



People, Performance and Development Committee
29 January 2018

2017 Staff Survey Results

Purpose of the report:

This report provides the People, Performance and Development Committee with a summary of the results from the 2017 Staff Survey. This is the third Surrey County Council staff survey undertaken by Best Companies and includes helpful comparison data to the previous two years of engagement results.

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 2015 with the second and third surveys undertaken in October 2016 and 2017 respectively. This report summarises the key findings from this most recent survey.
2. 54% of employees responded to the survey in 2017, which is well above the average response rate for a similarly sized not-for-profit organisation and provides the best evidence we have of how staff are feeling. This also shows a year on year improvement in response rate.
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, SCC scored highest against My Team, My Company and My Manager and lowest against Leadership and Fair Deal. This profile is consistent with the previous two year's results.
4. The questions with the highest overall score have remained consistent for the third year. These are 'I believe I can make a valuable contribution to the future success of the organisation' and 'People in my team go out of their way to help me'.

5. The areas of focus in 2017 related to the team, management and My Company, with the following coming out as the key areas to address:
 - One Team: avoiding duplication of work; improving communication; understanding what we can achieve together.
 - Management: listening and accepting everyone's views; more contact with teams; timely decisions; open and honest communication.
 - My Company: Clear direction and goals; less uncertainty about the future; more proactive rather than reactive approach.
6. Best Companies are due to present the detailed findings from the 2017 survey to the Extended Leadership Team on 22 January. Following this, more detailed analysis will be available but it is anticipated at the time of writing this report that the areas of focus and key themes will remain consistent with those outlined in paragraph 5 above.
7. Members are asked to review the key findings in the report and the areas identified for further focus.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the People, Performance and Development Committee is asked to note the results of the 2016 Surrey County Council Staff Survey.

Introduction:

8. In 2015, Best Companies was appointed by SCC to administer a three year programme of annual employee surveys. The final survey went live on 2 October 2017 and closed on 10 November 2017. During the period of the survey being open, reminders were sent to all staff who had not completed their email survey and the Extended Leadership Team took an active role in encouraging their teams to complete the survey through team meeting discussions, newsletters and email cascades.
9. The survey was made up of 70 questions or statements. The majority of these are categorised against one of the eight areas detailed below, with each area having between 4 – 12 questions or statements assigned to it. The remaining questions look at general feedback and don't contribute to the overall engagement score. In addition, all surveys include the option of providing free text to the following two questions: '*what makes this a great workplace?*' and '*what would make this a better workplace?*'.
10. All surveys included a unique code which identified the specified employee and allowed results to then be grouped according to the relevant details of the employee, such as team, 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.
11. 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.

2017 Staff Survey Results:

Response Rate

- 12. The overall response rate for SCC was 54%, a significant increase on the last two year's rates of 34.46 and 48.94% respectively. According to Best Companies data, large (3,500+ employees) not-for-profit organisations have an average response rate of 40.44% and large private sector organisations 49.49%.
- 13. Two areas of the organisation have had particularly low response rates in previous years - commercial services catering staff (largely based in schools) and music tutors. Working with the services, it was agreed that a tailored survey would be more appropriate for these two groups and this was implemented this year. As a result of this alternative approach, the response rate for this cohort increased from 4% to 29%. The results from these surveys are outside of Best Companies data and therefore not included within this report but have been fed back to the relevant Heads of Service.
- 14. The response rate can be broken down by Directorate, as summarised in the following table, and by service (**Annex 1**).

Directorate	Headcount	Responses	Response Percentage
Adult Social Care & Public Health	1810	991	55%
Business Services	170	141	83%
Children, Schools and Families	3024	1387	46%
Environment & Infrastructure	654	431	66%
Environment & Infrastructure Trading Standards	104	62	60%

Environment & Infrastructure Fire & Rescue	645	258	39%
Legal, Democratic and Cultural Services	1066	606	57%
Orbis*	1964	1256	64%
SCC Total	9442	5137	54%

* Orbis includes staff from Surrey and East Sussex County Councils and Brighton & Hove City Council.

