

REPORT TITLE: UPDATE ON EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE SURVEY 2024

26 SEPTEMBER 2024

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Neil Cutler Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the third Employee Attitude Survey (EAS) which took place in June 2024. The results were shared with colleagues via the HR intranet site and signposting in City Voice in early August.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report of the 2024 Employee Attitude Survey be noted.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

The engagement and performance of the Council's workforce is critical to the delivery of all outcomes set out in the Council Plan.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None. The survey was undertaken 'in-house' therefore no additional budget was required.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

None.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

Employees are critical to the delivery of the council's services and priorities and monitoring and reporting on employee attitudes enables enhanced employee engagement and performance.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

None.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The results have been shared with senior management, Unison and the Staff Forum. Results will be published on the intranet and colleagues will be made aware of the results through an article in City Voice.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

None.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

This was an internal survey. An equality impact assessment was completed and indicated that carrying out the survey did not impact on any group with protected characteristics.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This raw data from individual employees was subject to the council's data protection controls. The results published are anonymised and therefore can have no impact on an individual's privacy rights under data protection law.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure <i>Low employee engagement leading to high staff turnover and increased recruitment and agency costs.</i>	Ongoing employee attitude and engagement monitoring to enable early identification and remedial action to avoid retention difficulties.	Promotion of the council as an employer of choice.
Exposure to challenge <i>Spend of public money on an internal survey.</i>	Survey conducted in-house to minimise cost.	Positive results from survey can be used in recruitment materials.
Reputation <i>Failure to deliver public services and the Council Plan due to reduced workforce capacity, leading to public criticism and/or adverse local media coverage.</i>	Ongoing employee attitude and engagement monitoring to enable early identification and remedial action where retention difficulties could impact on the Council's ability to deliver public services and the Council Plan.	Identify and implement targeted employment initiatives and actions to increase employee engagement and minimise staff turnover. Promote the council as an employer of choice.
Achievement of outcome <i>Low employee engagement leading to poor performance and high recruitment & retention difficulties.</i>	Annual employee attitude survey to monitor trends and identify and address potential issues.	Early identification of emerging negative attitudes to inform timely initiatives and actions to avoid these becoming business critical.

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 The 2024 Employee Attitude Survey (EAS) ran for four weeks over the period 3 – 28 June 2024. The purpose of the survey is to find out how employees feel about various aspects of their working lives at the council and to inform senior managers and elected members how engaged employees are with their work and the Council as a whole.
- 11.2 A summary of the overall results is provided at Appendix 1.
- 11.3 This is the third survey managed internally by HR following the accepted recommendation to A&G that a survey be undertaken every 12 months. Repeating the survey at the same time each year allows the council to monitor trends and identify areas of concern and intervene accordingly. It also provides a means of measuring the impact of any initiatives implemented because of issues identified in the previous year's survey.

- 11.4 At the time of the survey, the Council employed 454 staff (headcount). The survey achieved a participation rate of 66% which is considered good by industry standards.
- 11.5 The survey was hosted on Citizen Space, a digital platform widely used across the public sector for the design, publication, management, and analysis of consultation activity. All staff received a link to the survey via their work email address and were able to complete the survey during working time. To facilitate participation, HR would have provided the survey in an alternative format if requested.
- 11.6 The survey asked employees to consider the same 14 statements as those used in the 2022 and 2023 survey and indicate if they strongly agree; agree; neither agree or disagree; disagree; or strongly disagree. This allows for direct comparison of results between surveys. A summary of the 'Agree' results only for each survey question over the past three years is provided in this report. For convenience, this report will combine the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' to give the percentage of responses.
- 11.7 Demographic data on gender, age and length of service in addition to service area was also collected. HR will analyse the demographic data. This will allow any issues concerning Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to be addressed.
- 11.8 Appendix 2 shows a comparison of 2023 and 2024 results and highlights changes of more than 3%.
- 11.9 The survey also included a free text section to provide employees with the opportunity to add any comments they wished to make, and a summary of the comments received is attached at Appendix 3. Individual comments are not provided because of the risk of identification of the employees who submitted comments.

Summary of 'Agree' results for each statement over the last three years

11.9 The table shows the combined 'Agree' (i.e. 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree') scores for all questions for the three years of the survey and highlights indicates changes of more than 3% between the 2023 and 2024 results.

