



**Performance and Finance Select
Committee**

22nd January 2008

**Report from
Director of HR and Diversity**

For Information

Report Title: Staff Survey 2006-7 - Action Plan

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report reviews progress on implementation of the 2006-7 Staff Survey Action Plan highlighting achievements and work in progress. It will be appreciated that for many of the initiatives the full impact and realisation of the benefits will become more evident over time.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 This report is for information only.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Background

Following analysis of the 2006-7 staff survey an action plan was developed to respond to the issues raised by staff.

The key issues identified were categorised under six headings:

- Working hours and pressure
- Awareness and engagement of managers
- Managing change
- Individual, team and Council responsiveness
- Council's response to feedback
- Harassment and discrimination

A corporate action plan covering a range of initiatives was developed and agreed. Significant inroads have been made implementing the plan and work will continue this year. It is intended to develop a new plan based on the latest staff survey with outstanding work merged to form a new action plan to ensure continuity and a cohesive approach.

Implementation of the plan has been monitored to ensure the initiatives have the desired affect and make a difference to the well being of the organisation. The full impact of some of the initiatives will not be known until there has been a reasonable period of operational experience to measure the degree of success in achieving the change required, although, formative evaluation in many cases shows that initiatives such as the Corporate Training Programme are addressing the issues that have been raised.

3.2 Detail

Progress on implementation of the Action Plan is set out under each of the main headings below.

Working Hours and Pressure

- In the summer of 2007 a work-life balance working group was set up to look at work life balance in the round. To date the Group has:
 - developed a new flexible working policy and toolkit to be launched in the Spring that will be responsive to the different needs of individuals and service areas whilst enhancing service delivery. To ensure that staff are able to work more flexibly and from home a comprehensive IT training programme has been put in place.
 - in collaboration with Learning and Development have designed workshops to enhance managers' awareness of their People Management responsibilities and build capability.
 - organised a pilot in Revenue and Benefits run by WellKom to improve the working environment. The intention is to roll out the learning across the organisation.
 - worked with the People Centre to develop improved flexible working monitoring arrangements using the new INTERACT HR Information System to improve consistency and fairness of its use through better management. The INTERACT System is new and currently being implemented. The planned new monitoring arrangements will come on line this year.
- Workshops for senior managers were run last year by external consultants to identify issues on working hours and pressures, support managers to manage their own work-life balance and explore ways to build on existing practice.
- Work with Members is planned for this year to support them in developing methods of working to improve their own work-life balance.
- A new guide for managers has been developed which seeks to clarify managers' responsibilities and accountabilities including managing the working environment.

- Employment policies and procedures are being reviewed and updated. Workshops for managers have been developed and delivered to communicate people management responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to the role of the line manager and the policies and procedures.
- A Health and Wellbeing Group has been established to work in tandem with the Work–Life Balance Group. To date they have been involved in a range of health promotion activities including:
 - regular positive health campaigns
 - stress awareness training for managers
 - increasing Environment and Culture discounted offer of physical activities for staff provided at different sites in the Borough
 - WellKOM pilot referred to above includes identifying stress hotspots
 - increasing healthy eating options. It is planned to introduce a jacket potato and salad bar in BTH.
- A staff benefits scheme including an employee assistance programme is being launched in February. The benefits include a variety of discounts for staff that support a healthy lifestyle including gym membership, health clubs and holiday discounts. Local therapists offering discounts will also be included on the benefits website. The employee assistance programme will provide access to advice and support on matters as diverse as legal, financial and counselling.

Awareness and Engagement of Managers and Staff

- From the training needs analysis management and leadership development interventions have been identified and key programmes have been or are about to be launched to address and develop management capability.
- The Management Development Programme has been developed to help managers to determine individual strengths and development areas in order to enhance personal performance and increase awareness of how personal impact can affect team and partnership working. The programme underwent an extensive pilot throughout 2007 before its launch in September 2007. Approximately 50 first line managers have attended. Key events are:
 - 360° feedback– questionnaires to be completed
 - completion of an on-line behavioural style profile
 - preparation and delivery of a presentation on ‘Improving the Management of Diversity in our department’
 - one to one coaching.
- The management and staff competencies are designed to build organisational capacity and support managers in the development of staff. The Management Charter and management competencies were launched early 2007. A behavioural competency framework has been developed through extensive consultation to bring alive the Staff

Charter and align it to the Management Charter and competencies. It is planned to launch the staff competencies at the end of January 2008. Workshops for staff and managers will be available as part of the launch.

