

<b>Subject:</b>	Values and Behaviours Progress Update
<b>Reason for briefing note:</b>	To provide a progress update to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel on AGS item 20.9 Values and Behaviours.
<b>Responsible officer(s):</b>	Nikki Craig, Head of HR, Corporate Projects and IT
<b>Senior leader sponsor:</b>	Duncan Sharkey, Managing Director
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 19 April 2021

## **SUMMARY**

*This note provides an update regarding item 20.9 of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Action Plan which relates to values and behaviours.*

### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Item 20.9 of the AGS Action Plan focuses on values and behaviours: Continuing the progress of improving the culture of the organisation and ensuring compliance with relevant procedures and ethical standards.
- 1.2 The agreed actions against this item are as follows:
1. Clear articulation of the Values and behaviours expected of Officers and Members including the mechanism for reporting concerns.
  2. Refresh the appraisal system in line with the new Values
  3. Raise the visibility of the whistleblowing process and ensure data (anonymised) is available to demonstrate the use of the this or other ways of raising concerns

### **2. KEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1 The required improvement outcomes associated with AGS item 20.9 are a clear demonstration by all of improved behaviours and improved scoring in staff surveys around culture and improved knowledge of whistleblowing procedures and outcomes.

### **3. DETAILS**

- 3.1 A set of new organisational values were developed through direct engagement with staff and launched to the workforce in June 2020. These were shared with Cabinet for their endorsement in July 2020. Examples of positive and negative behaviours accompany each value. An action plan was also produced to support the embedding of the values throughout the organisation and progress against these items is on track.
- 3.2 A key activity to support the embedding of the new values was the roll out of a programme of Crucial Conversations training to all staff. The purpose of the training was to equip staff with the skills to have difficult conversations

vertically within their reporting lines and also horizontally with peers to challenge behaviour not in accordance with the values and to support their adoption across the council. Volunteers from across the organisation were trained to deliver the workshops to groups of their colleagues via MS Teams. The programme commenced in late November and concluded recently with 426 staff having attended a session.

- 3.3 Work has been carried out to integrate the new values into the council's appraisal system. The council will be moving the timing of the appraisal cycle to coincide with the municipal year and therefore the revised scheme will launch to staff in May 2021. The new scheme incorporates a way for employees to demonstrate they are living the values.
- 3.4 The council's staff survey was carried out between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and achieved a response rate of 68% which is the highest to date. The survey included a number of questions on values allowing a comparison with the 2018 results (surveys alternate between a full and a mini survey each year). The results are summarised below.

Question	2020 positive response	Direction of travel	2018 positive response
My <b>manager</b> exhibits the council's values the majority of the time	75%	↑	68%
The <b>CLT</b> consistently exhibit the council's values	40%	↑	31%
<b>Members</b> consistently exhibit the council's values when I interact with them	21%	↑	18%
The <b>people I work</b> with exhibit the council's values on a regular basis	67%	↓	69%

- 3.5 Whilst three of the four areas show an increase in positive responses compared to two years ago it is recognised that there is significant scope for improvement. It should also be noted that the Crucial Conversations are a key tool in improving behaviour in accordance with the values and these only started during the last few days of the survey so responses will not take any benefit as a result of the sessions into account.
- 3.6 The whistleblowing procedure is available to staff on the council's intranet. Details of disclosures made under the whistleblowing procedure are recorded and an anonymised summary is available. Details of any whistleblowing procedures received will be submitted to Statutory Officers Group to ensure oversight.

#### 4. RISKS

- 4.1 The specific actions against item 20.9 are complete and therefore there are no direct risks associated with these activities. However, taking a wider view, it

should be recognised that changing culture can take at least three years and therefore caution should be taken not to expect too much change too quickly. If values aren't embedded in day to day activities and it can lead to disengaged employees and so it is really important to ensure the values are discussed regularly and openly at meetings. Behaviour at any level of the organisation, particularly the top, that is not aligned with the values will undermine their embedding and impede the culture change that is being sought. The Crucial Conversations workshops and the ongoing action plan referred to in section 5 below should assist in mitigating these risks.

## **5. NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 With it being under a year since the new values were launched, we are at a relatively early stage in our culture change journey. The values need to underpin all that we do as an organisation. We have already seen an example of this with their incorporation into the council's Transformation Strategy and they are also informing the development of the updated People Strategy. The launch of the values was accompanied by an action plan which includes activities, in addition to those referred to in this note, designed to support adoption and embedding. These items are in progress and will be reviewed and added to. Shortly the actions will be incorporated into a People Action Plan which will sit alongside the People Strategy and hold all our people related activities with each one contributing directly or indirectly to supporting the values.