No	Statements	2022 %	2023 %	2024 %
1	I enjoy my work at the council.	78.7	84.4	83.6
2	I will still be working at the council in 12 months' time.	69.0	71.1	74.6
3	I would recommend the council as a great place to work to my family and friends.	61.0	71.8	71.2
4	I am proud to work for the Council.	71.1	73.1	74.9
5	I am able to get the training and development I need to be successful at work.	71.4	71.4	70.2
6	I have the equipment I need to be successful at my work.	72.8	74.8	80.3
7	My line manager gives me regular feedback on my performance at work.	76.7	75.9	76.6
8	My line manager cares about me as a person.	86.4	85.4	80.3
9	The colleagues in my team are supportive and friendly.	93.7	95.2	94.6
10	The Council takes the health and well-being of its employees seriously.	67.6	73.8	73.2
11	The Council is committed to ensuring equality at work for all its employees.	69.3	74.8	73.6
12	I understand the key objectives of my service.	91.6	90.1	89.6
13	I understand the top priorities for Winchester City Council.	72.1	80.6	78.9
14	I would say that changes at work are communicated to employees quickly and clearly.	45.0	54.8	45.8

11.10 Key highlights/trends to note:

- Year on year increase for questions about still working for the council in 12 months' time (74.6%), pride in the council (74.9%) and having the right equipment (80.3%) is good news:
 - o Most employee surveys will include a statement about intentions to remain as this is a strong indicator of whether employees are happy with their current employer. This is particularly salient given the widely reported recruitment and retention challenges in the public sector. High positive scores for being proud to work for the Council reinforces this strong result and indicates high employee engagement.
 - o Having the necessary equipment was identified as a particular area to address following last year's survey therefore it is pleasing that the agree responses to this statement have increased and disagree scores

decreased from 12.2% in 2023 to 7.0% in 2024. At 5.2% difference, this question saw the biggest decrease in negative scores compared to all other questions.

- The statements concerning enjoying working for the council; recommending the council as a good place to work; supportive and friendly colleagues; health and wellbeing; equality; and employee communications have scored slightly lower than last year but remain higher than 2022 scores.
- High positive scores for questions about enjoying working for the council (83.6%); pride in the council (74.9%); and recommending the council as a good place to work (71.2%) indicate high “employee engagement”. Gallup defines employee engagement as the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in their work and workplace. HR research shows that organisations with high employee engagement are more likely to have higher levels of performance and productivity and lower levels of sickness and grievances.
- Positive scores (76.6%) for the question about regular manager feedback on performance saw a restoration to 2022 (76.7%) levels after a slight decline in 2023 (75.9%). This year’s increase would suggest the simplified appraisal process introduced in 2023 has embedded and is having a positive impact.
- The statement ‘My line manager cares about me as a person’ is possibly the most important question in the whole survey and HR literature shows that people are motivated to do their very best work if they have a good working relationship with their line manager. Positive scores have decreased year on year, however this was the second highest ‘strongly agree’ scoring statement (44.48%). A strong positive response of 80.3% highlights the positive culture at the council where the well-being of employees is regularly discussed by managers.
- There was a very slight decline in positive scores (94.6%) for the statement about ‘supportive and friendly’ colleagues compared to last year (95.2%) but still above 2022 (93.7%) and still a very high score. This is a very strong response and an excellent result given that hybrid working means fewer opportunities for employees to spend time together at work.
- The question about equality at work saw a very slight decline this year at 73.6% compared to 74.8% last year however this score remains above 2022 at 69.3% and still a very positive score.
- Positive scores for the question about corporate priorities declined slightly in 2024 (78.9%) compared to 2023 (80.6%) but remains higher than 2022 (72.1%). Scores for the question about service priorities saw a similar

pattern. It is not unusual for employees to know more about their immediate objectives than the higher priorities of the overall organisation. However, HR will consider whether this is an area that needs more attention in the corporate induction process.

- Positive scores for the question about employee communications have reduced (45.8%) from last year (54.8%) but remain slightly higher than 2022 (45%). This question also had the highest negative response with 23.08% employees disagreeing (strongly disagree and agree). This is an area that was highlighted for action following last year's survey and will continue to be an area for discussion. HR will work with Corporate Communications, Corporate Heads of Service and Unison to explore how this score can be improved in 2025.

