

Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	26th March 2018
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Staff Survey 2017 Headline Results
Report of:	John Quinn, Director of Corporate Services
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property & Corporate Services
Wards Involved:	All
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. A staff survey has been carried out annually across Westminster City Council (WCC), the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and Hammersmith & Fulham in the recent past. This year to coincide with the move towards Bi-Borough working, the survey was a joint project for both Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea only.
- 1.2. A significant departure has been made from the previous old fashioned, manually intensive survey that was managed in-house by RBKC and took up to 3 months to produce full results. The new 'Our Voice' is a professional, digital survey managed by a leading external expert. It provides timely results containing detailed, actionable analysis down to team and individual managers at head of service level.
- 1.3. The survey is shorter, more user friendly and contains updated modern language that better reflects external best practice. The new survey and its content means that comparisons to previous years is limited and not relevant for the headline engagement scores. There are a limited number of questions that have been retained and comparisons are available in these cases. This new survey and the results provides a better, more relevant and accurate baseline for the Council.
- 1.4. The power of the new survey is the reporting capability down to individual manager and team level. We are preparing and equipping managers to take detailed follow-up actions with their teams that hopefully will lead to real and sustained improvement.

- 1.5. The survey took place in September / October at a time of significant change for the Council and its employees. These changes include 'Trexit' in shared services; reorganisations such as those in Libraries and ongoing change in IT and Legal Services. The survey also took place in the months following the move from City Hall and more importantly Grenfell. These changes will have impacted on the results in the services affected.
- 1.6. The overall response rate for WCC was 62% in 2017 compared to 68% in 2016. Although the response rate has dropped compared to last year, it is still above the Local Government Benchmark. The response rate for RBKC reached 57%.
- 1.7. The Engagement Index of 6 key questions measures headline staff engagement. Westminster's Engagement Index for 2017 is 66%. The Engagement Index is a new baseline for the Council because it is made up of a new set of questions. Any comparisons to previous years would be misleading. Results can be compared to RBKC (57%) and, where the data, exists against external benchmarks. Westminster's engagement score in 2017 is average when compared against other local authorities.
- 1.8. This paper provides a summary of the accompanying slide deck (Appendix 1) and highlights the headline results from the staff survey Our Voice 2017 and actions that have taken place to create a culture of action.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1. Westminster's engagement score is average when compared against other local authorities. We aim to be a top quartile employer, where do members think we should focus to achieve this?
- 2.2. What role should members play in the employee engagement process and our aim to be a top quartile employer?

3. Background

- 3.1. Prior to 2017, the annual staff survey ran for the three councils; London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council from 2012-2016. This approach was old fashioned with a lengthy and manually intensive survey and took up to 3 months to produce full results.
- 3.2. The data was held internally by the team in RBKC who processed the survey and produced the reports. On occasions, there were errors in reporting of the results due to a lack of a robust quality check process.
- 3.3. Furthermore, because it took a considerable amount of time in producing the reports following the close of the survey, by the time it came to the creation of action plans, not only had the attention moved away from survey but the plans were inconsistently produced and not followed up throughout the year. This meant that engagement was seen as a one off event linked to a moment in time.
- 3.4. As a result, the councils wished to review the staff engagement survey in 2017 and deliver a modern approach which would enable them to have a more user friendly platform, quicker access to results and access to external expertise and best in class practice. In line with our move away from Tri-borough to Bi-borough for a number of services (in particular Adult's and Children's), we have moved from a Tri-borough survey to a Bi-Borough survey (Westminster City Council and Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea).

- 3.5. Following a joint procurement exercise across the two councils, the contract was awarded to ORC International, a UK based, international company with experience in business intelligence; including providing employee research to a wide range of organisations.
- 3.6. ORC put forward a set of recommendations based on best practice and following feedback from a range of stakeholders through face to face and telephone interviews and focus groups. Based on these recommendations, there has been a substantial revamp of the staff survey process. The new survey is a professional, digital survey which provides timely results containing detailed, actionable analysis down to team and individual managers at head of service level. It has fewer questions, looks and feels simple and modern and contains language that better reflects external best practice.
- 3.7. Comparisons to previous years is limited but available where the questions have been retained. Comparisons with headline engagement scores are not available due to change in the engagement index. This new survey and the results provides a better, more relevant and accurate baseline for the Council.
- 3.8. Details of the changes are listed below.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Lee Witham x02076413224 lwitham1@westminster.gov.uk

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Key results

Appendix 2: Summary of actions within each directorate

4. Key changes to the previous survey

- 4.1. **A new name: 'Our Voice':** This replaces the previous 'Your Voice'. Although only a small difference, the new name reflects the survey's shift in emphasis, focusing more on how all employees can work together to make the necessary changes that will improve staff engagement at the Council, rather than it being solely the responsibility of management.
- 4.2. **Modernised language:** The content and tone of the questions has been updated to better reflect a modern, agile workplace.
- 4.3. Shifting the tone has limited the number of comparable data points to previous years which means we are not able to provide a historical trend on each question therefore the comparison with previous years is not like for like.
- 4.4. **Length of survey:** The length of the survey has been reduced to make it more user friendly and accessible. We now have 36 questions (excluding local questions) and 1 targeted open comments question. Note the previous survey contained 59 questions.
- 4.5. **Updated Engagement Index:** The refresh of the survey provided an opportunity to update how we measure engagement. The engagement index is now made up of a basket of 6 questions. As an example we have changed the reference of 'good' to 'great' within the question of whether staff will recommend the council. This reflects best practice and it draws out whether people are 'settling' or feel that the council is truly an employer of choice. Changing the engagement index means it will not be directly comparable to previous years however, it will provide us with more meaningful information on engagement going forward.
- 4.6. **Council specific questions:** This year we also introduced local questions for each council. Local questions have provided the opportunity to explore council specific initiatives and issues. For WCC for example these were about exploring the connection that colleagues have with City for All and the Westminster Way. For RBKC these related to how colleagues perceived the council to be prepared for challenges ahead and trust in leadership following the Grenfell incident.
- 4.7. **Individual access to survey:** Previously staff were sent a generic link to complete the staff survey which involved people self-selecting their directorates and teams. This year we changed this to a unique link approach where each individual received their own personal invitation. Responses were anonymised and teams of less than 10 individuals or where there were less than 10 responses did not have a separate report to protect the confidentiality of individuals.
- 4.8. **Intuitive reports and faster reporting timescales:** This year there was faster reporting of results with the headline metrics being available within a week of the survey closing. This was followed by manager reports, benchmarking and open comments reports and access to the online reporting tool being available within three weeks of the survey's close. Previously managers had to wait for up to 3 months for the full reports to be available.
- 4.9. A total of **167 high quality manager reports** were produced across both Councils. These reports included in-depth information on teams including their overall results, engagement index and team comparisons. It also includes individual analysis for each manager recommending key areas to focus on to increase engagement in their teams. This 'key driver analysis' is a significant step forward in facilitating local action and improvement.

