



People, Performance and Development Committee
5 April 2016

Staff Survey Results

Purpose of the report:

This report provides an update to Members of the People, Performance and Development Committee (PPDC) on the results of the Staff Survey. This is the first SCC Staff Survey undertaken by Best Companies and will be used as a benchmark for future staff surveys. The next survey is due to be launched in October 2016 and the results will be brought to PPDC in early 2017. The Council Overview Board has also considered the results of the survey and recommended that individual scrutiny board review the data for areas within their remit.

Executive Summary:

1. In 2015, Best Companies was appointed by Surrey County Council (SCC) to administer a three year programme of annual employee surveys. Best Companies are recognised as being associated with 'The Sunday Times Best Companies' report and providing expertise in the areas of employee engagement and advocacy which was felt to fit well with the organisation's values and culture. The first survey was undertaken in October – November 2015 and this report summarises the key findings of this survey.
2. One third of employees responded to this initial survey, which is below the average response rate for a similarly sized not-for-profit organisation, but provides the best evidence we have of how staff are feeling. Overall, Best Companies have classified us as good and allocated us to their "Ones to Watch" category, which from their experience is seen as a solid score for an initial survey.
3. The survey was made up of 70 questions or statements which employees were asked to rate on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These were then given a score and categorised against one of the eight factors of engagement (Leadership, My Company, My Manager, Personal Growth, My Team, Well Being, Fair Deal, Giving Something Back). Of these factors, the County Council scored highest against My Team, My Company and My Manager and lowest against Leadership and Fair Deal. This profile was consistent across all services.
4. Looking at the questions that scored most highly, it is evident that employees believe that they can make a valuable contribution to the success of this organisation. They also feel that people in their team go out of their way to help and care for each other

and feedback is positive on all questions relating to support from managers, particularly in talking openly and honestly with staff.

5. In terms of areas for further discussion, the following came through as key themes:
 - a. Fair Deal, in particular issues around pay and benefits.
 - b. Managing and coping better with pressures of work.
 - c. Continuing to build SCC's leadership culture, with a particular focus on listening.
6. These will form the basis of service action plans between now and October when the next survey will be carried out.
7. Best Companies are also able to provide benchmarking data on other organisations' employee initiatives and successes and have provided extensive data based on SCC's survey responses, including demographic analysis and overall engagement scores. A summary of the key findings are included in the report for Members to review and further service-level data is also available on request for those who wish to look at it in more detail.
8. Members are asked to review the key findings in the report and the areas identified for further focus to ensure they are in line with the results and that actions are being planned to address them.

Recommendations:

The People, Performance and Development Committee is asked to note the results of the 2015 Surrey County Council Staff Survey.

Introduction:

9. In 2015, Best Companies was appointed by Surrey County Council (SCC) to administer a three year programme of annual employee surveys. Best Companies are recognised as being associated with 'The Sunday Times Best Companies' report and providing expertise in the areas of employee engagement and advocacy. The first survey was completed in October – November 2015 and this report summarises the key findings of this survey.
10. The last full Surrey survey was completed in September 2011 and, while small, locally managed surveys have been completed since this time, there has been no comprehensive survey since then which accurately details how employees feel about working for SCC.
11. Best Companies have recognised expertise in this area and the Council has commissioned a three year programme of annual surveys with a total cost of £71,304 (2016 – 2018). This cost includes all administration for approximately 11,000 employees, use of an online workplace insight tool and full support from the Best Companies Team in interpreting the survey data (including benchmarking data from other organisations). The first survey was emailed (where an active email address exists) or posted to all employees (including bank workers) employed at the time by SCC.

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Survey Results:

Response rate

13. The overall response rate for the County Council was 34.46%. According to Best Companies, large not-for-profit organisations have an average response rate of 40.44% and large private sector organisations, 49.49%. An organisation is categorised as large if it employs 3,500+ employees.

14. The response rate then breaks down by as detailed in the table below (response rates for all services can be seen in **Annex 1**).

Directorate	Headcount	Responses	Response Percentage
Orbis*	1516	878	58%
ASC	1880	626	33%
C&C	886	236	27%
CEX	1536	611	40%
CSF	4226	1096	26%
E&I	594	219	37%
Surrey County Council	10638	3666	34.46%

* Orbis includes staff from both Surrey and East Sussex County Councils.

