



Theme 6: Organisation & Culture

Culture Mapping Findings

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Nottingham
City Council

Purpose of Culture Mapping

Purpose

- This document provides background information to allow informed discussion and decision making regarding the culture change element of the Recovery and Improvement Plan.
- Culture change, and associated behaviour changes, are critical in enabling the improvement journey NCC is undertaking.
- In order to be satisfied that we fully understand the current prevailing culture at NCC a culture mapping exercise took place between January 2021 and March 2021, the findings of which are detailed in this summary report.
- The Non Statutory Review highlights that changes to structures and performance management arrangements will not in of themselves lead to organisation change without the right culture and individual behaviours. For this reason the Recovery & Improvement Plan emphasises the delivery of a far reaching and meaningful cultural transformation programme, supported by the Local Government Association.

*“This will clearly articulate both the **current prevailing culture** and the desired culture, as well as providing sharp focus to the individual behaviours and competencies that need to change or be developed.”*



Approach

Overall Methodology

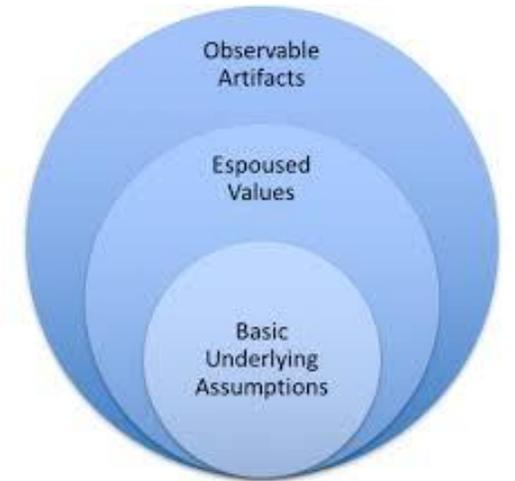
It is recognised that an organisation's culture is a complex picture particularly in an organisation the size of NCC. It is also acknowledged that an organisation's prevailing culture is neither 'right or wrong' but will have positive elements and less positive elements which may need to be mitigated against. In addition, sub-cultures in different parts of the organisation can exist.

For this reason the culture mapping activity utilised a number of different methods and approaches to gain a fully rounded insight into our current position, including:

- Desk top review of existing evidence
- Culture Mapping Survey - Councillors, Senior Leaders, Workforce
- Focus Groups – Trade Unions, Networks, Mixed Workforce Groups
- Discussions and anecdotal evidence from across the organisation

To ensure the mapping exercise was robust and valid, a range of methodologies and models were used for reliability and credibility, including:

- Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones: '*The Character of a Corporation*'
- Gerry Johnson and Kevan Scholes: '*The Culture Web*'
- Edgar Schein: 'Model of Organisational Culture'



Acknowledging an organisational culture has many layers.

Edgar Schein (1985)



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Findings

Summary of findings

- Councillors and SLMG colleagues perceive NCC to have a '**Communal**' culture with high '**Networked**' elements.
- Colleagues (the wider workforce) did not identify a dominate culture, however '**Networked**' scored highly when the positive and negative elements were combined.
- Much evidence pointed to an organisation and workforce **committed to public service** and "making a difference." There is high value placed on being part of an organisation that is '**values**' driven.
- Evidence suggests power, influence and engagement between colleagues and leadership were out of balance. The perception of 'how things get done' **differed between senior leadership and colleagues.**
- All acknowledged a recent lack of focus on **performance management** (organisation and individuals)

What does this mean?

- **Our organisational culture has many positives to harness and some negatives to mitigate against.**

Networked

Positives:

People know and like each other. Can be like a family to its people.

- Informality and flexibility
- Rapid exchange of information
- High trust and willingness to help
- No hidden agendas
- Fun, laughter
- Loyalty, caring, empathy, relaxed

Negatives:

Too much focus on friendships/relationships leading to a lack of challenge and creation of political cliques.

- Gossip and rumour. Negative politics.
- Endless debate, long meetings with little action
- Manipulation of communication, e.g. Copying emails
- Risk averse. Keep your head down.
- Change roles. Minimise performance measurement.
- Manage upwards more than manage outcomes

Communal

Positives:

Values both relationships and performance.

Feeling of belonging with a strong focus on goal achievement.

- Passionate, committed, high energy.
- Creative, loyal, stimulating.
- Able to sustain teams over long periods.
- Equitable, fair and just.
- Close tie between espoused values and embedded practices

Negatives:

Often life consuming. Charismatic leaders frequently look to create loyalty rather than compliance, resulting in a work climate of 'believers'.

