Committee(s): Professional Standards and Integrity Sub-Committee	Date(s): 07/12/2018
Subject: Staff Survey Response	**Public**
Report of: Commissioner of Police	**For Information**
Report author: T/Chief Inspector Luke Baldock, Strategic Development	

Summary

With reference to previous reports to Police Committee, Members will be aware that in September 2017, the City of London Police Chief Officer Team received the results of the Staff Survey. This was run by the University of Durham, who are widely respected as a national leader in Staff Surveys and used by many police forces and other public sector organisations across the country. City of London Police staff and officers were both invited to take part in the survey, and 57% of the workforce completed the survey. This is a very high level of participation compared to many other forces and demonstrates that City of London Police officers and staff are highly engaged and willing to communicate their views.

This report updates Members on plans moving forwards, to take the views expressed by staff and to respond in a way which demonstrates that City of London Police listens to its staff and responds by trying to improve as an organisation.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members receive this report and note its contents.

Main Report

1.) Background

The full detail of the Staff Survey is attached in a restricted appendix (Appendix A) at the end of this report. This is a highly detailed document and can be used as reference. This update to Members summarises the findings of the report, and the outcome of a series of focus groups held with staff after the publication of the report which adds detail to staff perceptions of issues raised in the main survey.

The Staff Survey results were delivered to the Chief Officer Team in a briefing by the University of Durham. Overall, the Force scored well in many areas. However, there were three main areas in which the force did not score as strongly. These are:

- **Hindrance Factors –** Things which are perceived as annoying and undermine optimum performance.
- **Organisational Fairness –** Also known as Procedural Fairness. This is a perception by staff that certain aspects of Force actions and processes are unfair (for instance selection/promotion processes.)
- **Supportive and Ethical Leadership –** This is a perception that staff do not always feel fully supported by their leaders. Durham University clarified that the Force still scored very highly in this area, but that it was not as strong as other areas of the survey results, and that public sector staff tend to have extremely high expectations in this area compared to the private sector.

Of these issues, perceived Hindrance Factors was outlined as the area which could have the most impact if improvements were made. Hindrance Factors/Stressors can be things, such as poor equipment or uniform, or day to day issues that make performing in the role more difficult for staff, such as perceived bureaucratic processes. When these things accumulate they can add to an overall perception of the job being made unnecessarily difficult. As a for instance, Durham Constabulary were able to reduce hindrance stressors after new pens were procured, which staff complained did not work in the rain and caused them issues whilst on patrol. By simply reverting to their old supplier they were able to demonstrate listening and reduce the sense of frustration felt by staff.

As a result of the findings, Organisational Development held a focus group with each Directorate across October and November 2017. This produced expanded detail on the Staff Survey findings with staff being asked to give specific thought to examples and things in their everyday work environment that triggered their response to the survey. This allowed Organisational Development to take a deeper dive into the issues highlighted by the survey. The focus groups were documented and the groups were made up of police officers and civilian staff at all ranks and grades. The focus groups highlighted an additional area which frustrates staff, this is:

- **Autonomy –** This is a perception at the time of the survey that staff lack the ability to make decisions themselves and are micro-managed, or unable to break down organisational barriers and bureaucracy to effective decision making.

2.) <u>Proposals</u>

Strategic Development and Organisational Development have worked jointly to devise an Action Plan to address the findings of the Staff Survey and formulate an effective response. This has led to a plan based on two main themes:

i) An effective way for staff to communicate their ideas, concerns or thoughts in a forum where they can receive answers to their questions and see action taken.
ii) A set of commitments based on the Focus Group feedback aiming to address issues raised by staff.

2.1) Staff Communication – Talkback

In the original response to the Staff Survey, "Talkback" was launched. This was an online forum where staff could communicate with each other, post questions and receive answers on issues that affected them. This launched in May 2018 after being developed and built from scratch. There is a main page banner on the Force Intranet home page for staff to select this and post on the site, with the site being simple and straightforward to use. Staff could post on the site based upon the main themes identified in the Staff Survey, with the ability to also post under "and another thing" for any other issues. At launch, there was significant activity, but it quickly became apparent that without co-ordination and moderation, the Talkback idea was not providing the responses that staff were expecting. As a result, activity on the Talkback page has decreased significantly. Talkback had originally been planned as a forum style communication tool, but it was clear that staff were mainly posting questions on there with the expectation of receiving an answer. However, when these answers were not always forthcoming, staff were quick to disengage.