Summary and actions

11.11 Overall, the survey indicates very positive feedback for the Council as an employer.

11.12 The following action points will be taken as a result of this year's survey:

- The Executive Leadership Board (ELB) and Corporate Heads of Service (CHOS) will continue to monitor their teams to ensure that regular appraisals, six-month review meetings, one to one meetings and team meetings are taking place.
- HR will analyse the demographic data to see if any issues arise concerning equalities (age or gender) and report back to ELB if necessary.
- HR will review the induction process and consider whether information about the 'corporate'/whole Council' is an area that needs to be strengthened.
- Efforts will continue to improve the rating for Communications to employees and will be discussed at the regular Unison/HR meeting agenda.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Previous Committee Reports

AG079 Workforce Report 2021/22, 29 June 2022

AG085 Update on Employee Attitude Survey and Related Matters, 10 November 2022

AG102 Workforce Report 2022/23, 20 July 2023

AG114 Update on Employee Attitude Survey 2023, 28 September 2023

AG126 Workforce Report 2023/24, 18 July 2024

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Employee Attitude Survey 2024 – summary of overall results.

Appendix 2 - Comparison of 2023/2024 'Agree' results showing changes of more than 3%

Appendix 3 - Summary of employee comments added to survey response

Appendix 1

Employee Attitude Survey - June 2024

<https://winchester.citizenspace.com/human-resources/bb730e1b>

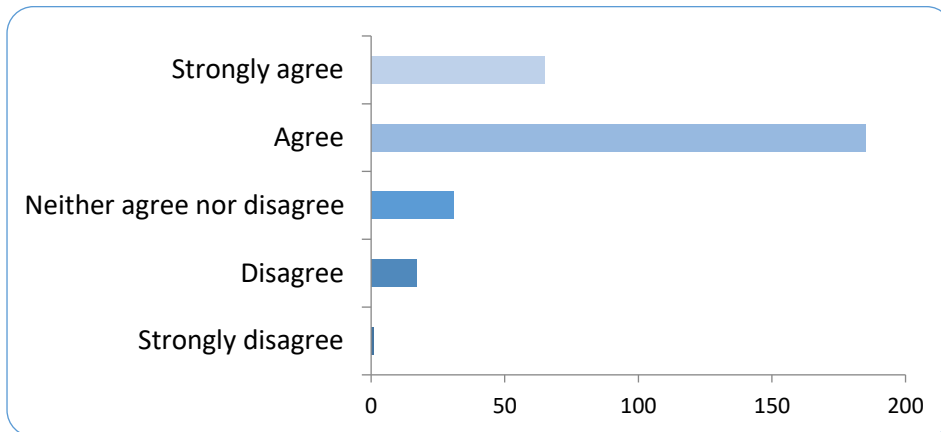
This report was created on Monday 01 July 2024 at 09:18

The activity ran from 03/06/2024 to 28/06/2024

Responses to this survey: **299**

1: I enjoy my work at the council.

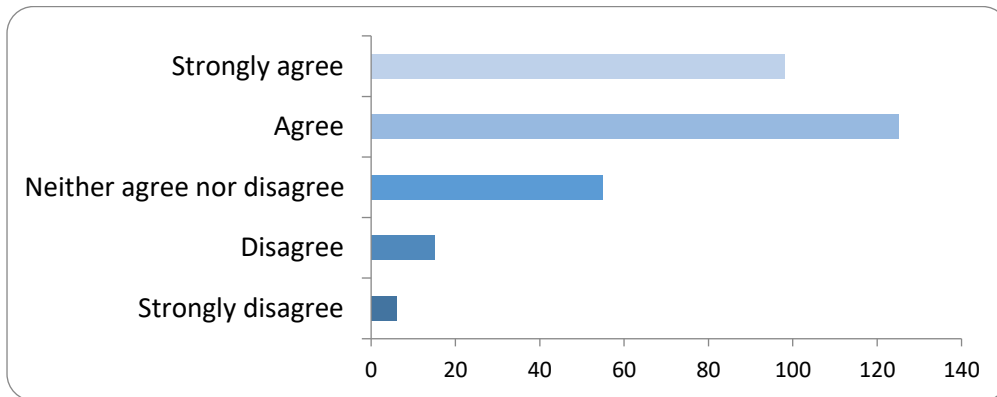
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	65	21.74%
Agree	185	61.87%
Neither agree nor disagree	31	10.37%
Disagree	17	5.69%
Strongly disagree	1	0.33%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

2: I will still be working at the council in 12 months' time.

