

Corporate Staff Survey Action Plan 2008

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DRAFT v2.0

1. Working Conditions

1.1 Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Increased dissatisfaction with working conditions.	 Staff feel under valued Less productive and motivated staff High absence & 	Identify key areas where dissatisfaction is highest	Property and Facilities Management (PFM)	April 2008	List of key areas of concern
	turnover Employee relation issues Less attractive place to work Future recruitment issues	Undertake a review of areas identified and develop action plan to address issues where possible	PFM	June 2008	Prioritised action plan and improved facilities
		Review catering facilities across the council including questionnaire to staff to identify requirements and introduction where possible of more healthy eating options	PFM and Health and Well-being Working Group	July 2008	Identification of requirements from staff, action plan of improvements and introduction of wider choice of healthy options where possible
	Incorporate improved facilities for staff in future plans for staff accommodation	PFM and Anna Woda	On-going	Future developments incorporate better facilities for staff	
Funther engine / det		Communication plan to inform staff of what action is being undertaken to address issues identified	PFM and Communications	June 2008 and on-going	Staff aware of improvements being made or planned to their working environment

Further analysis / detail

Staff are less satisfied with their physical working conditions compared to a year ago (10% fall in the positive % score from 68% to 58%). Staff in Children and Families and particularly Social Care are least satisfied with their working conditions. While those in Environment and Culture are the most satisfied with the exception of those in BACES.

The most frequently mentioned open comments relating to this issue include:

- Concerns about the quality of staff accommodation, council buildings and generally employee's work environment. Several staff expressed their support for a new Civic Centre or more a modern working environment.
- Staff also identified facilities provided for staff within council buildings as an issue. There were several requests for communal areas where staff can get away from their desks at lunch time and mix with colleagues; good quality food/refreshments; and improved shower/leisure facilities.

2. Communications and Leadership

2.1 Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Improving staff perceptions of the effectiveness and visibility of senior managers	Staff feel senior managers are detached from front line delivery and are not aware of real issues	Each service area to have meetings with all staff at least twice a year	All senior managers	Twice a year	Meetings with all staff increasing awareness of key issues and increased visibility
	Lack of engagement with staff and limited two way communication Low morale Staff don't feel valued Lack of clear direction	All service unit heads and/or directors to introduce a staff consultation forum to encourage two way feedback	Service unit heads/directors	Quarterly	Staff actively involved with senior managers identifying key issues and developing solutions together to address points
	Key messages do not get through to staff	Senior managers including members of CMT and Chief Executive to spend at least one day a month with units within their span of control. Adopting a "Back to the floor" approach by doing the job for a shift.	All senior managers/CMT/Chief Executive	Monthly	Senior managers more visible and aware of issues impacting upon staff. Staff more confident in raising issues directly with senior managers operating on same level.
		Chief Executive and Directors to hold breakfast/lunch meetings with selected staff on a quarterly basis	Chief Executive/directors	Quarterly	Increased visibility. Key messages reinforced and from staff able to feedback directly to directors/CE

Around 50% of staff agree senior managers are effective and visible. While this is significantly above the local government benchmark average, further statistical analysis (Key Driver Analysis) has identified that improvements with these indicators is likely to have a significant impact on staff engagement and therefore should be a focus for action.

In the open comments issues about management were the most frequently mentioned (195 comments). Of these several comments were specifically directed at senior managers including that they are out of touch with front line and less senior staff; that senior managers need to listen staff and communicate effectively when making decisions and implementing change.

2.2 Issue	Possible	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Communication – improving employees knowledge of their own and other departments	 Staff work in silos Duplication of effort 	Further research into the quality and quantity of information staff need via the staff panel and staff forums	Consultation	June 2008	Details about information required by staff
	 Best practice not shared across the council Adverse impact on 	Each department to have themed inter – service area 'master classes' to increase knowledge of other units and to encourage cross unit working	All service areas	Quarterly	Increased knowledge of work in other units
	service delivery	As part of induction for new staff incorporate time within other units in service area	All managers	On going	Increased knowledge of work in other units
		Review content and format of Improving Brent seminar to improve knowledge across council and increase staff participation	Communication/HR	July 2008	Increased staff participation and increased awareness of work across the council
		Managers to encourage short term attachments for their staff to other units within the council to increase knowledge	All managers	On going	Increased knowledge of work in other units and increased partnership working across the council
		Decisions from CMT and local SMTs/DMTs communicated to staff	Communications and all directors	April 2008 onwards	Staff aware of key issues and initiatives within

possibly in a service area monthly newsletter	council and own department

There has been a significant fall in the proportion of staff who feel well informed about what is going on in their department (58% agree - 9% decline since 2006) and who understand what other services in their department do (67% agree - 7% decline since 2006).