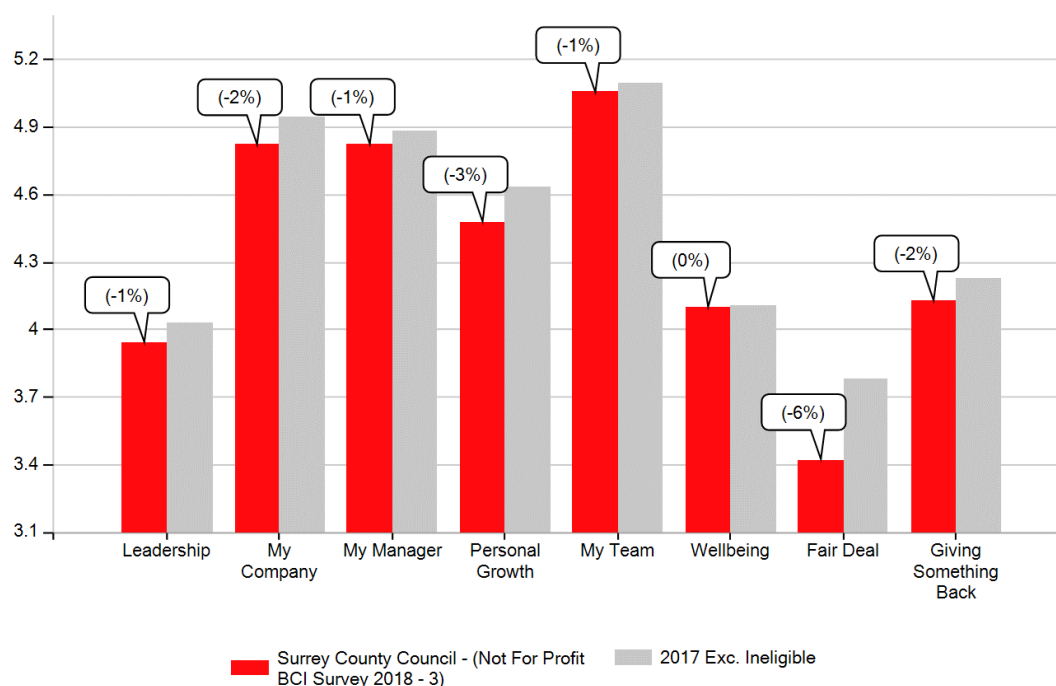
Findings

15. 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 nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. Each of the eight factors then receives an 'average' score based on all responses to the questions or statements that relate to that factor. Graph 1 shows the distribution of scores against all factors, along with the comparisons to 2017.

Graph 1 – distribution of average scores against all eight factors areas for Surrey County Council (excluding Orbis Brighton & Hove and Orbis East Sussex).