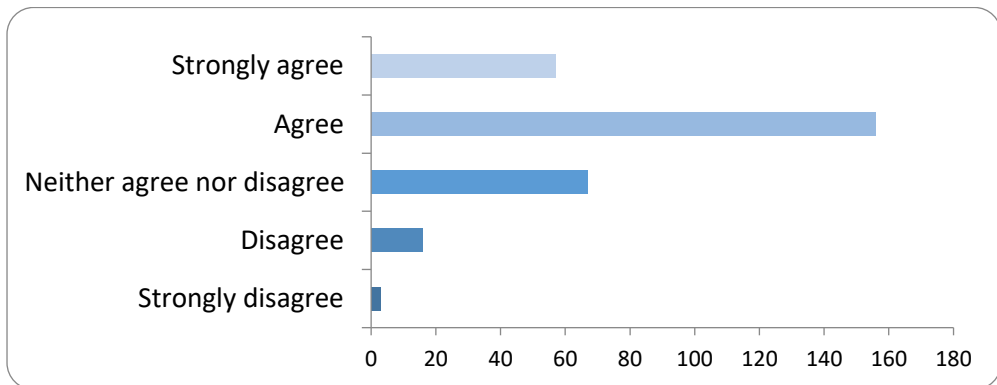
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	98	32.78%
Agree	125	41.81%
Neither agree nor disagree	55	18.39%
Disagree	15	5.02%
Strongly disagree	6	2.01%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

3: I would recommend the council as a great place to work to my family and friends.

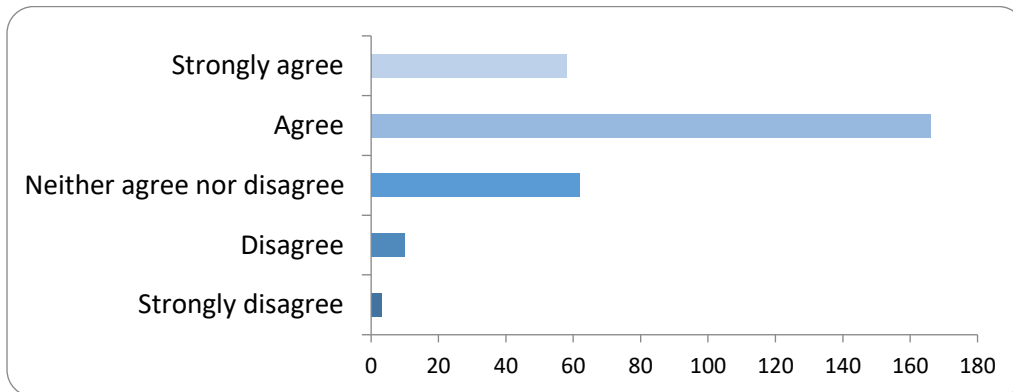
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	57	19.06%
Agree	156	52.17%
Neither agree nor disagree	67	22.41%
Disagree	16	5.35%
Strongly disagree	3	1.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

4: I am proud to work for the council.

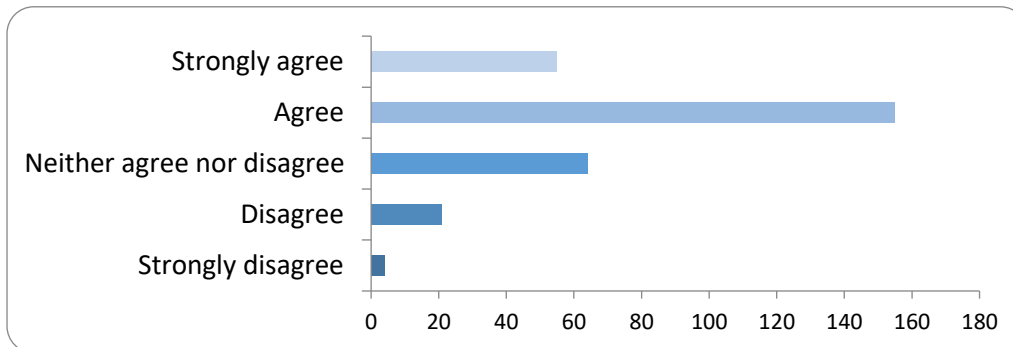
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	58	19.40%
Agree	166	55.52%
Neither agree nor disagree	62	20.74%
Disagree	10	3.34%
Strongly disagree	3	1.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

5: I am able to get the training and development I need to be successful at work.