In response to this, it is clear that Talkback needs to be proactively managed, with the posted questions acknowledged, and answers sought on staff's behalf. It was also clear that some staff were uncomfortable with the fact that Talkback has to be posted from a named account, with no ability for posts to be anonymous. Whilst it is desirable for staff to feel confident to raise issues without feeling the need for anonymity, it is also important to allow for anonymous posts so that individuals are not put off.

Looking at successful approaches to this issue used by other Forces, an effective system has been identified which utilises an Advocacy system. This involves the Force advertising for individuals who are passionate and proactive about improving the way the Force engages, and once identified, to form a cohort of "Talkback Advocates." The idea is to have Advocates across the organisation in as many departments as possible. They can provide visible peer support to staff across the organisation, and also post questions or thoughts on Talkback, on behalf of colleagues who do not want to be identified. The Advocates can be proactive in seeking opinions and putting them on Talkback. They can also monitor posts and seek answers on behalf of individuals posting. This will aim to address the issues which emerged with the original Talkback, and it can be relaunched once the Advocates are in place to raise awareness with appropriate messaging from Corporate Communications.

Utilising Chief Officer Team support, there will be a recruitment campaign for Advocates published, with a view to build the cohort by the end of 2018. They can then be briefed by cascade and provided with information and tools to assist them in the role. This initiative is wholly supported by the Chief Officer Team, and that Advocates will be given relevant support as is reasonable when seeking answers or information on behalf of people posting on Talkback.

Talkback will then be relaunched in early January 2019, with the idea of a "New Year, New Start" style communications campaign produced by Corporate Communications. They will work with the Assistant Commissioner to produce appropriate communications to raise awareness of this.

Talkback will have a "wall" where staff can post their issues and receive responses. Also, it will have a rotating theme section, where the organisation can pose questions on topical themes (eg Talent Development) with a view to promoting discussion and seeking staff opinions on these topics. Individual departments will be able to have a question placed on the rotating theme if they are seeking staff opinions on initiatives or ideas.

2.2) Focus Group Feedback – 8 Key Issues

As a result of the Focus Groups, Strategic Development and Organisational Development have now worked to assess the feedback, and have identified 8 Key Issues which come up most frequently. These are:

- **Career and talent development opportunities and pathways –** staff feel the pathways to develop careers or talent are not always clear.
- **Informal recognition –** Recognition is good for very high level achievements such as acts of bravery or positive outcomes from protracted investigations, but a better process for day to day good work is lacking. This often tends to be brief e-mails from the Chair of Daily Management Meeting and lacks a personal touch from individual Directorate senior leaders. As an example, one officer mentioned how the MPS use "Quality Service Reports" (QSR) as a more formal type of recognition which would be in between a simple thank you and a high level commendation. The QSR could then be added to staff HR records for more noteworthy good work.
- **Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Visibility –** There is a perception that leaders across the organisation are not visible enough. This is noted in both officer and staff feedback. For instance, popping in for team meetings, attending musters etc. There is a feeling that this does not happen enough and is mentioned from Chief Officer Team level down to local SLT level.
- **Projects and Initiatives –** There is a perception that the same individuals/ group of people are always selected for projects/ initiatives with no process as to how they are allocated. This means that individuals feel they are not being given equitable access to specific opportunities.
- **Inconsistency of management/leadership style –** Staff stated that many managers have divergent approaches to management processes meaning it is difficult to work consistently.
- **Team Engagement –** Staff feel that their line managers do not make enough time for team meetings in a more informal setting, for instance, "coffees in the canteen" style meetings. These would be unstructured, informal meetings of teams to allow conversation to flow and bonds to form. This represents more of a challenge for front line responders and will require careful consideration.
- **Wellbeing –** Staff felt that the Force Wellbeing Programme could be better supported at an organisational level, with too much reliance on hard working volunteers and the Wellbeing Network.
- **Autonomy –** There is a perception of too much micro management, and too many bureaucratic hurdles (especially in regard to procurement). These issues could be alleviated by giving staff more autonomy to make decisions.