- When the competencies are in place work will commence on identifying appropriate talent management strategy which will include developing the secondment and career progression arrangements.
- The employment policy review is an on-going programme and involves managers and staff. The review will streamline policies and procedures ensuring they are easily accessible and user friendly. A framework for the policy and procedures has been designed.
- Improved monitoring arrangements have been put in place so that the application of policies and procedures can be monitored, hotspots and adverse impact identified and action taken to address issues. HR performance data is given to managers to assist them in carrying out their management responsibilities and DMT's and SHRG receive reports to support their activities undertaking higher level monitoring and development of strategies to address issues.

Managing Change

- A module to support managers in managing change is part of the new corporate training offer which is generally aimed at building managers' capacity.
- Change workshops are currently being developed for staff as part of the corporate training offer.
- The Managing Change policy and procedure has been prioritised for review early this year.
- All change initiatives and policy development is undertaken with wide consultation and employee engagement from the outset. Members of staff are now actively part of working groups developing solutions and new policies e.g. new Fairness at Work policy and procedure.

Individual, Team and Council Responsiveness

- Staff appraisal forms have been reviewed, making them more streamlined and support our people managers in building capability. The process now includes 360 feedback for all people managers and integrates the manager and staff competency frameworks. Supporting documentation will provide guidance for managers and staff. Training will commence in February to inform, engage and educate all staff on the forms and processes.
- A wide range of courses and resources have been developed for Brent staff as identified through the training needs analysis. Staff are encouraged to browse the corporate training offer on the intranet and make their bookings online which then can be approved by their line

manager. All attendees are asked to evaluate the training programme to ensure that it supports them in their work.

- The management and staff competencies discussed clearly reflect the behaviours required to perform to a high standard and will be used to underpin all people management activity including learning and development, appraisal, job description, recruitment, induction/probation and career progression.
- A number of staff forums have been established with the parent and carers network being the latest addition. These forums encourage two way communication as well as a support framework for individual members of staff.
- In Spring 2007 a toolkit for staff and managers for the Improving Brent Programme was launched. The toolkit contains the methods to be used by all managers and staff to achieve the Council's Improving Brent Action Plan and transform the organisation. A broad range of Improving Brent activities are run throughout the year which all staff are encouraged to attend.

Council's Response to Feedback

- The programme of initiatives identified above will continue to be developed to ensure concerns and issues raised by staff are addressed. Consultation and evaluation is ongoing on all people management initiatives to ensure that the deliverables meet the needs of the Council's corporate objectives and employees concerns.
- There have been various initiatives implemented designed to improve staff communication including delivering corporate roadshows, staff briefings and network events.

Discrimination and Harassment

- A new Fairness at Work policy and procedure will be launched in the Spring. The launch will focus on communication of the policy and training for its effective implementation. A harassment and bullying programme focusing on acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in the workplace has been piloted in Children and Families and the learning will be used to inform and develop future training.
- Monitoring arrangements have been implemented to improve the quality of the information from ER cases that will enable harassment and bullying to be effectively managed.
- The Council's new recruitment and selection policy is being developed to support the Council's People Management Strategy. It is intended the new arrangements will be sufficiently flexible to respond to market needs whilst enhanced monitoring arrangements will ensure fairness and equity.

- Staff Forums are currently being reviewed. It is proposed to make recommendations to CMT in February. It is planned to have the new arrangements in place for the forums in the Spring.

The overall approach has been to engage, inform and improve and this approach has been endorsed by CMT as has the value of undertaking an annual staff survey.

3.4 Recommendation

This report is for information.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None

5.0 Legal Implications

None

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 The Diversity implications have or are being addressed under each of the initiatives and for key decisions and policy changes equality impact assessments will be carried out.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 Any staffing implications are being addressed under the various initiatives.

Background Papers

Staff Survey Action Plan 2006-7

Contact Officers

Val Jones – Director of HR and Diversity
HR & Diversity
Val.jones@brent.gov.uk
020 8937 1089