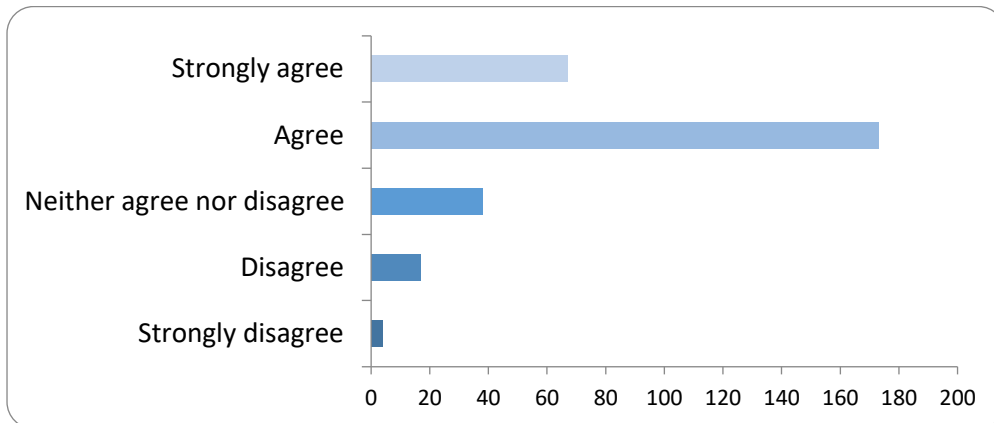
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	55	18.39%
Agree	155	51.84%
Neither agree nor disagree	64	21.40%
Disagree	21	7.02%
Strongly disagree	4	1.34%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

6: I have the equipment I need to be successful at my work.

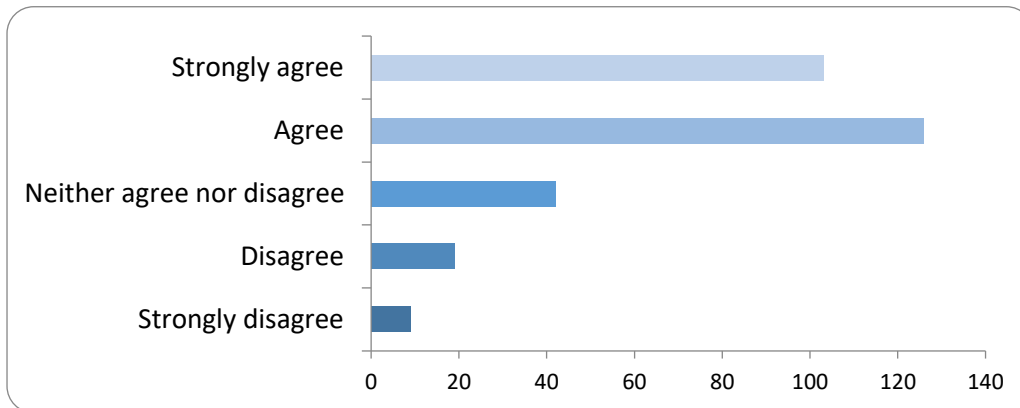
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	67	22.41%
Agree	173	57.86%
Neither agree nor disagree	38	12.71%
Disagree	17	5.69%
Strongly disagree	4	1.34%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

7: My line manager gives me regular feedback on my performance at work.

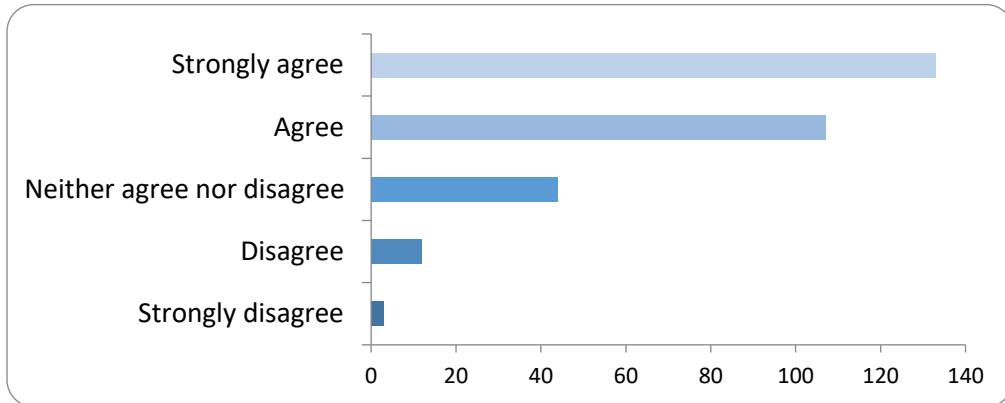
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	103	34.45%
Agree	126	42.14%
Neither agree nor disagree	42	14.05%
Disagree	19	6.35%
Strongly disagree	9	3.01%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