Of the 108 open comments that related specifically to communications, the most frequently mentioned issue was about improving communication and information sharing within and between departments (52 comments).

Related to the above questions, working relationships between departments are perceived by staff to have deteriorated, only 55% gave a positive response on this issue – a fall of 8% since 2006.

2.3 Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Fewer staff agree the future direction of Brent Council is clearly communicated to them	 Service delivery not aligned to 	Service areas to have meetings with all staff twice a year with lead members in attendance	All directors	Twice yearly	Improved awareness of future direction of council
	corporate strategy • Staff do not feel they can	All unit heads to have quarterly meetings with staff	All unit heads	Quarterly	Improved awareness and service delivery linked to strategic direction of council
	contribute Change programm es not aligned to	All eligible staff to have an appraisal with objectives linked to their service plan	All managers	Annually with a 6 month review	Staff's objectives linked to service plan objectives
	corporate strategy • Staff do not feel valued	All staff to have regular one to ones to review performance and achievement against objectives	All managers	6 weekly	Objectives regularly reviewed to ensure they are in line with corporate/service objectives
	 Staff feel uncertain about future 	Review staff publications and marketing material to increase readership	Communications	July 2008	Increased awareness amongst staff and increased readership
		Pop ups to highlight key issues (possibly including publications when issued)	Communications/IT	June 2008	Increased awareness of key issues
		Review communication methods with staff who do not have access to the intranet	Communications	July 2008	Increased awareness of future direction of council

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Only 51% of staff agreed that the future direction of Brent Council is clearly communicated to them. This is 12% below the local government benchmark score and 8% down on 2006.

2.4 Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Ensuring staff feel able to and are encourage to speak up and challenge the way things are done	 Staff feel under valued Improvements to methods of service delivery can be missed 	Each service area/unit to establish a staff consultation forum to encourage two way feedback	Service unit heads/directors	Quarterly	Staff forum established with staff able to feedback on issues and improve service delivery
	 Staff feel demotivated Poor service delivery Unsatisfied customers Dissatisfaction driven underground Increased turn over 	 Introduce new FAW policy and procedure Actions under 2.1 should also address the key issues here as they will increase staff engagement and two way communication 	HR See above	May 2008 See above	Issues raised and resolution achieved Staff feel they are able to raise issues and challenge the way things are done bringing about an improvement in service delivery
		SHRMs and management team meet with local union representatives on a quarterly basis	SHRMs/local SMT/DMTs	Quarterly	Increased engagement with unions
		Review and re-launch staff suggestion scheme	Consultation	September 2008	Increased number of staff suggestions and improvements in service delivery

Further analysis / detail
Around 40% of staff agree that they are encouraged to have a say on the way things are done in Brent, which is 6% below the score in

2006. Also just 37% of staff feel it is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done in Brent. In terms of the latter question the lowest scores where recorded in Transportation (12% agree); BACES (18% agree); and Brent Mental Health (18%).

2.5 Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Clearer communication, consultation, involvement and support for staff effected by change	 Change isn't owned Limited commitment from staff 	Brent develops a corporate change management programme structure	PRU	July 2008	A corporate system for managing change programmes
in service delivery are missed Not all risks identified Change is ineffective and slow Increased	 Improvements in service delivery are missed Not all risks identified Change is 	All major change programmes to have a clear communication and consultation plan	All programme managers and communications	July 2008	Clear communication and consultation plans leading to increased engagement
	and slowIncreased staff turnover	Wider consultation to all staff forums as union membership in Brent is limited	All programme managers/project leads	On going	Increased consultation and engagement
	Low morale	All change programmes/projects to have an associated consultation forum	All programme managers/project managers	On going	Increased consultation, awareness and engagement
		Increase managers' capability in change management	HR	On going	Managers with better skills to lead and manage change
		Improve staff understanding around the change process	HR	On going	Staff who understand and are better equipped to deal with change

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Only around a third (33%) of staff agree that the council involves them while undertaking organisational change. Also just 35% agree that the council supports employees affected by change (35% agree).

Of the 108 open comments relating to communication the second most frequently mentioned issue (32 comments) was about change and in particular ensuring there is clear communication and transparency about why decisions have been made. Staff also wanted their views and concerns taken into account before decisions or change is implemented.

