

Croydon **Renewal** Plan: Staff engagement report

November, 2020

Key overall findings

- Strong, palpable anger and vitriol towards senior management
- Lack of trust in senior management which has amplified sense of uncertainty, unease and anxiety
- Inconsistent health and well being support from managers, examples of exemplary and poor practices
- Fragmented engagement and communication from senior management with often low visibility
- Lack of accountability and taking responsibility
- Silo working which increases costs
- Technology was seen as an enabler that allowed for flexibility but also a vice as expectation that you are available all the time and 'MicroSoft Teams fatigue' is creeping in.
- In some cases working from home is creating isolation and affecting mental health and wellbeing as long term arrangements is uncertain
- Staff want to know what moving forward looks like, what is the plan?. "We are not working from home, we are at home trying to work". to share their insights.
- A number of low hanging fruit – 'actionable ideas' that are worth immediate attention

Survey highlights and lowlights

- **1003** responses, equivalent to **28%** of staff
- **738** respondents gave ideas of what we can implement immediately to achieve a balanced budget this year
- **97%** of respondents support the need for a Croydon Renewal Plan, with **51%** feeling they can offer meaningful contributions to establishing a balanced budget
- **86%** of respondents feel connected to their team and manager during the pandemic, however only **69%** feel connected to the council as a whole
- **51%** are proud to work for the council, **21%** are not proud, **21%** are ambivalent
- **56%** of respondents feel the organisation supports them in their health and wellbeing, however **73%** enjoy working from home with the new technology
- **59%** of respondents agree that our council leaders are communicating and managing the public health (Covid-19) pandemic well

Focus group highlights and lowlights

- **147** participants, **762** comments recorded
- “We cannot change how the senior management had handled things previously to get us in this predicament but we can be hopeful of better things with this new CEO and her approach.”
- “CEO needs to listen to the staff on the ground, we often tell the true story of the service the positive AND the negatives and it is the only way of really knowing what is happening. Staff are positive and want to see the changes.”
- “Culture change - look at us as a croydon council employer - do what you need to do to achieve an outcome - flattening the structure as opposed to silo working.”
- “On the surface, statements are made about concerns for staff and their well being but not in practice.”

Staff feedback: where we need to move to

Where we are	Where we need to move to
Current narrative is jarring for the reality for the council, reflects former leadership	A hopeful, inclusive and sustainable new narrative about our future and aspirations developed and shared by all
Distrust/lack of trust in senior management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competent, accountable management role modelling expected behaviours and our values.• All staff have confidence in leadership, feel they can speak truth to power and do not fear reprisals for respectful challenge.
Passive staff voice in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff voices heard and active involvement in shaping our future• New psychological contract with staff setting out mutual expectations, from operational staff to officers and leaders
Silo working & decision making – lack of empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative/partnership working is norm• Restructure/reorganise along lines of core services
Low levels of resilience	Focus on wellbeing initiatives and support for staff both working remotely or in work to support positive mental health and connection to the council

Staff say we need to do these things first:

- Reset the organisation & be clear on what a resilient culture and workforce looks and feels like
- Recognise that there are systemic constraint/barrier to true engagement and collaboration and address the issues inclusively
- Retain our best talent; work collaboratively and harness strengths cross-functionally to make this happen
- Improve leadership & management capability in key areas, esp. financial management
- Improve health and well being support

Our recommendations

RESETTING

- Take steps to create a psychologically safe environment
- Start with a clear vision and set of values which are shared across the council.
- Structure is a vital element of delivering the vision and values but it has to be complemented by the right systems, strategy, skills set, workforce planning, and working style of the new organisation.
- Follow through with feedback loop for survey and focus group (Croydon Renewal Plan)
- Embed good practice management and leadership positive behaviours within the organisation.
- Train Managers in supporting staff with mental health and promoting well being.

Thank you