**Hafod’s Organisational Culture Profile**

In September 2018, Hafod Board Members and a selection of staff were invited to take part in a cultural profile survey based on the work of Groysberg *et al* (2018)[[1]](#endnote-1) of Harvard Business School. This exercise was first undertaken in March 2018 and this follow-up survey was designed to record any changes to the perceived culture of Hafod throughout a period of organisational change.

**Methodology**

Participants were invited to rank, on a five-point scale, how well they thought each of 16 statements described Hafod. The statements were paired and organised into eight themes, or attributes, with the scores added to give an overall score for the attribute, *e.g.* the ratings out of five for the statements “the organisation is focused on collaboration and mutual trust” and “the organisation feels like a big family” add together to form a score out of ten for the attribute of “Caring”.

*Table 1: Statements and attributes*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The organisation is focused on** | **+** | **The organisation feels like** | **=** | **Total** |
| Collaboration & mutual trust | + | A big family | = | Caring |
| Compassion & tolerance | + | An idealistic community or cause | = | Purpose |
| Exploration & creativity | + | A dynamic project | = | Learning |
| Fun & excitement | + | A celebration | = | Enjoyment |
| Achievement & winning | + | A meritocracy | = | Results |
| Strength & boldness | + | A competitive arena | = | Authority |
| Planning & calculation | + | A meticulously planned operation | = | Safety |
| Structure & stability | + | A smoothly running machine | = | Order |

All 17 Hafod Board Members were invited to take part, together with 121 members of staff. The number of Board members has been reduced, from 30 in March 2018, due to the restructure of the organisation. At the start of the 2018, there were separate Boards for Hafod Care, Hafod Housing and Hafod Resources, but these have now been replaced by a single Hafod Board. The selection of staff invited to take part in the survey has been expanded. In March 2018, the survey was distributed to 86 members of staff, drawn from the Operational Leadership Group, the Housing & Care Change Lab Workshops, attendees at a series of change management workshops, and managers from across the organisation. These groups of staff were chosen as they are most likely to be able to comment on the current culture of the organisation, and have a part in cascading current developments to others. Since the first iteration of the survey, the change lab workshops have been completed with the Caring for the Future event, the Operational Leadership Group has been disbanded, and the Hendre group structure has been collapsed. A series of 50th anniversary events and a programme of internal communication has helped to widen exposure to the organisational aims of One Hafod. The invitation list for the September 2018 reiteration of the organisational culture was expanded to include all frontline officers, including neighbourhood coaches, maintenance surveyors and care home managers and support managers. In September 2018, a total of 6 Board members and 71 staff took part, representing a 56% return overall.

**Results**

The results showed that Hafod has a cultural profile that leans towards the attributes of Learning, Purpose and Authority. These three attributes, in the same order, were the top three choices in the original survey in March 2018. Board Members ranked each attribute in a slightly different order, rating Order and Results higher than Purpose or Authority.

*Table 2: Top three cultural attributes*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **First** | **Second** | **Third** |
| **Overall** | Learning | Purpose | Authority |
| **Board** | Learning  | Order | Results |
| **Staff** | Learning | Purpose  | Authority |

Board Members gave a higher score than staff to all eight cultural attributes, although the difference was only statistically significant (p < .05) for Order, Safety and Results. Of these, the difference was largest for Order, which Board Members felt was the second-most important cultural attribute. These differences between Board and staff results are identical to the March 2018 survey.

Six of the eight cultural attributes were given higher overall average scores in September 2018, than they were given in the March survey, with only Safety and Order receiving lower scores. However, the only statistically significant difference between the two surveys was for Caring, which increased from 6.1 in March to 6.5 in September.

**Discussion**

Board members and staff continue to agree that Hafod is focused on Learning and Purpose. Groysberg *et al* consider these values to be held by organisations that emphasise flexibility, adaptability and receptiveness to change, which would seem appropriate for an organisation undergoing a change journey such as Hafod’s. They also note that convergence between staff and Board ratings indicate more stable organisational cultures.

Since the first survey was carried out in March, the collapse of the Hendre group structure and reformation of a single Hafod board, with new Board members, has potentially contributed to high Purpose scores. The high ratings for Learning may have been influenced by the relaunched PDR process, which took place over the summer, and the redesign of the e-learning system, which culminated in the launch of a new Learning Management System whilst this survey was underway. The increase in Caring scores may have been influenced by a growing understanding of the links between housing, care and support services, and their impact on customer well-being, as the three services begin to work more closely than ever before.

Groysberg *et al* ascribe both advantages and disadvantages to each of the eight attributes, when featured strongly in an organisation’s culture, and these are outlined in Table 3 overleaf. The continued high figures for Learning and Purpose suggest a culture with an appreciation for innovation and social responsibility, but Groysberg *et al* warn that practical concerns and existing advantages may be missed by an overemphasis on exploration and long-term goals. It is possible that this may be balanced by the comparatively high scores for Authority, which has broadly complementary advantages and disadvantages. The slight fall in scores for Order, however, may be an early warning sign of potential conflict and inefficiency in an organisation in the process of linking previously separate services.

The attribute given the lowest figures by both Board Members and staff was Enjoyment, as was the case in the first survey. This suggests that the organisation may be missing out on the advantages associated with this trait – high employee morale, engagement and creativity.

*Table 3: Advantages & disadvantages*

| **CULTURE STYLE** | **ADVANTAGES** | **DISADVANTAGES** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Caring**Warm, sincere, relational | Improved teamwork, engagement, communication, trust, and sense of belonging | Overemphasis on consensus building may reduce exploration of options, stifle competitiveness, and slow decision making |
| **Purpose**Purpose driven, idealistic, tolerant | Improved appreciation for diversity, sustainability, and social responsibility | Overemphasis on a long-term purpose and ideals may get in the way of practical and immediate concerns |
| **Learning**Open, innovative, exploring | Improved innovation, agility, and organisational learning | Overemphasis on exploration may lead to a lack of focus and an inability to exploit existing advantages |
| **Enjoyment**Playful, instinctive, fun loving | Improved employee morale, engagement and creativity | Overemphasis on autonomy and engagement may lead to a lack of discipline and create possible compliance or governance issues |
| **Results**Achievement driven, goal focussed | Improved execution, external focus, capability building, and goal achievement | Overemphasis on achieving results may lead to communication and collaboration breakdowns and higher levels of stress and anxiety |
| **Authority**Bold, decisive, dominant | Improved speed of decision making and responsiveness to threats or crises | Overemphasis on strong authority and bold decision making may lead to politics, conflict, and a psychologically unsafe work environment |
| **Safety**Realistic, careful, prepared | Improved risk management, stability, and business continuity | Overemphasis on standardisation and formalisation may lead to bureaucracy, inflexibility, and dehumanisation of the work environment |
| **Order**Rule abiding, respectful, cooperative | Improved operational efficiency, reduced conflict, and greater civic-mindedness | Overemphasis on rules and traditions may reduce individualism, stifle creativity, and limit organisational agility |

**Conclusions**

This second iteration of the organisational cultural profile survey suggests that Hafod continues to be focused on Purpose and Learning, with Authority, Order and Results being lesser, but important elements. Board and staff perspectives are still similar, and both groups thought Enjoyment was the attribute least representative of Hafod’s culture. These results are a snapshot of opinions at a single point in Hafod’s change journey, and they highlight some potential advantages and disadvantages of focusing on different attributes. It would be worthwhile repeating the survey at later points in the change journey, to capture any shift in organisational culture.

1. Groysberg, Boris, J Lee, J Price, J Yo-Jud Cheng, Harvard Business Review, Jan-Feb 2018, 44-57 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)