2.6 Issue	Possible	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
	Impacts				
Fewer staff have had an appraisal in the last 12 months.	 Service delivery not linked to corporate or service plan objectives Staff developmen 	Introduce new appraisal system for managers and staff linked to competency framework and departmental objectives	HR	April 2008	New appraisal introduced with individuals objectives and development needs clearly linked to service objectives
	t needs overlooked • Poor performanc e • Service objectives	Introduce manager and staff competencies	HR	April 2008	Clear competencies which can be used for development and selection of staff
	not metStaff do not feel valuedStaff feel	CMT/SMTs/DMTs regularly review statistics around completion of appraisals	CMT/SMTs/DMTs	May 2008 onwards	Improved completion levels
	de- motivated • Good performanc	If managers are not completing staff appraisals this should be reflected in their own appraisal	All managers	April 2008	Improved completion levels
	e not rewarded Increased staff turnover	Managers to attend appraisal workshops	All managers	March 2008 onwards	Improved completion levels and improved quality of appraisals with objectives and development plans clearly linked to service delivery

There has been a 6% fall in the proportion of staff that stated they have had an appraisal in the last 12 months (70% agree). Previous staff surveys have highlighted that employees that have not had an appraisal respond more negatively to a range of questions in the survey. (53%).

Also around two thirds of staff (67%) stated that their last performance evaluation accurately reflected their performance. This is 11% below the local government benchmark score.

3. Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

3.1 Issue	Possible	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures										
High levels of bullying / harassment and discrimination	 High numbers of ER cases Demotivated 	 Implement new Fairness at Work (FAW) policy and procedures 	HR	May 2008	New single policy										
staff • Poor performance • Increased	Review and relaunch code of conduct to reinforce levels of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour	HR and Communications	May 2008	New Code of Conduct											
	staff turnover Unhealthy working environment Inappropriate behaviour continues unchallenge d	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Unhealthy working environmentInappropriate	Introduce mediation scheme	HR	May 2008	Pool of mediators with more issues being resolved informally
		Revise role, select and train new Confidential Harassment Officers	HR	May 2008	Increased number of trained officers supporting staff										
	Introduce managing conflict workshop for managers	HR	April 2008	Managers more confident in tackling conflict and reduced number of grievances											
		Instigate disciplinary procedures where there is a serious breach of the Code of Conduct	All managers	On going	Serious cases of bullying and harassment dealt with appropriately. Reduction in number of allegations										

Introduce workshop for managers in new FAW policy	HR	April/May 2008 and on going	Managers aware of new policy and how to implement it
Regular review/analysis of cases and feedback on lessons learned	HR and Legal	Quarterly	Ability to identify trends and implement measures to identify emerging issues

Further analysis / detail
One in five staff (18%) stated they have experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination.

4. Career Development

4.1 Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
To improve staff confidence in the career opportunities available to them at Brent Council	 Low morale Increased staff turnover Development opportunities missed Not utilising talent 	Review current recruitment, retention and reward strategy	HR	July 2008	Clear strategic objectives to develop action plans around recruitment, retention and reward
	effectively Sub-optimal service delivery	Review current recruitment policy in relation to parallel internal/external recruitment	HR	April 2008	Opportunity in some circumstances to advertise jobs internally
		Develop a talent management strategy and policy and clearly communicate to staff	HR	August 2008	Strategy and plans to improve talent management across the organisation
		Implement competency framework	HR	April 2008	Staff aware of competencies required at all levels and for different roles and as such can used as a development tool
		Develop career pathways and communicate	HR	Nov 2008	Clear pathways for staff and managers to use for staff development

	Develop workforce development plan identifying future requirements including skills and knowledge to feed into corporate L and D plan	SHRMs/HR	April 2008	Clear WDP and L and D plans to recruit and develop staff with the skills and knowledge required to deliver improved service provision over the next 3 years
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Only 39% of staff, agree that they are confident about their career opportunities at Brent Council. While, two thirds (67%) of staff intend to be working for Brent in 12 months time this is 6% points below the average local government benchmark figure.

Of the 89 open comments that related to training and development the most frequently mentioned issue was about career progression, advice and development. These staff generally wanted more opportunities to progress and develop at Brent either within their current roles, other roles or in other departments. Many felt such opportunities do not exist in Brent currently, these comments where made both by new and young employees as well as staff who have been at the council for some time.

5. Employees general perceptions of the Council

5.1 Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Improving employees perception of the council	 Increased staff turnover Lack of motivation amongst staff Low morale Unwillingness to change Sub-optimal service delivery 	 Improve communications and raise awareness around benefits of working for Brent Council Implement initiatives in staff survey action plan Raise profile of Brent as a not only a good service provider but also as a great place to work 	HR/Communications See above Communications	Ongoing See above On going	
Funther analysis / datail					

Further analysis / detail

Employee's perceptions of the council remain very positive. Particularly compared to external benchmarks, however there has been a decline in the proportion staff satisfied overall with working for Brent; who feel the work they do is worthwhile along with feelings of loyalty and being proud to work for the council.