8: My line manager cares about me as a person.

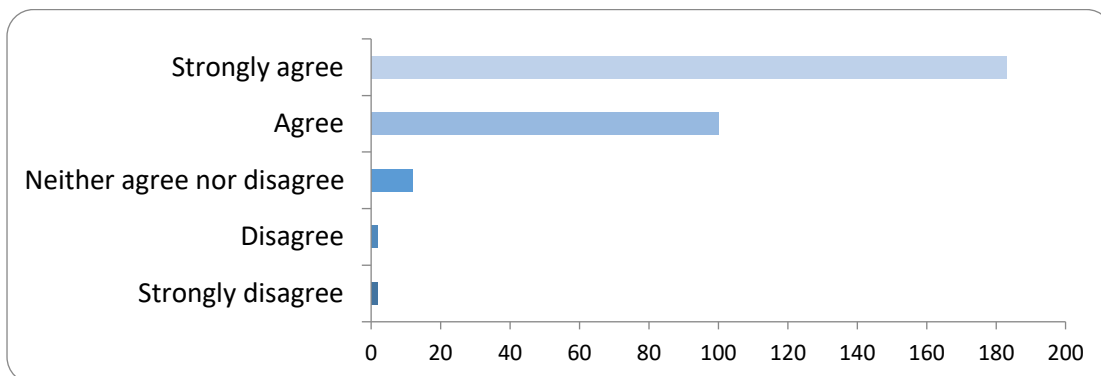
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	133	44.48%
Agree	107	35.79%
Neither agree nor disagree	44	14.72%
Disagree	12	4.01%
Strongly disagree	3	1.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

9: The colleagues in my team are supportive and friendly.

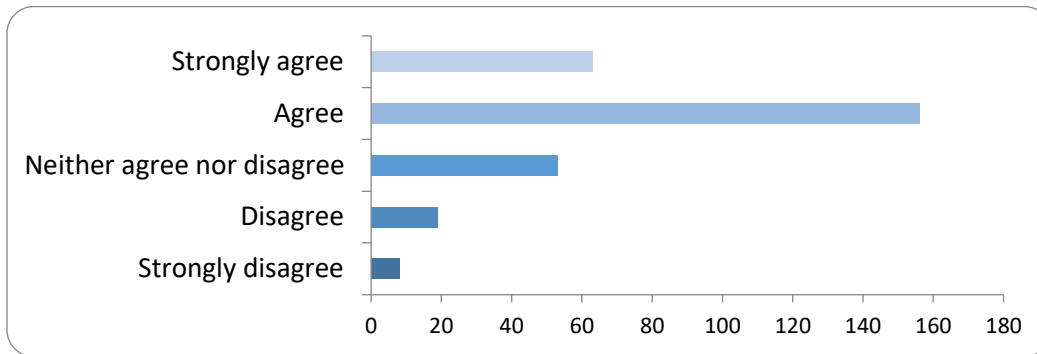
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	183	61.20%
Agree	100	33.44%
Neither agree nor disagree	12	4.01%
Disagree	2	0.67%
Strongly disagree	2	0.67%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

10: The council takes the health and well-being of its employees seriously.