15. The response rate for SCC is lower than the average for similar organisations, which could be due to a number of reasons. In order to ensure a consistent approach across all organisations, Best Companies provide strict guidelines on how the survey should be promoted. This is different to the approach SCC has taken previously and therefore people may not have been as aware of the survey as expected, particularly given the considerable time since the last full employee survey (2011). A number of employees reported the surveys had been automatically filtered into 'junk' email folders and others reported deleting the email as the email address was unfamiliar and it was not obvious from the subject that it contained the staff survey.

16. The complex staff base may also have had an impact, with a large number of bank employees included within the survey who had not worked leading up to or at the time of the survey and therefore may have been less inclined to respond. There are also concerns that some colleagues based in local or areas offices and schools (such as catering assistants) had not heard about the survey and the benefits of completing it. The Council will be focusing on all of these areas in its approach for 2016 and in the feedback provided to Best Companies.

The Survey

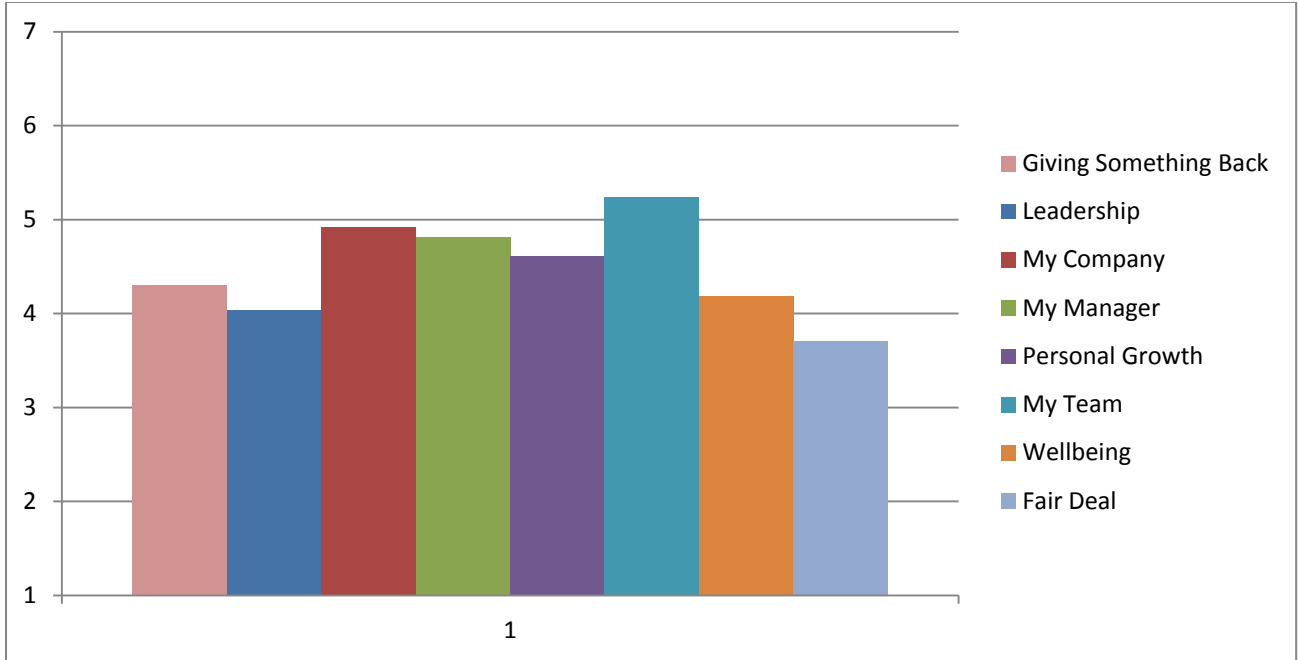
17. The survey was promoted using emails, posters and an S-Net Campaign including an all staff email from David McNulty. The Extended Leadership Team were engaged in the process in early 2015 and asked to suggest ways in which the results of the survey could be shared and worked on. The survey went live on 12 October 2015 and closed 6 weeks later on 20 November. During the period of the survey being open, reminders were sent to all staff who had not completed their email survey. Visits were made to local offices including libraries to talk to the staff and promote the survey and the S-Net continued to promote the survey throughout this time.
18. The survey is made up of 70 questions or statements. The majority of these were categorised against one of the eight areas detailed below with each area having between 4 – 11 questions or statements assigned to it. The remaining questions look at general feedback. All surveys included a unique code which identified the specified employee and allowed results to be scored according to the relevant details of the employee such as job grade, contracted hours and length of service. The organisation is not able to identify individuals from the results but can analyse the data based on different demographics to identify trends.
19. The survey results are grouped into eight areas as follows:
 - i. **Leadership** – measures how staff feel about the head of their organisation, the senior management team and organisational values.
 - ii. **My Company** – focuses on how much employees value their organisation, how proud they are to work there and whether they make a difference.
 - iii. **My Manager** – measures whether staff feel supported, trusted and cared for by their immediate manager.
 - iv. **Personal Growth** – examines whether employees feel challenged by their job, whether their skills are being utilised and there are perceived opportunities for advancement.
 - v. **My Team** – includes encouraging team spirit, having fun and feelings of belonging within a group of direct colleagues.
 - vi. **Well Being** – measures stress, pressure, the balance between work and home life as well as the impact of these factors on personal health and performance.
 - vii. **Fair Deal** – includes how well employees feel they are treated and how their pay and benefits compare to similar organisations.
 - viii. **Giving Something Back** – explores to what extent staff think their organisation is socially responsible and whether they believe this effort is driven by appropriate motives.