4.10. **Pulse surveys:** In addition to the annual staff survey, we have the functionality of conducting pulse surveys throughout the year. Pulse surveys allow us to conduct a temperature check at a moment in time on key themes/topics and have no more than 5 or 6 questions. These pulse checks link in to the approach used in the Annual Staff Engagement survey and going forward will enable us to have engagement as an on-going discussion item as opposed to once a year event.

5. Employee Engagement: Employee engagement is a workplace approach resulting in the right conditions for all members of an organisation to give of their best each day, committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success, with an enhanced sense of their own well-being.

5.1. David Macleod from Engage for Success describes it as "This is about how we create the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential".

5.2. Employee engagement is based on trust, integrity, two way commitment and communication between an organisation and its members. It is an approach that increases the chances of business success, contributing to organisational and individual performance, productivity and well-being. It is measured by the engagement index.

5.3. According to research conducted by Engage for Success:

- 5.3.1. Companies in the top quartile of employee engagement scores had 18% higher productivity than those in the bottom quartile.
- 5.3.2. 59% of engaged employees said that their job brings out their most creative ideas against 3% of those less engaged.
- 5.3.3. Companies with high levels of engagement show turnover rate 40% lower than companies with low levels of engagement.
- 5.3.4. Organisations with engagement in the bottom quartile average 62% more accidents than those in the top.
- 5.3.5. Companies with top quartile engagement scores average 12% higher customer advocacy.
- 5.3.6. Companies with engagement scores in the top quartile had twice the annual net profit of those in the bottom quartile.

6. Summary Highlight of Our Voice 2017

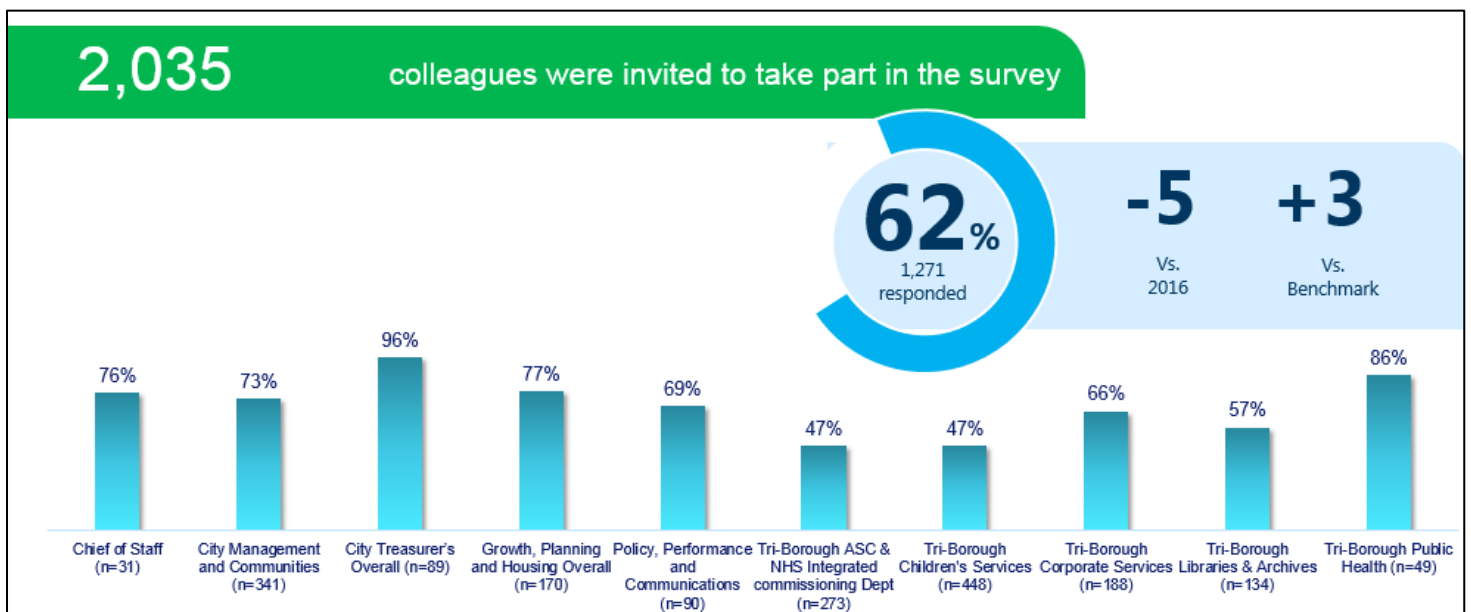
6.1. The survey ran from 18th September to 6th October 2017 across both councils. The timing of the survey coincided with very significant amounts of change across the Council which will have impacted on employees' perceptions. These include: Grenfell, major security activity, reorganisations for services such as Libraries & Archives and IT, the move from tri-borough to bi-borough services and the decant of staff from City Hall.