6. Actions taken on the staff survey

6.1 Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Only 41% of staff believe that action will be taken on the problems identified in the staff survey	Lower completion rate next yearLower	Communicate achievements following last years' survey and action plan	HR/Communications &Consultation	April 2008	Staff aware of actions taken following last years' survey
	morale Staff feel views are not listened to	Communicate this years action plan	HR/Communications &Consultation	April 2008	Staff aware of action to be taken following recent survey
	 Staff feel under valued Lack of service improvemen 	Each service area to develop own action plan to deliver against corporate action plan and incorporate any local issues	All directors/SHRMs	April/May 2008	Staff aware how issues will be addressed within their service area
		Regularly review and communicate action against plans. Make sure achievements are clearly linked back to staff survey action plan	CMT/SMTs/DMTs/ Communications	Quarterly)	Staff updated on progress against action plan
Further analysis / detail					

7. Work Life balance and pay

Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Staff feel less able to balance their work and personal life and the majority do not feel they are fairly paid given their	 Increased staff turnover Low morale Staff feel 	Continue work with work life balance working group to identify issues and introduce new initiatives	HR	On going	New initiatives to improve work life balance
responsibilities.	under valued Increased levels of stress Increased	Feedback outcomes of work life balance workshops with staff, managers and senior managers and agree plan of action	HR	April 2008	Identify barriers and action plan to reduce them
	absenteeism • Sub optimal	Introduce new flexible working	HR	May/June 2008	Flexible working toolkit expanding
	service delivery	policy and workshops for staff			current options together with a
		Undertake assessment with Work Wise UK to develop and embed smarter ways of working	HR		workshop to assist managers improve their own work life balance and enable them to challenge current working practices
		Develop total reward strategy and communicate to staff total value of employment package	HR and Communications	October 2008	Maximise financial and non-financial reward for staff. Staff aware of value of total package

	Expand staff benefit scheme to include more local benefits	HR/People Centre	On going	Staff benefit from local discounts
	Benchmark against other public sector organisations	HR	September 2008	Able to identify areas above, in line or above sector averages

Less than two thirds of staff (63%) feel they are able to balance their working life and personal commitments. This is five percentage points down on last year and four below the local government benchmark score. Staff within Social Care and ITU has particularly low positive scores in relation to this question (54% and 51% respectively compared to 63% across the council).

Only 38% of staff agreed that they are fairly paid given their responsibilities. This is eight percentage points below last years score and six points below the local government average. The lowest positive percentage scores for this question were recorded in for staff within the Housing Resource Centre (19%), BACES 21%, Housing Strategy and Regeneration (23%), Environmental Health (24%) and Brent Learning Disability (26%).

8. Tackling hotspots

Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Staff in a number of customer facing units that have typically given less positive responses to the survey overall.	 Low morale Increased staff turnover Increase in number of 	Focus groups with key groups to identify underlying issues	Unit heads/SHRM /L&D	April 2008	Clearer understanding of issues
	ER cases	Individual action plans for groups identified	Unit head/SHRM	May 2008	SMART action plan to address issues identified
		Improve staff engagement	Unit head/SHRM	May 2008 and on going	Increased staff participation, issues identified early on and acted upon
Fruther evelopie / detail		Action plan and updates regularly communicated to	Unit Head/SHRM /Communications	May 2008 and on going	Staff aware of action planned and progress against plan

Further analysis / detail

There appears to be a number of units where staff have given less positive responses to a range of indicators in the survey these include, Information Technology Unit, BACES, Environmental Health, StreetCare, Transportation and Brent Mental Health.

Issue	Possible Impacts	Actions	Owners	Timescale	Success Measures
Demographically certain groups of staff have typically given less positive responses to the survey overall.	 Low morale Increased	Focus groups with key groups to identify underlying issues	Diversity/SHRM /L&D	April 2008	Clearer understanding of issues
	staff turnover Sub-optimal service delivery	Individual action plans for groups identified	Diversity/SHRM	May 2008	SMART action plan to address issues identified
Footbase and balls (data!)	Not maximising individual potential	Action plan and updates regularly communicated to	Diversity /Communications	May 2008 and on going	Staff aware of action planned and progress against plan

Demographically there appears to be certain groups of staff that have given less positive responses to a range of indicators in the survey including:

Qs where there is a significant statistical difference includes

- 'Other black backgrounds' (Qs 4,9,10,11,12,19,21,22,30,36,38,40,41,46,51, 52 and 63)
- Staff aged 21-30 on (Qs 58,59, 60, 61,63)
- Disabled staff particularly (Qs 2,10,11,17,20,25,26,38,39,40,41,51,52,53,56,62)