- Sense of invulnerability.
- Inability to strengths of peer organisations and competitors.
- No leadership development, only disciples.
- Confuse belief with performance, carrying underperformers.
- Unwilling to change.
- Reliance on Figureheads.

Focus Group Evidence – What do you enjoy or value about working for the Council?

Impact	Relationships	Inspiration
<p>Citizen contact, helping, assisting, working with colleagues in a team.</p> <p>Sense of reward, doing your bit for the citizens / society and are contributing.</p> <p>Challenge, variety of work. Ability to affect change in young children's life and help set them up in the right way.</p> <p>See first hand impact and change we can have on communities and benefits we provide.</p> <p>As a problem solver I want to make a difference.</p> <p>I stayed in authority, stuck around because of values. Improving citizen's quality of life, resolving issues in workplace, supporting citizens and colleagues.</p>	<p>Working relationship with others across council – dedicated passionate wonderful people, helpful towards each other</p> <p>Employer of the city I live in – important, valuable work in the city, looking after the most vulnerable, regeneration</p> <p>People work with, feels like a family. So much knowledge, great skillsets and richness of people</p> <p>Colleagues work with, some have become close friends. Trust, emotional support keeps me going.</p> <p>Making a difference, enable and support people to do their jobs and support citizens, enable services, I love the people that I work with.</p>	<p>Reach into the communities is totally different after being in private sector. It is inspiring to be part of such a large organisation and the reach we can have</p> <p>Believing in what we do for people. People I work with, and as an organisation making a difference to the people.</p> <p>Seeing impact of work on citizens, frontline workers and even in background functions. Managing bids that bring money in for council work keeps me going.</p> <p>Value the impact we can have on lives, and in making the city a greener one.</p> <p>Public service values. Helping citizens and communities. Giving people something to be proud of in the city.</p>



Positives to harness

- We have a loyal workforce, committed to meeting the needs of our citizens.
- Talking about 'helping people' motivates our workforce.
- We have passion and enthusiasm to harness.
- Our workforce is ready to deliver to make a difference.
- We need to build on our positive communal aspects.
- We need to build on the commitment to the council and our sense of localism.
- We need to celebrate our successes and things we do well. Retain our ambition.
- We need to be the council the city needs.



Some challenges to address

- We need to focus on delivering our outcomes in a values driven way.
- We are too paternalistic – we need to start doing ‘with’ and not for.
- We need some focus on the values of being efficient and effective - of providing value for money. We need to be sustainable.
- We need to improve the conversations we are having - managers and colleagues.
- Good management (doing the right things) is not consistently valued in all areas.
- We need to improve individual performance reviews – people mostly view them negatively.
- The challenges of returning to offices and hybrid working needs to support our change.
- We need to reach the ‘frontline’ with our communications and have a narrative that connects with the frontline.



What do we need to do more of

Leaders **role modelling** and doing the right things

Leaders and colleagues **working together**

A narrative on **working with citizens**

Visible, engaging **leadership** at all levels

Not to be **afraid of change**

A narrative that works for **all areas of the organisation**

Demonstrate we are doing the **right things for our citizens**

Significant change and **we all have a role to play**

Show people they can make **a difference** (and how)

Invest in and **develop our people**

Make use of **recovery and returning** to workplaces



Methodology

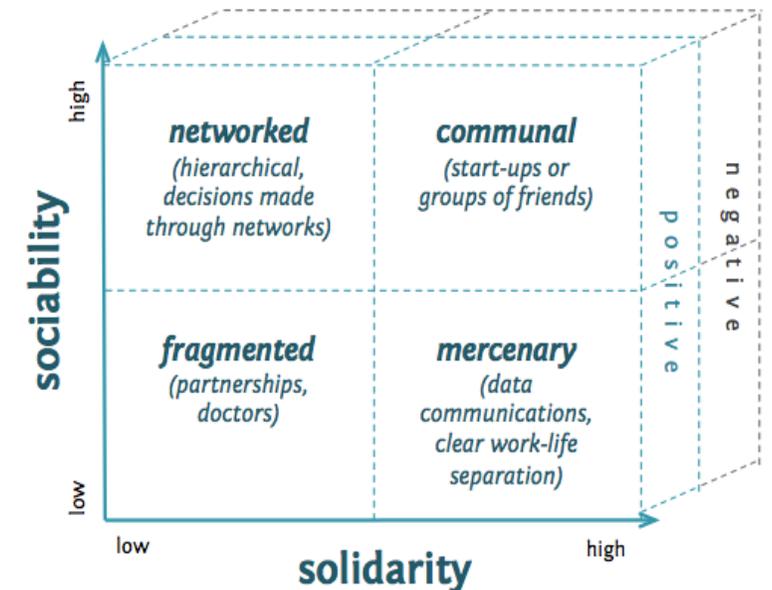
Methodology - Culture Mapping

Using the work of Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones, a valid and reliable questionnaire was adopted to assess how NCC's culture maps out on a matrix of Sociability and Solidarity, how the organisation prioritises relationships or business outcomes.