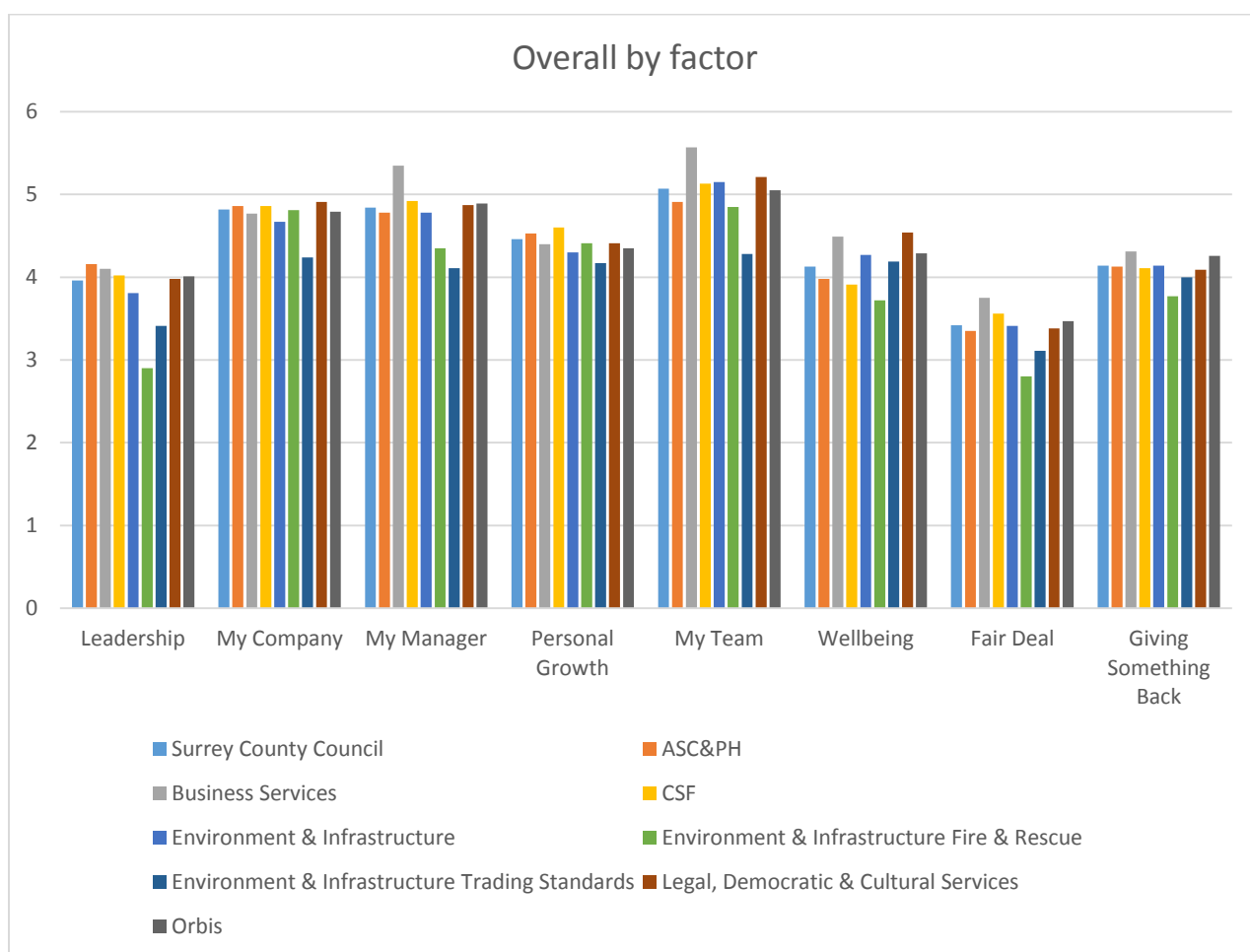


17. My Team, My Manager and My Company scored highest, with the three highest questions within the organisation falling within these factors. The following

three questions have been the highest scoring questions for the past three years and the change in results since last year is shown below.

- i) I believe I can make a valuable contribution to the success of this organisation (5.52 2017 / 5.62 2016 - My Company)
 - ii) People in my team go out of their way to help me (5.49 2017 / 5.54 2016 - My Team)
 - iii) My work is an important part of my life (5.44 2017 / 5.47 2016 - My Company)
18. Fair Deal and Leadership scores remain SCC's two lowest areas and the following questions scored the lowest overall within the organisation.
- a) Most days I feel exhausted when I come home from work (3.25 2017 / 3.2 2016– Wellbeing)
 - b) Profit / budget concerns are the only things driving this business (3.36 2017 / 3.54 2016 – Giving Something Back)
 - c) I am paid fairly for the work I do relative to people in similar positions in similar organisations (3.36 2017 / 3.72 2016 Fair Deal)
19. The three highest scoring questions are the same as last year although all three scores have marginally dropped. The lowest scoring questions are also similar although the Fair Deal statement 'I feel I receive fair pay for the responsibilities I have in my job' made it to fourth lowest scoring question this year rather than third place in last year's results. This statement was replaced by 'I am paid fairly for the work I do relative to people in similar people in similar organisations'.
20. The results this year show some interesting differences in how people are feeling when analysed by job grade. In particular, organisational clarity and leadership shows improved scores for Senior Managers and Directors (S13+) but a drop in scores for levels below S13.
21. Conversely, wellbeing results show that Senior Managers & Directors have reduced scores from last year and significantly lower in all questions when compared to the benchmark. However staff graded S12 and below show improved results for wellbeing areas when compared to last year and benchmarking results. As an example, 'I'm spending too much time working' results in different scores when looking at staff graded S12 and below (generally improved scores from last year and comparable to our benchmark) than when compared to Senior Managers (graded S13+) whose results have decreased since last year and are significantly lower than the benchmark.
22. The factors can also be compared at a Directorate level, as illustrated in graph 2.

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



23. From this graph it can be seen that Business Services show the highest levels of engagement across most areas.

Results by Service

24. A full breakdown of scores across all services is attached at Annex 1. This shows the scores for each factor, the response rate and the service's overall engagement score (out of 1000) which then translates onto Best Companies ranking – unclassified (0-599), One to Watch (600-659.5), 1Star (659.6-696.5), 2Star (696.6-738) and 3star (738+).
25. On the factors in Annex 1, a RAG rating has been applied to identify areas of strength (scoring above 5 – green) and potential areas of focus (scoring below 3.75 – red). From this data, services where there are two or more areas scoring below 3.75 include Surrey Fire & Rescue, Trading Standards, ASC Mental Health, E&I Emergency Management & Projects, Legal Services & Orbis Audit. All of these areas scored below 4 for Fair Deal and at least one other factor.
26. The highest overall single factor score by service was for New Models & Business Improvement who scored 6.36 for 'My Manager'. In addition, all eight factors within this service area scored above 4 indicating overall positivity for all areas of engagement within this team.

