



People, Performance and Development Committee
6 November 2019

Performance Conversations - Review of Progress

Purpose of the report:

To provide a summary of progress with the implementation of Performance Conversations across the county council.

1. Recommendation:

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers the key findings from the feedback survey, notes the progress made to date as well as next steps.

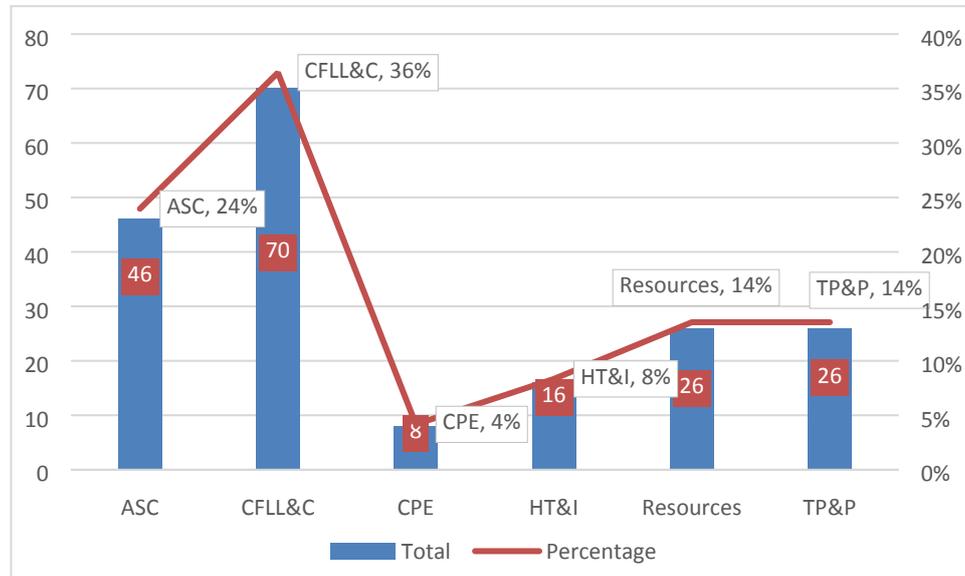
2. Introduction:

- 2.1. One of the strategic objectives of the Our People 2021 Workforce Strategy has been to develop a new approach to performance and achievement, the aim being that individual and organisational performance is improved through new approaches to performance management that support open and honest conversations.
- 2.2. This led to the development and subsequent introduction of a fundamentally different approach to create a framework that is flexible and enables meaningful conversations between staff members and managers.
- 2.3. The council's previous appraisal scheme (linked to pay progression) was widely viewed as no longer fit for purpose, leading in some instances to discussions between staff and managers of questionable value, simply to trigger related pay increases. In contrast, the Performance Conversations approach focusses on raising individual performance that impacts on organisational performance and, ultimately, outcomes for residents.

- 2.4. This new approach was launched in April 2019 to coincide with the review of the then Surrey pay model and the decoupling of pay to the appraisal process. Now that the approach has been in place for six months a brief staff survey has been carried out to assess the impact to date.

3. Key Findings:

- 3.1. 192 employees completed the survey, as follows:



- 3.2. Monitoring of the previous appraisal system focussed on quantitative data, i.e. the number of completed appraisals logged on the system and ratings awarded to individuals. The survey of Performance Conversations however captures both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a baseline for future measurement and assessment of progress.

3.3. Frequency

- 3.3.1. 86% of staff who completed the survey said they are having Performance Conversations, with 40% having them monthly and 69% having them at least quarterly.
- 3.3.2. Of those staff who said they weren't having Performance Conversations, key reasons given were recent restructures and/or people being new in post and therefore still within their probationary period.

3.4. Impact

3.4.1. The following table reports the impact findings from the survey:

Survey impact question	% staff who agree
Have the Performance Conversations enabled you to:	
Feel that you, your contribution and your work are valued?	53.6%
Be clear about the objectives and outcomes you are aiming to achieve?	49.4%
Improve performance and impact of your work and that of the wider team/ organisation	39%
Play a part in changing the culture – practically applying the Working Principles	31.25%

3.4.2. It is worth comparing these results to similar benchmark findings from the NHS National Staff Opinion Survey 2019:

NHS SOS Question	% of staff who agree
Left me feeling that my work is valued by the organisation	29.2%
Helped me agree clear objectives for my work	35%
Help me to improve how I do my job	21.8%
The values of the organisation were discussed	33%

3.5. In comparison with the NHS findings, Performance Conversations appear to be having a positive impact. The survey findings provide an opportunity to build on this approach to continue and further improve the impact on performance.

4. Next steps:

- 4.1. Further action is needed to lever the impact and continued focus on performance and achievement, particularly around how to have open and honest conversations targeted on raising individual and organisational performance. This further action will include:
- Building capacity and capability within directorates to support staff and managers to be able to have effective discussions.
 - Building a new e-learning module to train both new staff and act as a refresher for existing staff on the council’s approach to Performance Conversations.
 - Including guidance and support for managers within leadership development programmes.

5. Financial and Value for Money implications:

5.1 None arising directly from this report.

6. Equality and Diversity implications:

- 6.1 An improved approach to performance discussions will help to ensure consistency across all groups of staff.

7. Risk Management implications:

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report.
-

Report contact: Jackie Foglietta, Director of HR&OD

Contact details: Tel: 01483404648 Mobile: 07976 112409
Email: jackie.foglietta@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers: None