

Personnel Committee

16 July 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	RBC Staff Survey Action Plans
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Louise Duffield, Executive Director Resources
Report author	Kathryn Cook, Director HR&OD
Lead Councillor	Councillor Ruth McEwan
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	1. That Personnel Committee notes the current corporate and service staff survey action plans

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The results of the 2025 staff survey and the corporate action plan were shared with Personnel Committee at its meeting on 12th March 2026. This report provides an update to Personnel Committee (as requested at that meeting) about the corporate and service staff survey action plans that were developed to address the issues that arose from the survey.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Council recognises its people are its greatest asset and aims to be an employer of choice. The Council's people strategy outlines four focus areas: Attract, Engage, Develop, Recognition & Reward to ensure an engaged and motivated workforce. The Council's Inclusion and Diversity strategy's aim is to have "an inclusive culture where we can all do our best work and thrive".
- 2.2. The regular staff survey enables the Council to understand employee experiences at work and identify areas that are working well and areas for improvement.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1 The staff survey was open for 5 weeks from 10 November to 12 December 2025. The survey consisted of 58 questions, plus questions on the respondent's directorate, service area and work location plus optional diversity questions related to protected characteristics and care experience. There were 1235 responses to the survey which represents 52% of the Council's workforce (excluding schools) - this was an increase on last year's response rate of 43%. Overall the results were very positive, showing increases in positive scores for the vast majority of the questions and improvements in scores for the majority of actions taken as a result of the previous staff survey.

3.2 Corporate actions

As the Committee was advised at its meeting in March, six themes for action were identified corporately. These were:

- **Improving Leadership impact** including more regular communication and listening sessions; continuing to encourage staff to speak up; strengthening leadership and management development and continuing to develop the regular 'Team Talk' programme
- **ICT and change programmes** including acting on feedback-becoming more of a learning organisation; putting user experience at the centre from day one; better understanding the 'change-load' on staff; clearer communication about why changes are happening; involving Digital Champions and Change Makers more effectively and involving staff groups to support inclusion and better outcomes
- **Bullying & Harassment** including targeted support; working with staff groups to improve experiences; mandatory training for all managers; supporting collective learning
- **Culture** including focusing on our Team Reading value: "Working Together"; creating more opportunities for collaborative learning; refreshing our Staff Awards; driving collaboration across the organisation; improving internal processes; embedding inclusion and shaping our future strategy

3.3 Executive Director Service plans

Each DMT has been provided with the detailed analysis of responses from their teams and have identified priority areas for action within each Directorate. These action plans build on (but do not duplicate) the corporate action plans.

The themes for each are as follows:

3.3.1 DEGNS:

Leadership & Culture including actions to ensure appraisals are completed in a timely way (including grandparenting); quarterly Extended Management Meetings and Away Days to build relationships, support development and training and model expected leadership behaviours; showcase employee achievements at DEGNS All Staff Briefings; providing clarity on priorities and support workload conversations

Bullying & Harassment including actions to analyse HR casework to understand grievance cases and identify where we can act earlier; setting up a staff reference group to explore issues and reinforce channels for reporting through communications.

Health and Wellbeing including actions to create a DEGNs Wellbeing Action Plan; to develop a Staff garden at Civic; to advertise REDA walking tours and other initiatives

3.3.2 DCASC:

Workload & Capacity including actions to monitor caseloads, demand & wellbeing; challenge the norm to stop non-value work; strengthen workforce capacity (ASC & Housing); clarify priorities and customer focused activity; embed workload conversations & escalation routes

Rewards & Benefits including actions to benchmark roles and review market alignment; implementation of the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES); strengthen career pathways & secondment opportunities; increase recognition (STAR, peer & Customer feedback); improve visibility of pay, progression & rewards

ICT Systems including actions to identify key system 'pain points' through staff input; provide targeted ICT training and develop super users; deliver system fixes and reduce duplication; use AI and digital tools to improve efficiency

Leadership & Culture including actions to establish a clear communication rhythm and engagement; increase leadership visibility and listening opportunities; strengthen manager communication and cascade; deliver cross-directorate priorities to improve collaboration

Bullying & Harassment including actions to strengthen leadership accountability, embed early intervention and manager development and increase transparency and consistency in case handling

3.3.3 DOR:

Communication: – Whole directorate engagement – ED hosted quarterly sessions, bi-monthly in person DoR management sessions, increased cascading and feedback, team meetings in all teams, tools, newsletter/blog.

Collaboration and customer focus: - Continue and extend our cross-directorate collaboration, focus on reducing silos and duplication of work, thinking customer first.

Leadership: - Senior leaders at team meetings, visible leadership through shadowing and listening sessions, steering group to ensure the staff survey action plan is delivered, focus on quality in our 1-1s.

Workload and Opportunity: – Improved prioritisation and planning, what can we stop?, development and training opportunities (esp. IT and leadership).

Specific Director level action plans to focus further on specific needs of services/teams.

3.3.4 DOCS

Visible, Accessible Leadership including actions to connect from Day One - meet the DOCS Leadership team; open Access to Leadership – informal drop-in sessions with the ED are now open – no agenda, just a safe space; more Visible Leadership – spending time in your workspaces; ‘You said, we did’ – regular updates – hold us accountable

Communication & Engagement including actions to reintroduce the Staff Newsletter (Monthly); continue Quarterly Roadshows - Celebrate our ‘Bright Stars’ ; introduce Managers Briefing Packs; pulse Surveys & Quick polls; exit interviews

Collaboration & One Council Working including actions to raise awareness of what DOCS does; create opportunities to connect and tackling challenges together

Wellbeing, Values & Workload including actions to target support where it’s needed; recognise our Bright Stars; improve workloads

Confidence, Voice & Speaking Up including actions to create safe spaces to talk; social Graces roll out; strengthen Anti Racist Practice; strengthen support for managers

- 3.4 All action plans are in delivery and there is a formal communication plan in place to ensure that staff are kept up to date on progress in implementing these plans. The timing for the follow up staff survey will be confirmed to Personnel Committee at its meeting in November 2026.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The report supports insights into employee experience at work and actions to address issues identified to “Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future”.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. Not applicable to this report

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. Not applicable to this report

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. The staff survey is open to employees including those without a reading.gov.uk account. The survey includes diversity questions to enable analysis of results for specific groups. The diversity questions were reviewed this year and updated to ensure all nine

protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 were covered and the Council's additional tenth characteristic "care experienced".

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1. None

9. Legal Implications

9.1. None.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 None

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. Actions plans have been timetabled and implementation has commenced. Progress will be regularly reviewed and communicated pending a decision about the timing of the next full survey.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.