6.2. **Response rates:** The overall response rate for WCC was 62% in 2017 compared to 68% in 2016 and 72% in 2015. (The survey was managed by RBKC in 2015 and 2016). Although the response rate has dropped compared to last year, it is still above the Local Government Benchmark. (The response rate for RBKC reached 57%).

6.2.1. Feedback from the focus groups conducted by ORC prior to the revamp suggested that people had concerns about anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, they had concerns over the post-survey process and limited confidence in actions

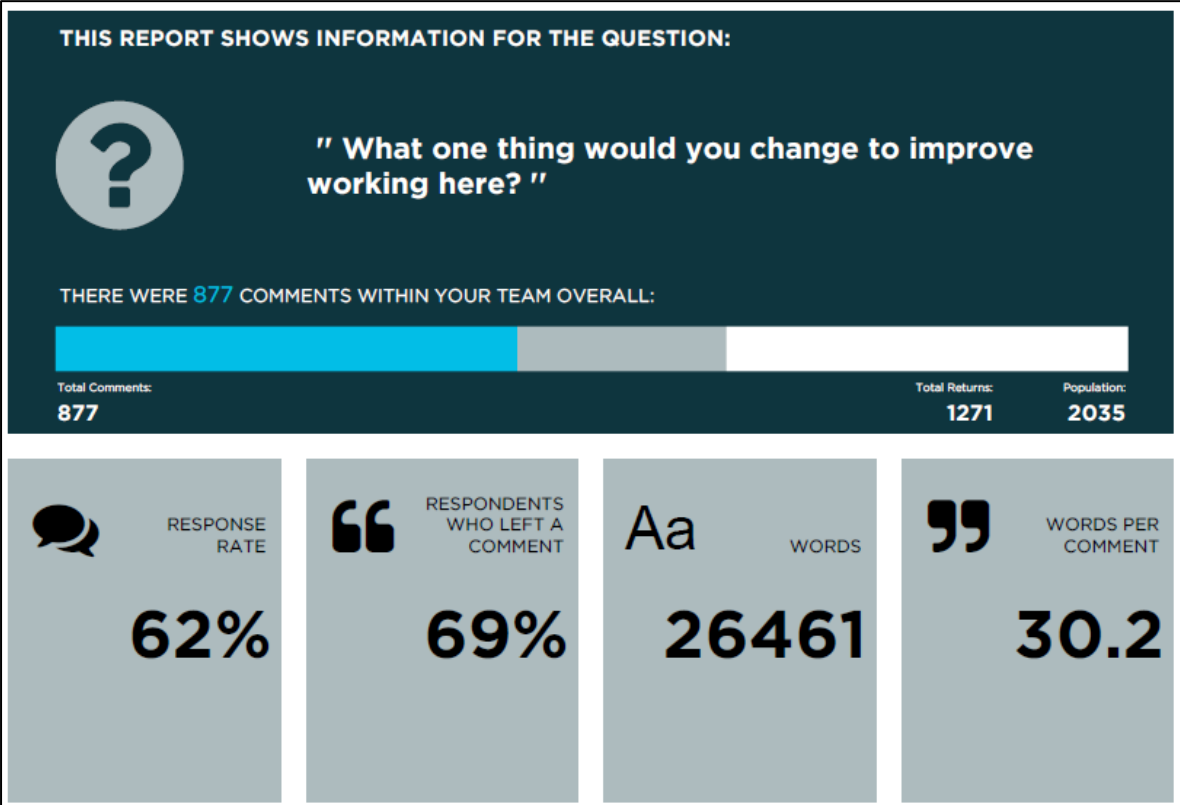
following the close of the survey which could have impacted on the response rates as evident by the decline since 2015.

- 6.2.2. In addition with the move to the unique individual access to the survey, in previous years' managers could send out a simple link to all people in their teams asking and reminding them to fill in the survey. This year people needed to respond to their individual email from ORC. There were a number of reminders sent but none of these came directly from their line manager so could have been overlooked or deprioritised. In addition, some teams had more than 100% response rate in 2016 which suggests people could have filled in more than once.
- 6.2.3. Feedback from the staff network following the close of the survey in 2017 further highlighted that people still had concerns about anonymity and confidentiality.
- 6.2.4. Response rates broken down by each directorate are provided below:



