Policy context

- 3.1. Insights from the staff survey will support services, SLT, HR and OD to improve the working environment, wellbeing and productivity of staff enabling the delivery of all Corporate Strategy priorities.

### 4. Background and context

- 4.1. The Council commissioned an independent research agency to conduct an all staff survey; the first since 2018. In total 54% of staff responded compared with 50% in 2018. This sample size produces data with a maximum margin of error of  $\pm 1.74\%$  at a 95% level of confidence.

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- 4.2. All employees with email addresses were sent a link to the survey by email, with regular reminders sent throughout fieldwork to encourage completion. Paper copies were distributed among staff working predominantly offline.
- 4.3. Survey questions were organised around the following themes:
  - Council Values
  - Systems and Processes
  - Ways of Working and Wellbeing
  - Personal Performance and Development
  - Line Managers
  - Senior Leaders
  - Communications
  - Discrimination, bullying and harassment
  - Climate Emergency
  - Suggestions for Improvement at the Council

## **5. Summary of key points**

### **Direction of travel**

- 5.1. Positive progress since last staff survey in 2018. For 18 out of 21 comparable indicators, significant improvements in positive perceptions are evident.
- 5.2. Notable gains on delivery of appraisals and wider sentiment on L&D opportunities. However appraisal processes can still lack tangible outcomes and benefits for some staff.
- 5.3. Compared to 2018 an increasing proportion of employees feel valued for the work that they do (60% up from 51%) and proud to work for the council (71% up from 63%).

### **Culture and Values**

- 5.4. Nearly all employees (94%) agree that they personally put the council's corporate values into practice at work.
- 5.5. When considering the council's values in practice 79% agree that employees respect all people, and communities, with a similar number (76%) agreeing that they prioritise the service to the public. However, only 42% agreed that Lewisham Council invest in employees.
- 5.6. A fifth of employees (22%) state that they are likely to leave the council in the next year. This represents a risk to both resourcing and knowledge retention.

### **Ways of working**

- 5.7. Only two in five (42%) employees agree they can complete their job without needing to work excessive hours. This measure produced the highest proportion of negative responses within the whole dataset.
- 5.8. In the context of this workload pressure, it is notable that:
  - Only six in ten employees (65%) state they have the right tools to do their job

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effectively. More exploration of perceived gaps and how these impact on productivity may be necessary.

- One in five (22%) disagree that their emotional and mental wellbeing is supported at work. Provision of such support would seem vital when staff feel stretched.
- 5.9. When considering home/hybrid working, benefits to the climate and productivity are most commonly identified. A blurring of the boundaries between work and home and reduced team connectivity seem to be the key risks of hybrid working.
- 5.10. Line manager behaviours are generally seen as positive, a finding that should be celebrated. Relationships between line managers and individuals are predominately felt to be based on trust and respect, with improvements evident compared to 2018. Managing poor performance and challenging unacceptable behaviour are potential areas for improvement.

### **Communications**

- 5.11. There is scope for the sense of direction (messages from senior leaders) to be strengthened. Currently, only 50% agree senior leaders are open and honest in their communications with employees.
- 5.12. The survey findings also suggest that employees sometimes feel like they lack a voice. While line manager level relationships are good, only 48% agree that they are consulted in a meaningful way before changes are made to their job.
- 5.13. Staff feel more informed at both team and council levels than was the case in 2018.
- 5.14. In terms of communication priorities, 71% of staff want to hear more about how the council is addressing inequalities vs 52% who want to hear more about how the council is addressing the climate emergency.

## **6. Next Steps**

- 6.1. The following next steps are proposed :
- Further analysis by demographics and directorate/divisional level (where appropriate) to understand the difference experiences across the council. This will allow the us to develop universal and more targeted approaches to addressing issues that the survey has identified.
  - Follow-up engagement for example in the form of pulse surveys and/or focus-groups to unpick specific issues (e.g. workload) identified in survey.
  - Development of an action-plan(s) to address the issues identified in the survey and follow-up engagement.
  - Agreement of 2 – 4 year cycle of follow-up pulse and full surveys to measure progress.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

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## 8. Legal implications

8.1. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

## 9. Equalities implications

9.1. Discrimination, bullying and harassment was one of the survey themes, including the correlation with Protected Characteristics. Further analysis will look at any significant differences in responses across protected characteristics.

## 10. Climate change and environmental implications

10.1. Staff perceptions regarding climate action by the council and consideration of their own job impact on the local/global environment was one of the survey themes.

## 11. Crime and disorder implications

11.1. There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## 12. Health and wellbeing implications

12.1. There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

## 13. Glossary

Term	Definition
Confidence Level	A 95 percent confidence level is saying is that if the survey were repeated over and over again, the results would match the results from the actual staff group 95 percent of the time.
Margin of error $\pm\%$	The margin of error is a statistic expressing the amount of random sampling error in the results of a survey. The larger the margin of error, the less confidence one should have that results would reflect the result of a survey of the population.

## 14. Report author(s) and contact

14.1. If there are any queries about this report, please contact Atika Mohammed (Head of Insight, Transformation & OD) by email ([atika.mohammed@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:atika.mohammed@lewisham.gov.uk)) or telephone (020 8314 3133).

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