



## Supplementary - One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Tuesday, 22 March 2011 at 7.30 pm**

Committee Room 3, Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane,  
Wembley, HA9 9HD

### Membership:

#### Members

Councillors:

Castle (Chair)  
Colwill (Vice-Chair)  
Beckman  
Chohan  
Lorber  
McLennan  
Sheth  
Van Kalwala

#### first alternates

Councillors:

Brown  
BM Patel  
Long  
Hirani  
Matthews  
Harrison  
Kabir  
Denselow

#### Second alternates

Councillors:

Beck  
Kansagra  
Mashari  
Hossain  
Brown  
Hector  
Kataria  
Gladbaum

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020 8937 1359 [anne.reid@brent.gov.uk](mailto:anne.reid@brent.gov.uk)

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[www.brent.gov.uk/committees](http://www.brent.gov.uk/committees)

**The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting**

# Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

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**One Council Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee  
22 March 2011**

**Report from  
Director of Finance & Corporate  
Services**

For Information

**Staff Survey 2010/11 Main findings and action plan 2011/12**

**1.0 Summary**

1.1 This report is to update One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Brent council staff satisfaction survey and Action Plan.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 This report is for information only.

**3.0 Detail**

**3.1 Background**

The staff survey is a valuable tool in assessing levels of employee engagement across the council and there is much empirical evidence to suggest that those organisations with high levels of employee engagement are also those where performance is highest. Engaged employees are better motivated, have less absence and are more productive. It therefore makes sense that not only should we conduct an annual survey but we should highlight the key areas for development, develop an action plan and feed back to staff.

**3.2** Following a competitive bidding procurement exercise, the market research company ORC International were appointed to undertake the 2010 staff satisfaction survey. The 2010 survey is the fourth successive survey undertaken by ORC. The main strengths of ORC's approach continue to be their wide experience and technical expertise in employee surveys; their independence, access to their UK benchmarking databases, (which includes data from other local authorities) and the range of bespoke reporting options they offer.

## 4.0 Questionnaire & Methodology

The questionnaire is structured using the following sub headings:

- Your job;
- Training and career development;
- Performance and line management;
- Senior management and leadership;
- Communication;
- Equal opportunities;
- Work Life Balance;
- Pay and Benefits;
- Customer Focus;
- Perceptions of Brent Council.

**4.1** As in previous years, the questionnaire was available for staff to complete on-line. In addition, paper copies of the survey were targeted at staff with limited access to PC's or the intranet.

**4.2** The survey fieldwork period was in the five week period between 13 December 2010 and Friday 14 January 2011. During that time 1,462 questionnaires were completed. This represents an overall response rate of 55%, seven percentage points down on the 2009 figure of 62%, but still above the 51% average for other local authorities within the ORC International perspective database.

## 5.0 Results

**5.1** **Headlines** – the consultants overall assessment is. *'Findings remarkably similar to the previous year with many findings in line with 2009. The principles of one council may be starting to embed as there has been an increase in perceptions of cross team/department working relationships. The spending review, cuts and change issues may have had some effect on career opportunities and overall satisfaction – but not too dramatic.'*

**5.2** **What's improved** - questions showing the most improvement centre around working practices, specifically how employees and departments work together. The consultant's view is that these improvements are important at time of change, and although there is a high neutral response to the question, 'the Council supports employees who are affected by change' there has been a slight improvement in the % +ive score.

	2010 % +ive	2009 % +ive
There are good working relationships between departments on the principals of 'One Council'	49	42
There are good working relationships and support between managers and employees.	64	62
I am encouraged to work in partnership with other units in my department.	77	71
The Council supports employees affected by change.	36	31

**5.3 What's declined since 2009** – staff are less confident about their career opportunities with the Council. There has also been a notable decline in the perceived effectiveness of Insight – the staff magazine and feeling safe to speak up and challenge etc.

	<b>2010 % +ive</b>	<b>2009 % +ive</b>
Confident about career opportunities at Brent	26	34
Overall satisfaction in working for Brent Council	69	75
Effectiveness of internal communication channels (Insight Magazine)	46	52
Safe to speak up and challenge etc	32	37
Given the opportunity to improve my skills at Brent Council	61	66
Believe that action will be taken on problems identified etc	40	45
Intend to be still working for Brent Council in 12 months time.	67	72

**5.4 Results in detail** - the narrative report contains detailed analysis covering the ten main sections in the questionnaire:

- Your Job, Training & Career Development
- Performance & Line Management,
- Senior Management & Leadership
- Communication and Equal Opportunities
- Work Life Balance
- Pay & Benefits
- Customer Focus and Perceptions of Brent Council.

**5.4.1 Your job** – The overall score for this section is 76% and is a slight improvement on the 2009 score. The consultant's assessment is that a majority of staff have good role clarity and feel their job is clearly related to the Council's objectives. Staffs largely feel encouraged to work on their own initiative and have the necessary information to do their jobs well. Staff satisfaction with the physical working environment remains unchanged from 2009 and is 6% points above the local govt benchmark.