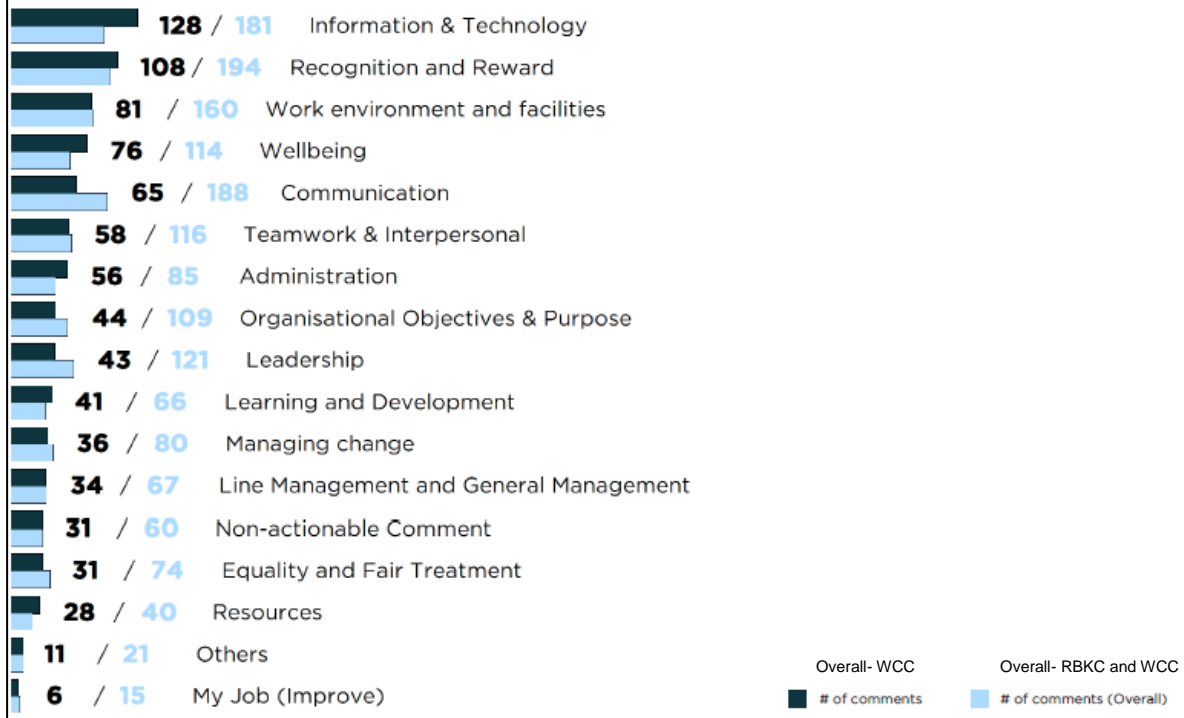
- 6.3. **Open comments:** There was one open comments question “What one thing would you change to improve working here?”

6.3.1. There were 877 comments for the council overall which were divided into 17 major themes as shown below:





There are **17** major themes and **58** sub themes



- 6.4. **Engagement Index:** There is a basket of 6 questions within the Engagement Index that measure staff engagement. This gives an average score out of 100% in terms of engagement. Westminster's Engagement Index for 2017 is 66%. The Engagement Index is a new baseline for the Council because it is made up of a new set of questions. Any comparisons to previous years would be misleading. Results can be compared to RBKC (57%) and, where the data, exists against external benchmarks.
- 6.4.1. The highest engagement score this year is for City Management and Communities at 70% followed by Growth, Planning & Housing at 67%.
- 6.4.2. The graphs below show questions that make up the engagement index and differences in engagement index by directorate.

Employee Engagement



Employee Engagement is measured through the Engagement Index which is made up of a basket of 6 questions. This gives an average score out of 100% in terms of engagement.

‘Say’ refers to the **pride and advocacy** employees have for the council

‘Stay’ refers to the **commitment and attachment** an individual feels towards the council

‘Strive’ is about how **motivated and inspired** employees are to help the council achieve

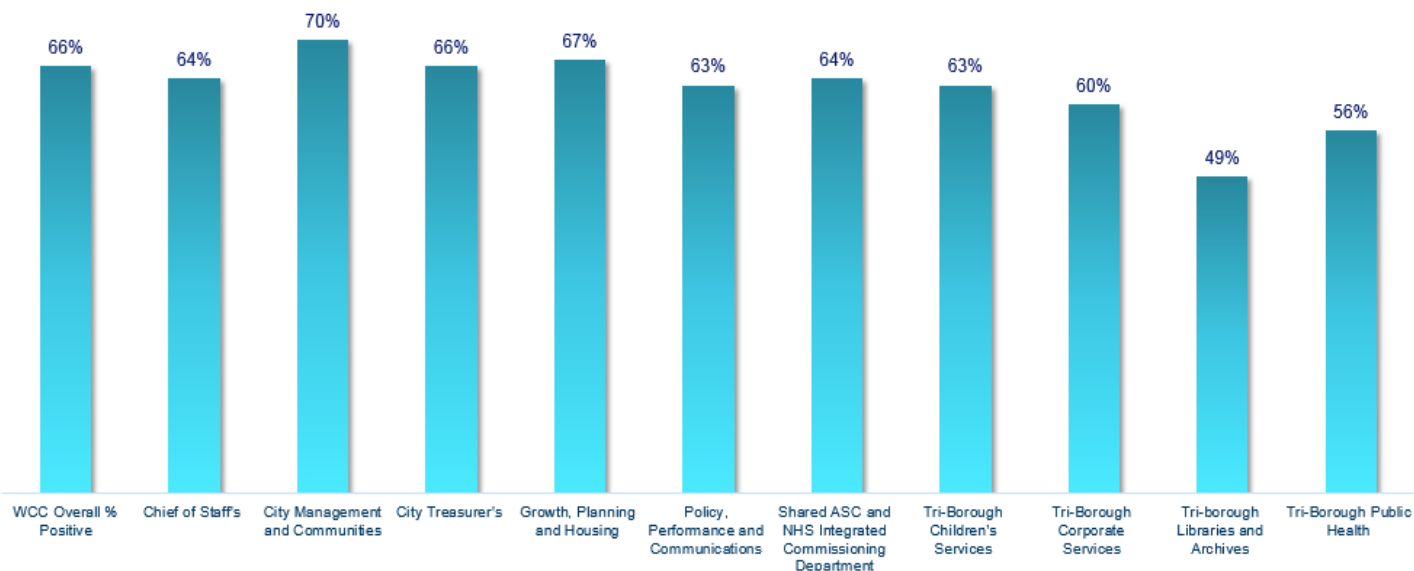
Say		Response Scale				% Positive	Trend	Variance from BM
Q30	I am proud to work for the Council	24	46	23	5	70%	-2	-1
Q31	I would recommend the Council as a great place to work	16	37	34	9	53%	-	-6
Q32	If I were a member of the public contacting the Council, I would be confident of a good service	12	44	33	8	56%	-	-