27. There are caveats with comparing services year on year due to changes in the structure. However, there are some notable increases including Cultural Services, New Models of Delivery & Business Improvement, Orbis Strategic Directorate, Orbis Procurement & Commissioning and Environment & Infrastructure – all of whom have achieved increases in 4 or more engagement factors. This year on year comparison can be seen in **Annex 2**.
28. Within the survey, individuals have the option to answer two free-text questions. These are 'What makes this a great workplace' and 'what would make this a better workplace'. Over 5,100 comments were recorded and this data is provided to Heads of Service to support with the interpretation of survey results. In addition, Best Companies will provide an analysis of the key themes from these comments by the end of January.

General Comment

29. The results from the Staff Survey are broadly similar to SCC's results in both 2017 and 2016 and, whilst overall results have dropped, the areas of strength and improvement remain consistent.
30. In particular, the Leadership results have gone down by 1% and is not unexpected given the timing of the survey coinciding with the Chief Executive's retirement and wider context the Council operates within. The confirmation of Joanna Killian joining the Council in March 2018 provides more clarity and an opportunity for the new leadership team to re-engage with staff on future priorities and direction for the organisation.
31. Results for Fair Deal increased in 2017 following the pay and reward consultation, however in 2018 the results dropped. This could be linked to the delay in agreeing the pay deal for this year which was anticipated to be in July 2017 but was actioned in October 2017. In addition, staff appear to be feeling the effects of austerity in their personal lives and a feeling that others are paid more for similar jobs. These factors coupled with an unrelenting need to cut costs whilst at work is having a clear effect on how individuals' perceive the fairness of their pay and reward.
32. A further decrease in results since last year is for Personal Growth. This factor looks at how individuals perceive the training and development and opportunities to develop their career within the Council. There has been significant change surrounding training and development over the past 12 months with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy which has replaced some established training, e.g. ILM and accredited courses. There is also a shift towards self-learning courses rather than classroom learning which is taking time to embed. The organisation remains committed to investing in staff and providing opportunities for individual to develop. One example is the new leadership development programme that launched in October 2018 and provides opportunities for current managers but also has a focus on developing future leaders through the 'Aspiring Leaders' programme.
33. The Council continues to see great strengths from results around the support people receive from their manager and also from their team more generally and it is reassuring to see this continue to be reflected into the third year.

Next Steps

34. The full survey results will be shared with Senior Managers from the week commencing 22 January. This will take the form of a presentation from Best Companies on Monday 22 January, full results being shared with managers

and the results being shared via the Council's intranet and through Jive on 24 January. There will be a Chief Executive weekly email on 24 January sharing the results of the survey and all services are encouraged to share the results from this date.

35. During February and March, services are encouraged to talk through the results and share through normal channels such as newsletters and meetings. The assigned workforce lead within each Directorate will work with the HR&OD lead to ensure a clear action plan is developed which allows focus on a small number of key areas of improvement. These improvement areas and actions are due to be confirmed by the beginning of March 2018.
36. This was the last year of the current contract to deliver the Staff Survey with Best Companies. Whilst the immediate focus is on ensuring services are actively responding to the recent survey results, work will also begin in parallel to review the options going forward, looking at best practice within the sector and also more widely in terms of alternative approaches to engagement. A further report will be shared with Members on the future approach as appropriate.

Conclusions:

37. This report details the key results of the 2017 Staff Survey and the resulting proposed areas of focus. Over half of the Council's employees responded providing a strong evidence base of how staff are feeling and, having completed the survey three times, an understanding of how the organisation is changing and evolving.
38. Using Best Companies provides the Council with a detailed understanding of engagement and allows benchmarking against other organisations. This year the overall results have dropped slightly but here are some areas within the Council where results have improved. For the reasons outlined in this report, there is evidence that the environment colleagues are working within and the challenges this produces continues to impact on their engagement.
39. In terms of looking ahead, there needs to be renewed focus on areas of Fair Deal, Leadership and Personal Growth. The Council also needs to remain focused on wellbeing – especially for Senior Managers. The Extended Leadership Team will begin working with services during February and March 2018 on actions to address concerns raised in the staff survey.

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.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

41. In engaging Best Companies to undertake the Staff Survey, SCC is 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 characteristics.

Next steps:

- 1) Directors and management teams have been provided with packs detailing their own results including comparisons with last year's results as well as

other teams and services. This will now be cascaded across the organisation, supported through the Chief Executive's weekly email and discussions with the Extended Leadership Team.

- 2) Individual teams will be encouraged to use the data to have conversations about the results and agree what area they most want to work on between April and September.
- 3) As this is the end of the three year contract with Best Companies, an options appraisal will be carried out and recommendations put forward on how best to engage staff going forward. This will be reported back to the Committee for a decision as necessary. .

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Annexes:

Annex 1 – Overall results by service 2018

Annex 2 – Comparison of results by service 2017 & 2018

Sources/background papers:

None

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