Results

20. In answering the questions in the survey, staff were asked to rate each question on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These are then given a score by Best Companies on the following scale:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree not disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

21. Each of the eight factors then receives an 'average' score based on all responses to the questions or statements that relate to that factor. The below graph shows the distribution of scores against all factors.



Graph 1 – distribution of average scores against all eight factor areas for Surrey County Council

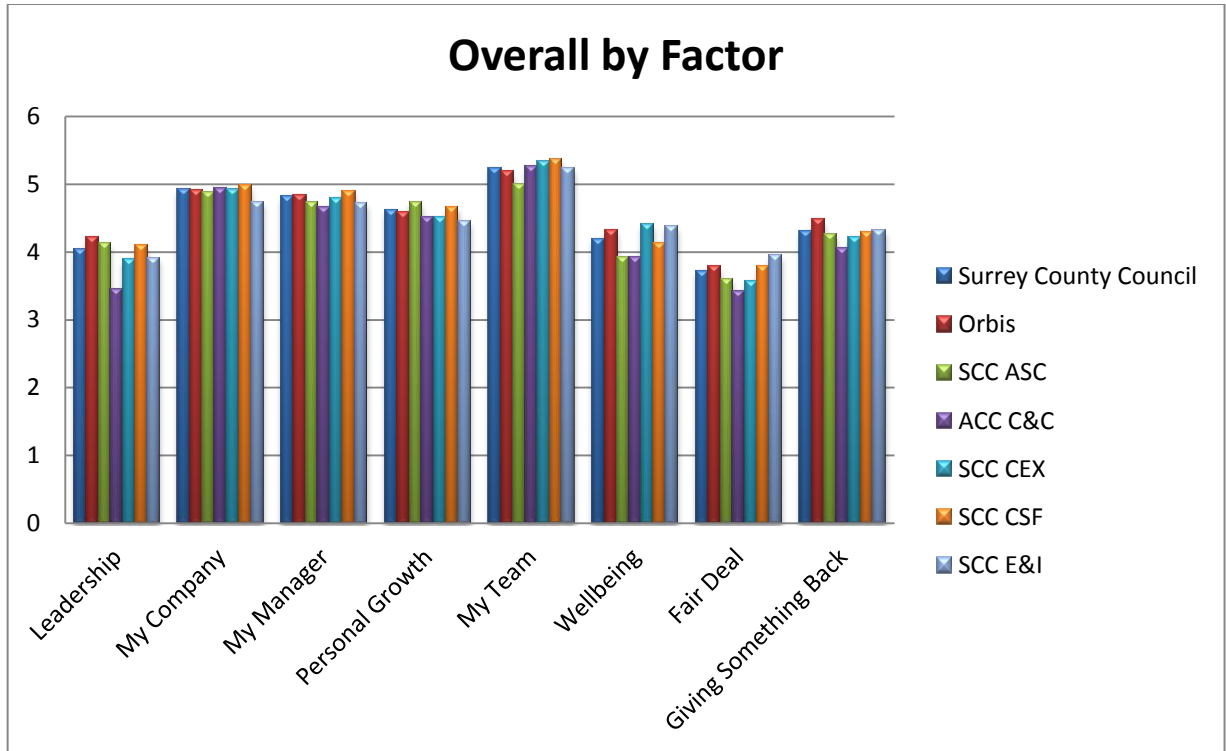
22. My Team, My Company and My Manager scored highest with the three highest scoring questions within the organisation falling within these factors:

- i. I believe I can make a valuable contribution to the success of this organization (5.63)
- ii. People in my team go out of their way to help me (5.51)
- iii. I feel that my manager talks openly and honestly with me (5.27)

23. Fair Deal, Leadership and Well-being scored lower on average and the following questions scored the lowest overall within the organisation:

- a. Senior Managers of this organisation do a lot of telling but not much listening (3.71)
- b. I feel I receive fair pay for the responsibilities I have in my job (3.61)
- c. Most days I feel exhausted when I come home from work (3.17)

24. The factors can also be compared at a Directorate level as illustrated in the graph below. This shows that scores are fairly consistent across areas with My Team the strongest factor and Fair Deal the weakest in all areas.



Graph 2 – distribution of average scores against all factors by Directorate

Results by Service

25. A full breakdown of scores across all services is attached at **Annex 2**. A RAG rating has been applied to these to identify areas of particular strength (green) and potential focus (red.) From this data, services where there are two or more areas scoring negatively include Adult Social Care Commissioning & Operations, Children's Services, Fire and Rescue, Highways and Cultural Services and Property (Orbis). All of these areas scored below 4 for Leadership and at least one other factor.
26. The highest single overall factor score was for the Communications Service who scored 6.11 for 'My Team'. This is an area where all services scored positively demonstrating the enjoyment and support colleagues receive from their work teams. Three other factors scored above 4 across all service areas - My Manager. My Company and Personal Growth.
27. Full detailed results have been developed by question for each service area and shared with managers to consider and cascade within their teams. They are also available to all staff and Members via the Council's intranet (Snet) by searching for 'staff survey'.

Benchmarking Information

- 28. Benchmarking data has been provided and is included in **Annex 3**. This compares SCC’s scores against those of organisations who have also used Best Companies employee survey and whose results (accreditation scores) are:
 - i. One category higher than SCC’s results – this is known as 1 star Big Companies
 - ii. At the same level as SCC – this is known as One to Watch Big Companies) and;
 - iii. Other Councils, In the 2015 survey, this includes Manchester City Council & Wigan Council.

- 29. Each organisation using the Best Companies approach is given an accreditation score based on the overall scores for each of the eight separate factors. This accreditation score is categorised against four separate categories which represent the level of overall employee engagement achieved from the survey. These can be seen in the table below. The categories are
 - (i) One to watch – engagement scores of 600 to 659.4
 - (ii) One Star – engagement scores of 659.5 to 696.4
 - (iii) Two Star – engagement score of 696.5 to 737.9
 - (iv) Three Star – engagement score of 738 and above

The table below shows that Surrey County Council achieved an accreditation score of 615.1.

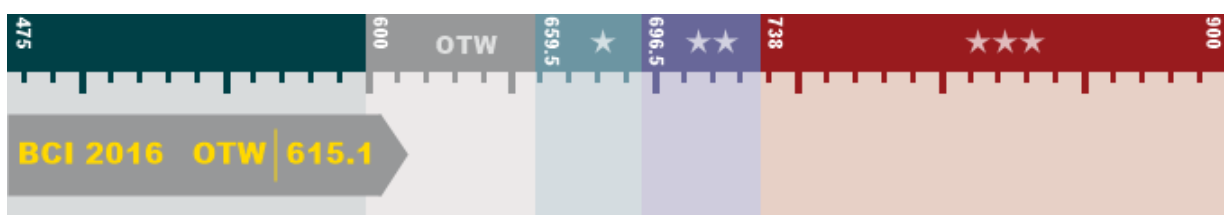


Table 3 – accreditation score table

- 30. When comparing SCC’s overall scores with that of other councils, comparable scores are identifiable in four areas – My Manager, Personal Growth, My Team and Wellbeing. The factors where SCC is below the benchmark are Leadership and Fair Deal. This resonates with free text comments about pay and reward as well as concerns regarding wider leadership.

Key areas of focus

- 31. The survey has helped to highlight key areas of focus for the next seven months. These include the importance of providing staff with the opportunity to make suggestions for improvement and ensuring that these are heard and fed back on, not only by their immediate manager but by more senior managers as well. This aligns with the proposals for increasing staff ownership of organisational performance to develop the one team culture through assessment of organisational performance as

part of the pay and reward strategy. SCC has promoted the pay and reward consultation, encouraging involvement and participation in sessions among staff at all levels.

