

Somerset County Council

Human Resources Committee
– 11 October 2022

Round One Culture Workshops

Executive Member: Cllr Liz Leyshon, Deputy Leader and Lead Member on Finance and Human Resources

Lead Officer: Chris Squire, Director of Customers, Digital & Workforce

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<i>Please complete sign off boxes below prior to submission to Community Governance</i>			
Report Sign off	Seen by:	Name	Date
	Legal	Tom Woodhams	5/10/22
	Corporate Finance	Jason Vaughan	5/10/22
	Human Resources	Chris Squire	5/10/22
	Executive Member	Liz Leyshon	5/10/22
	Monitoring Officer	Scott Wooldridge	5/10/22
Summary:	This report presents analysis from the unitary culture workshops that were run from April to July 2022. The workshops involved staff from all five authorities, and explored their experience of culture, what they would like to see in the new Somerset Council and what they would not like to bring through. The ambition is to involve staff in the creation of the People Strategy for Somerset Council and the vision & values for the new organisation.		
Recommendations:	The members of the HR Policy Committee are asked to: 1. Note the analysis and the feedback in the report 2. Provide support for continued staff engagement in this area.		
Reasons for Recommendations:	Work on creating a positive culture in Somerset Council is crucial, as we bring teams and services together through the unitary programme. A strong organisational culture is essential to the delivery and development of effective services to the people of Somerset.		
Links to Priorities	Part of the People Workstream for Local Government		

and Impact on Service Plans:	Reorganisation.
Financial, Legal and HR Implications:	<p>Financial – There are no financial implications to this work.</p> <p>HR – Work on the development of culture will have a positive impact on all aspects of HR work, including performance, recruitment, retention, sickness absence. There is of course an immediate minor impact on capacity to run these programmes, however this is an investment that should be made.</p> <p>Legal – There are no legal implications as a result of this work</p>
Equalities Implications:	There are no equalities implications that have come out of the First Round of Culture Workshops. A full Impact Assessment will be part of the development of the People Strategy.
Risk Assessment:	N/A
Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):	N/A

1 Background

- 1.1 Local Government in Somerset is being reorganised with the formation of a single unitary authority covering the work of the current County Council and four District Councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West & Taunton, and South Somerset) with effect from 1 April 2023 (Vesting Day). Somerset County Council remains as the continuing authority.
- 1.2 Work on developing culture for the new organisation was deemed to be a 'Tranche One' product in the Unitary Programme Plan.
- 1.3 Staff across all five local authorities were invited to take part in a series of workshops, with 15 sessions scheduled. The workshops were run either face-to-face, in locations across Somerset, or virtually. They were led by Helen Thomas, Head of HR at Sedgemoor District Council, and Chris Squire, Director of Customers, Digital & Workforce at Somerset County Council, and supported by members of the Culture & Behaviours sub-workstream within the LGR People Programme.
- 1.4 485 staff attended the sessions, with very positive comments received.
- 1.5 The data from the workshops has been analysed, including over 2,500 comments covering 100 themes. The top 5 themes include Communications, Ways of Working, Wellbeing, Collaboration/Partnerships and Leadership.

1.6 The themes were then analysed against the quotes from the workshops, showing what staff want to see and what they don't want to experience in the new council.

1.7 Information and contributions from the Workshops is being used to support the development of the Corporate Plan, Branding and Values for Somerset Council.

2 Options Considered

2.1 No other options have been explored, the Culture Workshops were developed within the People Workstream as the best way of talking with and listening to staff and their thoughts on culture.

3 Consultations Undertaken

3.1 Not applicable

4 Implications

4.1 The implications of this work are that staff will be involved at all levels in the creation of the 'look' and 'feel' of the new council, with a clear programme of continued engagement. This will have a positive impact on service design and delivery, as we bring teams and services together.

5 Background Papers

5.1 Presentation.