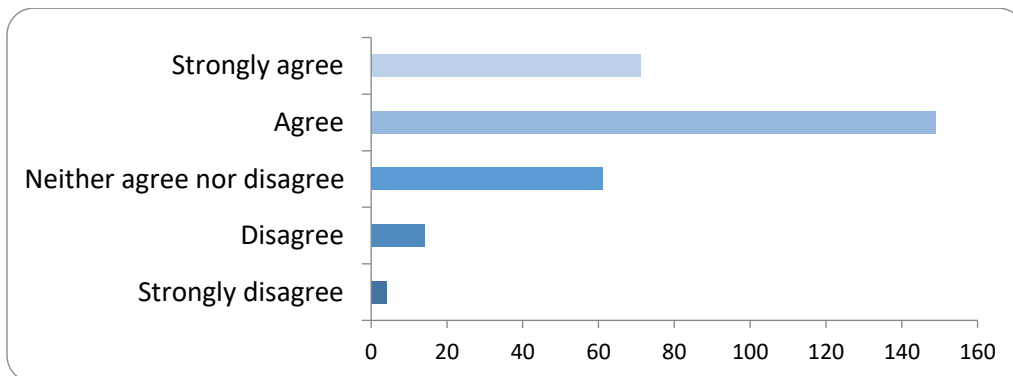
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	63	21.07%
Agree	156	52.17%
Neither agree nor disagree	53	17.73%
Disagree	19	6.35%
Strongly disagree	8	2.68%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

11: The council is committed to ensuring equality at work for all its employees.

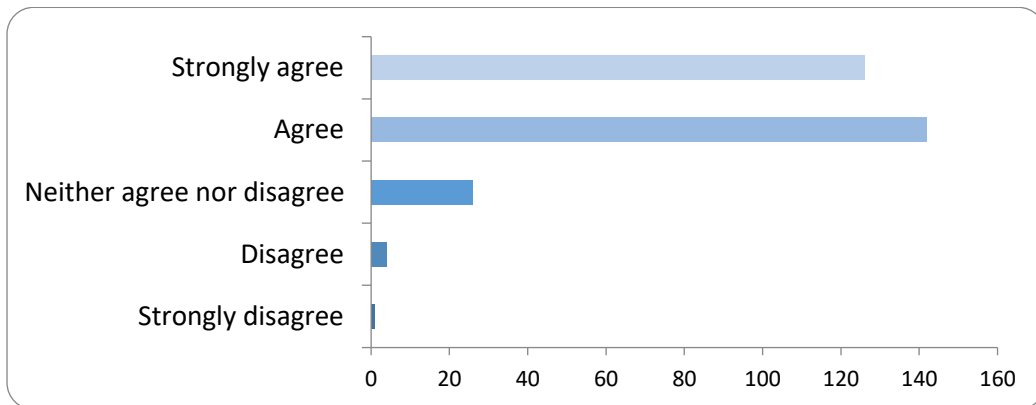
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	71	23.75%
Agree	149	49.83%
Neither agree nor disagree	61	20.40%
Disagree	14	4.68%
Strongly disagree	4	1.34%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

12: I understand the key objectives of my service.

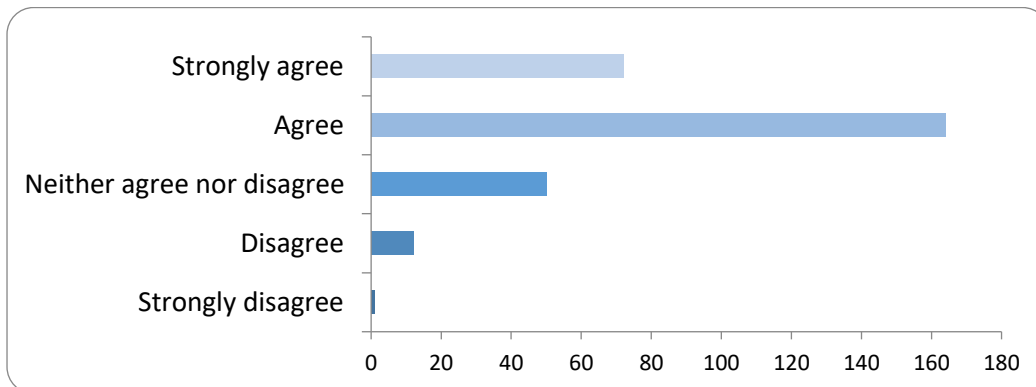
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	126	42.14%
Agree	142	47.49%
Neither agree nor disagree	26	8.70%
Disagree	4	1.34%
Strongly disagree	1	0.33%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

13: I understand the top priorities for Winchester City Council.