32. More work is also necessary on wellbeing and ensuring that individuals are not 'burned out' by doing excessive hours or feeling under pressure in their role. It is important to equip colleagues with the tools to carry out their roles effectively and support them in building their resilience. This will be an area of focus for SCC's health and safety plans by continuing to develop sound workload management practices.
33. The Council is further committed to assessing the impact of the Stay Healthy-Stay Well strategy Workplace Wellbeing Charter Standard from Public Health England, a programme which is being led across Surrey by the Strategic Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health. The Workplace Wellbeing Charter is complemented by ongoing improvements to occupational health services, management of attendance and workforce planning. This will include the 'Modern Worker' programme, regular supervision and appraisals as well as clear objectives.
34. As an overall link to employee engagement, the Council has been provided with the 15 survey questions with the highest correlation score to overall engagement (included in **Annex 4**). These provide a real opportunity to influence and improve employee engagement. The areas of focus include development opportunities, managerial support and continuing to develop a values-led culture. Linking to this focus on increased engagement, the organisation will look at ways to increase participation next year, engaging staff closely in this to ensure the views of as many colleagues as possible are heard
35. All these areas will be fed into service and corporate action plans due to be agreed in March, as well as to the corporate HR&OD plans. This is the best evidence available of how the organisation is feeling and there are a number of positives to celebrate in terms of the loyalty individuals have towards their team and their service as well as responses which show that employees feel they have a valuable contribution to make towards the future success of SCC. The action plans and discussions of the results will provide an opportunity to ensure SCC is supporting colleagues to continue to make this positive contribution.

Conclusion:

36. This report details the key results of the 2015 staff survey and the resulting proposed areas of focus, together with timescales. One third of employees responded providing the best evidence available for how staff in SCC are feeling. Whilst this provides a good initial sample, there is a commitment to increase the response rate when the second survey is carried out in October 2016.
37. Using Best Companies provides a detailed understanding of engagement and benchmarks against other organisations. Overall, Best Companies have classified the Council as good and allocated SCC to their "Ones to Watch" category. Best Companies have indicated that from their experience, this is a solid start for an initial survey.
38. Looking at the questions scoring most highly, employees believe that they can make a valuable contribution to the success of this organisation. They also feel that people in their team go out of their way to help and care for each other. Feedback is positive

on all questions relating to support from managers, particularly in talking openly and honestly with staff.

39. In terms of areas for further discussion, the following came through as key themes:
- a. Fair Deal, in particular developing and promoting pay and benefits.
 - b. Managing and coping better with pressures of work.
 - c. Continuing to build SCC's leadership culture, with a particular focus on listening.

These will form the basis of service action plans between now and October when the next survey will be carried out.

Financial and value for money implications

40. The Section 151 Officer confirms that there are no financial and value for money implications associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

41. The risks associated with the staff survey include – not engaging sufficiently with staff, achieving too low a response rate to be representative and not being able to achieve accreditation from Best Companies. To mitigate these risks, is SCC ensuring there is a clear communication plan and individuals can see that the responses have been listened to and will contribute to change. This is being supported by regular emails from David McNulty, Directorate Action Plans and ELT engagement.

Equalities Implications

42. In engaging Best Companies to undertake our staff survey, SCC are using an experienced and established methodology which has been rigorously tested to ensure a fair and consistent approach which does not discriminate or differentiate against any known protected characteristic.

Next Steps:

- i. Survey results have been shared with staff through s-net and all Directors and management teams have been provided with packs detailing their own results, including comparisons with other teams and services. This has been supported through David McNulty's weekly email and discussions with the Extended Leadership Team.
- ii. Individual teams have been encouraged to use the data to have conversations about the results to produce high level Directorate action plans, which will be shared across the organisation in April. These actions plans will be reviewed by Human Resources and Organisational Development to inform the plans and activity for the year ahead.
- iii. The next survey will be undertaken in October 2016, providing an opportunity to compare results year-on-year.

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Annexes:

Annex 1 – Response rate by service

Annex 2 – RAG report - Overview by service

Annex 3 – Benchmarking Information

Annex 4 - Top 15 questions correlated to employee engagement

Sources/ background papers:

None