Stay		Response Scale				% Positive	Trend	Variance from BM
Q33	I feel a strong sense of belonging to the Council	13	38	34	11	50%	-4	-4

Strive		Response Scale				% Positive	Trend	Variance from BM
Q34	I am committed to helping the Council meet its goals and objectives	30	59	10	1	89%	+2	+3
Q35	Working here makes me want to do the best work I can	28	49	19	4	68%	+2	+2



Engagement Index- By directorate



6.5. **Comparison with 2016 results:** Half of the 36 questions in the survey were asked previously and therefore trend data is available for these 18 areas. The highlights are:

6.5.1. On 4 questions, WCC findings have increased by five percentage points or more compared to 2016.

6.5.2. On 5 questions, WCC findings have decreased by five percentage points or more compared to 2016.

The table below highlights that collaboration scores have dropped significantly compared to last year. This may be due to the move out of City Hall to other locations as suggested by the comment below:

“Mixed feelings about the agile working. Whilst it is true that the random nature of seating can lead to interesting, unexpected interactions, it is difficult to nurture a sense of team if the team is scattered”

Comparison with 2016 (5+ point rise)		Comparison with 2016 (5+ point fall)	
When changes have been made which affect my job, I have felt supported	+5%	I am treated with fairness and respect by the people I work with	-5%
I believe that senior managers understand the challenges facing our service	+5%	Considering my duties and responsibilities, I think my pay is fair	-5%
I think it's safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done	+8%	My line manager keeps me informed about issues that affect me directly	-6%
I have the equipment and resources I need to do my job	+22%	Senior managers are sufficiently visible where I work	-6%
		There is a great sense of collaboration in my team	-15%

6.6. **Highest and lowest scores:**

- The following three questions had the highest positive scores:
 - I am committed to helping the council meet its goals and objectives: 89%
 - I am treated with fairness and respect by the people I work with: 82%
 - In the last year, whilst working for the council, I have personally experienced bullying and/or harassment: 11% (this is 81% positive)

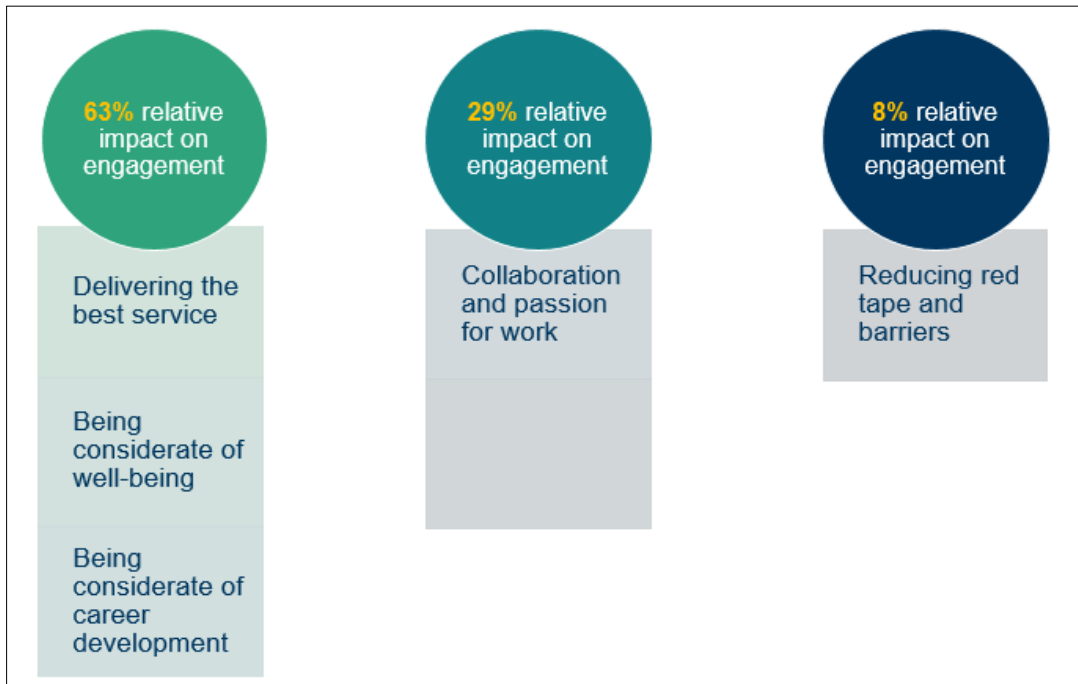
Commitment to helping the council meet its goals and objectives comes out very strongly and highlights the passion staff have for working in the council.

“I feel very much a part of a strong team that are moving in the right direction, new innovative projects are on going and upcoming and I very much enjoy being part of that. Communication between the team both on-site and off-site has improved greatly over the past few years and really goes some way to ensuring the sense of belonging to a larger team. I am not sure of anything major I would change currently”

- The following three questions had the lowest scores:
 - I am optimistic about my opportunities for career development: 36%
 - I feel the council is well prepared to meet the challenges of the future: 36%
 - Changes that impact on me are well managed: 37%

6.7 **Drivers of Engagement:** One of the key improvements this year is the introduction of a ‘key driver analysis’ for all teams. This investigates the relationships between questions and their relative impact on engagement and therefore enables managers and teams to focus on improving the right things within their service context. The analysis for the Council as a whole has revealed that key factors are the council delivering its promises on the best service and being considerate of the well-being

and careers of our staff (see image below). This has directly led to a corporate focus on the way we manage staff performance (see section 7.3).



Career development is clearly very important as suggested by the comment below.