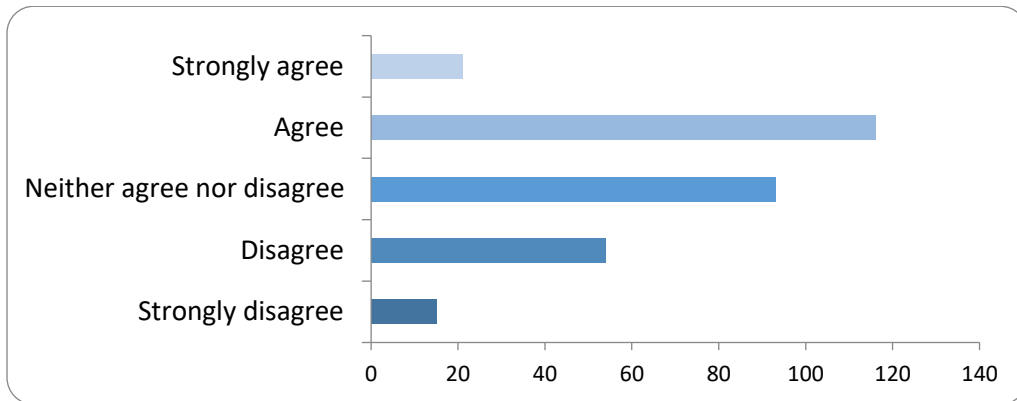
There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	72	24.08%
Agree	164	54.85%
Neither agree nor disagree	50	16.72%
Disagree	12	4.01%
Strongly disagree	1	0.33%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

14: I would say that changes at work are communicated to employees quickly and clearly.

There were 299 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	21	7.02%
Agree	116	38.80%
Neither agree nor disagree	93	31.10%
Disagree	54	18.06%
Strongly disagree	15	5.02%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Appendix 2

Comparison of 2023/2024 'Agree' results showing changes of more than 3%

Combined results for 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree'

Question	2023 %	2024 %	Direction of travel only where combined total more than 3% difference
I enjoy my work at the council.	84.4	83.6	
I will still be working at the council in 12 months' time.	71.1	74.6	↑
I would recommend the council as a great place to work to my family and friends.	71.8	71.2	
I am proud to work for the Council.	73.1	74.9	
I am able to get the training and development I need to be successful at work.	71.4	70.2	
I have the equipment I need to be successful at my work.	74.8	80.3	↑
My line manager gives me regular feedback on my performance at work.	75.9	76.6	
My line manager cares about me as a person.	85.4	80.3	↓
The colleagues in my team are supportive and friendly.	95.2	94.6	
The Council takes the health and well-being of its employees seriously.	73.8	73.2	
The Council is committed to ensuring equality at work for all its employees.	74.8	73.6	
I understand the key objectives of my service.	90.1	89.6	
I understand the top priorities for Winchester City Council.	80.6	78.9	
I would say that changes at work are communicated to employees quickly and clearly.	54.8	45.8	↓

Appendix 3**Summary of employee comments added to survey response**

81 employees took the time to add a written comment. The survey is confidential, and for this reason, individual comments that could allow the respondent to be identified are not recorded below.

All the written comments have been examined in detail by HR.

Summary of main themes:

Hybrid working - 7 employees commented on the Council's hybrid working policy. Comments were mixed with 2 employees commending it, particularly the positive work/life balance benefits, compared to 5 employees who thought it should be less rigid and/or applied more consistently.

Line managers - 4 employees said they thought their line manager did not support them, especially in terms of appraisals and personal development.

IT/Systems - 8 employees said they thought support on IT and systems could be improved.

Working conditions – 3 employees commented on working conditions, including a desire for individual lockers, improved facilities and air conditioning.

Working for WCC - 6 x employees said they were very happy working at the council and 6 employees said their teams or colleagues were great to work with. Positive comments about the hard work, dedication and professionalism of colleagues were typical.

1 x employee commented positively on the support given for mental health and wellbeing at the council.

2 x employees commented negatively on the use of pronouns in emails and lack of freedom of thought/speech.

Communications - 13 x employees thought communications from management to employees could be improved.

Strategic management – 5 x employees said they thought top management was too top heavy or too remote.

Workload – 5 x employees said they thought their workload was too much, with some feeling 'burnt out'.

Pay – 3 x employees commented on their pay being too low.

Climate change – 1 x employee said they thought not enough was being done on climate change.