This included:

- 23 question survey with Councillors and Senior Leaders (SLMG)
- 24 question survey with wider workforce

Providing scores to indicate where the prevailing culture sits within the sociability-solidarity matrix, and to identify the positive and negative elements of each characteristic.



[Company cultures are based on the degree of interaction between the two types of human relationships. There are positive and negative aspects to consider.]

c.75
Responses from Cllrs & Senior Leaders

c.1300
Responses from wider workforce

c.24%
Response Rate

Methodology - Focus Groups

A series of focus groups were undertaken for a deeper analysis and understanding of the current organisational culture and the views of the workforce.

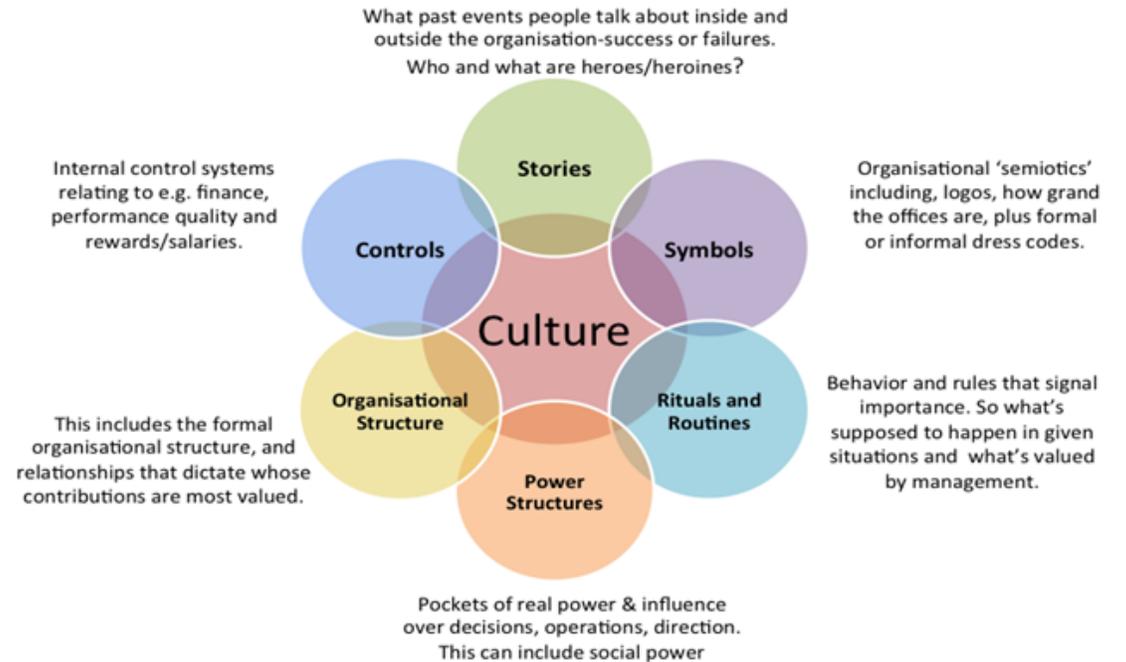
x7 Focus Groups took place using the six elements of the 'Culture Web' to drive the conversation and discussion, with:

- Trade Union colleagues x1 group
- Employee Network Chairs/Members x1 group
- Cross representational workforce groups x5

x7
Focus
Groups

x70
Attendees

Johnson and Scholes Cultural Web



Johnson and Scholes (1992)



Methodology - Desk Top Review

The desktop review of existing information and evidence that provides insight into NCC's current organisational culture included (not exhaustive):

- Public Interest Report into Robin Hood Energy (2020)
- Non Statutory Review conducted by Max Caller (2020)
- Workforce Survey - Covid Impact (2020)
- Workforce Survey & Focus Groups – Homeworking Experience (2020)
- Covid Lessons Learned exercise (2020)
- Sustainable Future – early diagnostic sessions (2019)
- Unlocking Loxley – Smarter Working evaluation (2019)
- EDI Focus Groups (2019)
- Colleague Opinion Survey (2018)
- Peer Challenge Report (2017)

Observations, comments and information was extracted from the documents and matched against the positive and negative elements of the 'Goffee and Jones' matrix.



End



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