"We need more flexibility to developing the people we have in the organisation to meet the future skills needs. E.g. more ways of identifying and developing talent and the ability to move them where they are needed within the organisation"

6.8 **Team Comparisons:** In the main, staff in shared services are less positive than those in sovereign services particularly around trust in senior managers, feeling prepared for the future and involvement in next steps. The wider context of shared services currently is clearly impacting scores. Although staff in sovereign services are more positive, there is opportunity for further improvement particularly around the key drivers of engagement. The work currently being done in Children and Adults services to launch the new Bi-Borough services with RBKC have taken into account the feedback from the staff survey. This has led to a number of workshops being run with staff to engage them fully in the process and allowing them to shape key areas of focus.

Team Comparisons



The questions on the survey are broken down into the following key themes and the overall score for each theme has been used for the break-down analysis by directorate below.

Roles and Responsibilities	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Informed and Equipped	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Support and Development	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Your Line manager	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Senior Managers	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Preparing for the future	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Next Steps	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health

Key	+ 5pp or more above WCC overall	-5pp or more below WCC overall
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6.9 **Comparison with Local Government (LG) benchmark:** The survey has continued to be benchmarked by ORC which provides a number of benchmark comparators from its global survey database. We continue to use the LG benchmark as our prime comparator. In Westminster there are 3 questions above, 12 questions in line and 4 questions below the LG benchmarks. Again in contrast, in 2016 there were 13 questions above, 38 questions in line and 3 questions below the LG benchmarks.

Above benchmark		In line with benchmark		Below benchmark	
I am treated with fairness and respect by the people I work with	+5%	I feel a strong sense of belonging to the council	-4%	There is a great sense of collaboration in my team	-14%
I have the equipment and resources I need to do my job	+8%	Considering my duties and responsibilities, I think my pay is fair	-4%	The council cares about my health and wellbeing	-9%
I think it's safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done	+9%	My line manager gives me regular and constructive feedback on my performance	-3%	I would recommend the council as a great place to work	-8%
		In the last year, whilst working for the council, I have personally experienced bullying and/or harassment	-3%	In my opinion the council is committed to delivering the best we can for our service users	-5%
		Changes that impact on me are well managed	-1%		
		I am proud to work for the council	-1%		
		My line manager motivates and inspires me to be more effective in my job	+1%		
		Working here makes me want to do the best work I can	+2%		
		My roles gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment	+2%		
		I am satisfied with the overall benefits package (e.g. annual leave, pension, season ticket loan, etc.)	+3%		
		I am committed to helping the council meet its goals and objectives	+3%		
		Senior managers are sufficiently visible where I work	+4%		

6.10 **Comparison with other benchmarks:** In addition to the LG benchmark, we also compared our results to other benchmarks such as private sector, central government, charities/not-for-profit etc. Some findings from these comparisons are below:

Where other sectors can learn from WCC:

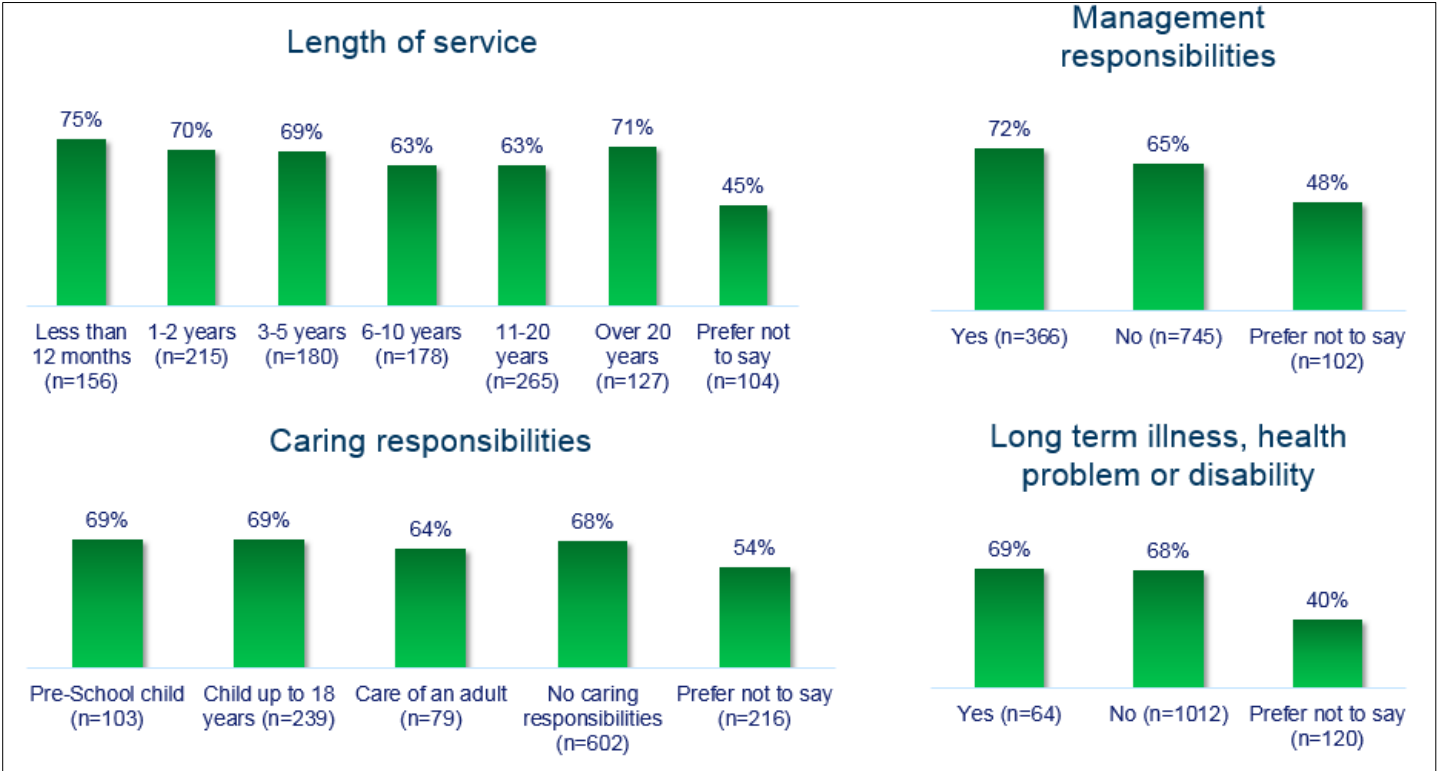
- On the question “I am committed to helping the council meet its goals and objectives”, whilst WCC scores are in line with local government benchmark, they are ahead of private sector, central government and charities/not-for-profit sectors.
- Similarly on the question “I am treated with fairness and respect by the people I work with”, WCC scores are at par with charities/not-for-profit and above central government, local government and private sector.

