

Deputy Chief Executive Report - Appendix 2 – Background Information

Key information for noting:

- (i) A survey was conducted between February and March 2017 which included some additional questions on bullying and harassment. It concluded: 'This is a disappointing response ... Urgent action is recommended to make sure that those people who say that they have observed bullying know and understand the harassment policy which is in place and are encouraged to report the incident they have observed'
- (ii) An ACAS report made reference in February 2018 to the need for better people management to tackle concerns regarding matters such as a blame culture and bullying. It also made a statement that previous staff survey findings had been 'buried', which was 'something that must not happen following this survey'. The report said that communication within the organisation was poor with team meetings and information sharing inconsistently applied across the Council.
- (iii) In May 2018, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, received the findings of its commissioned report by Raine and Dunstan. This went into greater detail and provided quotes from interviews with staff members relating to direct and witnessed behaviours and incidents.
- (iv) The Peer Review Revisit Report of 2018 highlighted that the organisation needed to develop in the area of 'valuing staff'.
- (v) Since being in post, the new Chief Executive, Head of HR and HR Business Partner have been approached by current and former members of staff, and a number of Elected Members, have asked that this matter be concluded. A number of current and former staff have stated that they are requesting this because they experienced or witnessed bullying and intimidating behaviours at Ryedale District Council. They have also reported that they either felt unable to report this for fear of retribution or that where activity was reported, it was inappropriately handled.
- (vi) The current CX has commissioned two reviews of all of this information since being in post. The initial review suggested that a full investigation involving all parties needed to take place. This was commissioned from the LGA and has now concluded. The findings of this work include the recommendation that: "The Raine and Dunstan report ought to be published with the text identifying individuals redacted. The current failure to publish is increasing the perception of secrecy.