With many of these themes, there are already plans underway to address them. For instance, the Talent Development Working Group has been formed and has been holding events around Talent Development and Continuing Professional Development. The Management Development Programme has been launched and is set to provide support to achieve more consistent and effective management support. The Force is working to assess if communication of these initiatives could be improved to allow staff to better understand what is being done.

The plan to address this is for each of the 8 Key Themes to be given an owner. That owner will be responsible for populating an Action Plan to turn the Key Issue into a Commitment. Each Issue, Owner and associated Action Plan will be published on the Organisational Development Portal of the Force Intranet, this will be a clickable link which will allow staff to see the status of each plan, and the most recent actions taken, with the owner of the plan updating what has been done.

Again, Corporate Communications will assist with this and ensure the Commitments are publicised with a news article on the main page to raise awareness. This will help demonstrate to staff that relevant action is being taken as a result of the outcomes of the Staff Survey and follow up Focus Groups; that staff have been listened to and their concerns acted upon.

3.) Chief Officer Lead and Communications

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Alistair Sutherland has taken ownership as the Chief Officer Team Lead for the Staff Survey response. Corporate Communications will work with the AC to populate an appropriate communications plan.

The intention is to produce a news article communications piece where the AC can talk about his support for the Talkback Advocates, and encourage people to sign up. The AC will also be able to task Directorate Heads with cascading the message and identifying suitable people who may wish to be involved within their respective Directorates.

The AC can also talk about the 8 Key Commitments the Force is aiming to address as a result of the Staff Survey Feedback and the actions that will be taken around this to show that this is being supported by the Chief Officer Team. Durham University's research has shown that Chief Officer buy in is critical to ensure staff support and trust in actions taken.

4.) Timescales

Corporate Communications are now drafting communications pieces and working on the Talkback website to update it to the new design. The aim is to advertise through the Force intranet and Directorate Heads to identify Talkback Advocates throughout December 2018, and ensure that they are prepared and briefed by the end of December.

During this time, owners will also be identified for each of the 8 Key Commitments to populate Action Plans, and the Organisational Development website will be prepared to be able to publish these plans accompanied by a main page news story.

As previously mentioned, the aim will then be to launch the new and improved Talkback, along with the 8 Key Commitments at the start of January 2019 with a "New Year, New Start" style feel to the campaign.

Timeline summary:

- News article outlining commitments and plans -   End of November 18
- Recruitment of Talkback Advocates -   During December 18
- Identify Action Plan owners and populate plans -   During December 18
- Launch of Talkback and Publish 8 Commitments -   Early January 19

5.) Monitoring

It is proposed that the Assistant Commissioner will monitor the progress of Talkback and the 8 Commitments as a quarterly agenda item at the Organisational Learning Forum.

This will hold Action Plan owners to account and ensure active progress against the commitments.

6.) Conclusion

This "two-pronged" approach aims to demonstrate a clear plan to staff on issues raised in the last Staff Survey. Whilst the Force had excellent engagement rate, and overall very good scores there are always ways in which we can improve. The 8 Key Commitments aim to address this.

Also, through Talkback Advocates there will now be a peer support network to enable staff to regularly communicate issues on an ongoing basis, with a clear way for these to be picked up, addressed and, where possible answers provided or change made to address issues.

As aforementioned, this is set to launch in January 2019 with a view to being able to demonstrate real progress before the next survey launches in order to build confidence that taking part in the survey leads to real results.

It is noted that there have been delays in this process, and we aim to openly acknowledge this on communications material to show staff the organisation is committed to making improvements and to address the issues raised.

These plans have been approved in principle by the AC and an accompanying Action Plan has been produced with owners for each action being currently sought.

Restricted Appendix

- Appendix A – Original Staff Survey Report

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