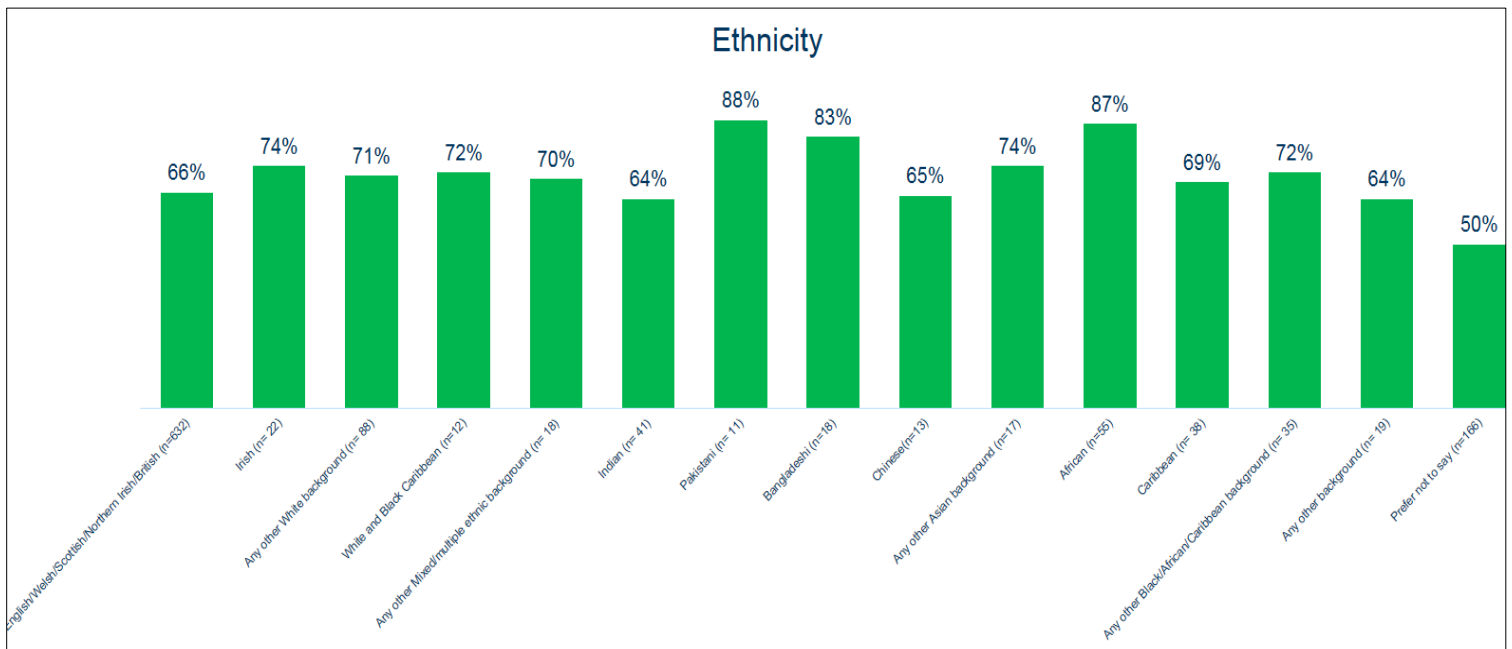
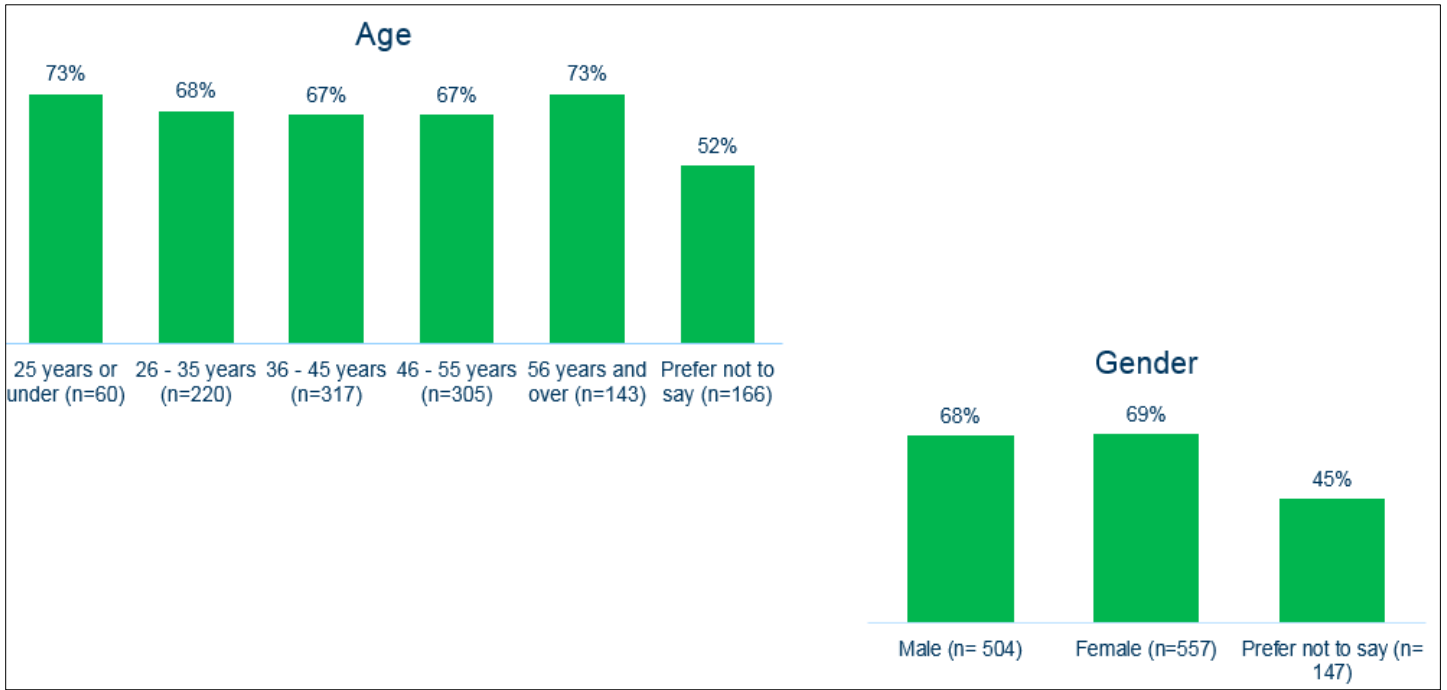
Where WCC can learn from other sectors:

- On the question “My organisation cares about my health and well-being”, WCC is 18% below private sector.
- WCC is 17% below private sector on the question “In my opinion the organisation is committed to delivering the best we can for our service users”.
- WCC is 15% below charities/not-for-profit and 14% below private sector on the question “I would recommend the council as a great place to work”.
- With regards to sense of belonging, the council is 15% below the private sector.
- WCC is 14% below charities/not-for-profit and 9% below private sector on the question “I am proud to work for the organisation”.
- WCC is 10% below private sector on the question “Changes that impact me are well managed”.

6.11 **Demographics:** The demographic data revealed the following:

- 6.11.1 Employee engagement is highest amongst staff who have worked in the council for less than 12 months at 75%. Engagement levels drop as the length of service increases and is lowest for staff who have been working in the council between 6-10 years and 11-20 years at 63% and increases significantly once people have been in the council for over 20 years at 71%.
- 6.11.2 Employee engagement is highest amongst staff who are 25 years or under and 56 years or over at 73%. However, between these two age groups, the level decreases as employees get older.
- 6.11.3 People with caring responsibilities of children are slightly more engaged (69%) than those with no caring responsibilities (68%). This is an area for Westminster City Council to celebrate as it is not typical of other organisations where the engagement scores of those with caring responsibilities are lower.
- 6.11.4 Similarly, people with disability are nearly as engaged (68%) as those with no disability (69%). Again an area for the council to celebrate as it is not typical of other organisations.
- 6.11.5 There is no significant difference in employee engagement between males (68%) and females (69%).
- 6.11.6 The most engaged ethnicity is Pakistani (88%) followed by African (87%). The lowest score on engagement is 64% for the Indian ethnicity but there is no significant difference from the average score (66%) and English/Welsh/Scottish/Norther Irish/British (66%).





7. Approach to Action planning and next steps

- 7.1. In previous years typically a date was set for action plans to be completed and sent back to HR. We found that in some cases this resulted in action plans being completed as a compliance exercise which lost momentum after submission. In addition, the staff survey audit report that followed the 2016 survey revealed that the action planning process was not only inconsistent but also weak at the lower levels. Furthermore, the Our Voice 2017 survey revealed that only 42% of staff believed they will have the opportunity to be involved in the actions following the survey. This shows that a fresh approach is required to following up on results.

- 7.2. To signify a change and to create a culture of action, we have changed the focus of our approach from policing action plans to facilitating on-going engagement and involvement of staff in actions following the results. This has meant that actions are led locally by directorates which are more targeted and based on the key focus areas identified in their reports. More specifically this has involved the following:
- Following publication of all manager reports on 16th November, each EMT member has held a meeting with their senior management team to discuss their directorate specific results and to use the survey and outcomes of it to inform work over the coming year for their service areas.
 - Culture of Action workshops facilitated by ORC's support have also taken place to equip leaders on tools and best practice that have helped them involve their teams and take action to improve the results both locally and across the council.
 - Following on from this, there have been extended management team sessions and discussions with staff through all staff drop ins or team meetings. Some directorates have held additional focus group sessions to explore the results further.
 - Key focus areas have been identified including areas that are both being celebrated and need improvement.
 - A follow up EMT discussion item was held in January where the EMT directors shared the actions and engagement activities from their service areas. (Appendix 2 provides a summary of key actions within each directorate).
 - Regular review meetings both at Senior Management team and individual team level have been planned over the next few months.
- 7.3. In addition to local actions, the biggest corporate response to the results will be to change the way we performance manage staff. Through this change, the council intends to move away from box-ticking appraisal form completion to regular forward-looking conversations where employees are in charge of driving their own performance and the manager's role is to provide coaching and feedback to help their employees improve their performance. This approach will encourage a stronger emphasis on the drivers of engagement by focussing on delivering the best service we can as a council and ensuring ongoing career development and well-being of our staff members is a higher priority within the organisation. The proposed changes to performance management is being developed and will be brought forward for Members to shape, consider and review.
8. **Next Steps:** It has been agreed that a pulse survey will take place on the 23rd of April to get a sense of how engaged and involved staff are feeling in having opportunities to be involved in action following the results. This is part of our new approach to create a culture of action and to ensure engagement is a rolling agenda item instead of an annual event based around completion of a box ticking action plan.