**5.4.2 Training and career development** – satisfaction with training and career development continues to decline. The overall score for this section is 54% (58% in 2009). The level of staff confidence in their career opportunities with Brent has declined by 8% points. The consultants suggest that this could be related to general uncertainty and anxieties as a result of the spending review. Training and career development is identified as a key driver of employee engagement and is therefore a priority area for improvement.

**5.4.3 Performance and line management** – the overall score for this section is 68% (65% in 2009). All eleven questions in this section show some improvement. Questions – *‘my line manager motivates and inspires me to be more effective in my job’* and *‘my line manager effectively deals with poor performance’* are significantly above the local govt benchmarks – 7% and 17% respectively. The proportion of staff that has had an appraisal in the last 12 months has increased slightly; as has the proportion who believe their appraisal accurately reflects their performance – 69% (66% in 2009).

**5.4.4 Senior Management / Leadership** – scores in this section have risen slightly. The average score is 41% (37% in 2009). Despite the improvements in satisfaction there are high neutral scores for each of the three questions. The consultants suggest that this indicates room for improvement with regard to the visibility of, and leadership from senior management and the level of support offered to employees affected by change.

**5.4.5 Communication** – there has been little change in staff views on communication since 2009. The average score for this section (48% +ive), is very similar to the 2009 score. The consultants say - there has been little change in staff views of communication since 2009; satisfaction with downward communication is higher than for upward communications. Staff understand what other departments do and 57% feel that the future direction of the Council is clearly communicated.

Communication channel	Satisfaction % +ive
Intranet	72
Line Manager	68
CE's Newsletter	58
CE's Blog	48
Managers Briefing	46
Insight (staff magazine)	46
Corporate Road Shows	41
Visits from senior managers / directors or assistant	31
Your Voice – Staff Forums	25
One Council Master classes	14

**5.4.6 Equal Opportunities** – There has been little change in staff perceptions of equal opportunities since 2008. The overall score for this section is 71%. Staff feel that Brent is an equal opportunity borough, (71%) and that they are treated with fairness and respect (68%). The levels of discrimination and harassment/bullying, remain the same as 2009 at 12% and 11% respectively. Managers are identified as the principal source of discrimination and harassment/bullying.

**5.4.7 Work Life Balance** – there has been little change in staff perceptions of work-life balance over that past few years. The overall score for this section is 68% (67% in 2009). A majority of staff say they are given the opportunity to use flexible working patterns when necessary and a similar proportion say they are able to balance their work life with personal commitments – 70% and 64% respectively.

**5.4.8 Pay and Benefits** – the overall score for this section remains the same as 2009 at 47%. Satisfaction with the total benefits package is 48% but this is 10% points below the local govt benchmark and 12% below the London council’s benchmark.

**5.4.9 Customer focus** – the overall score for this section is 65% - not comparable to the 2009 score because of changes to the questions. Notwithstanding, a majority of staff feel that Brent is committed to customer service and that their team acts on the feedback they receive from external customers 73% and 72% respectively. A smaller proportion, (52%) feel their service has improved in the last six months. This question has a high neutral response – (38% uncertain about service improvement). The consultants say this level of uncertainty could be related to uncertainty about service cuts.

**5.4.10 Perceptions of Brent Council** – this section is used to measure the levels of employee engagement within the Council. ORC define engagement in terms of Say, Stay and Strive.

- **Say** – where employees are inclined to speak positively about the organisation;
- **Stay** – reflecting the individual’s commitment to the organisation, e.g. career development, commitment to stay and be part of the organisation;
- **Strive** – going the extra mile and put extra discretionary effort into their work.

The Employee Engagement Index (EEI) which is the average score for the questions in this section is 66% - a 3% point decline since 2009. Although feelings of loyalty to Brent council remain high and 91% of staff feel the work they do is worthwhile with 92% being happy to go the extra mile, there are declines in other questions. Intention to remain working at Brent is down 5% points. Belief that action will be taken to on problems identified in the survey is down by 5% points and overall satisfaction with working for Brent council is down by 6% points. Poorer responses to these questions might be seen to reflect current anxieties about jobs and service cuts.

**6.0 Employee engagement and Key Driver Analysis**

**6.1** A Key Driver Analysis (KDA) has also been undertaken and can be used to focus on those aspects of working for Brent council which have the greatest impact on engagement. The main findings from the KDA are in the tables below.

<p>1. Key strengths / areas to celebrate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear on the role; feel it is worthwhile &amp; clearly related to the Council’s objectives.</li> <li>• Staff happy to work on own initiative and go the ‘extra mile’ when required.</li> <li>• Customer focused; committed to customer satisfaction and act on feedback</li> <li>• Line management/performance management</li> </ul>
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2. Key areas for further investigation and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and career development; improve perception of career opportunities available.</li> <li>• Building on improvements to the working relationships between departments.</li> <li>• Views of senior management/employee voice and involvement – safe to speak up and challenge.</li> <li>• Work-life balance.</li> </ul>
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3. Other issues for further investigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction with total benefits package.</li> <li>• Harassment, bullying and discrimination.</li> </ul>
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## 7.0 Next Steps

7.1 The consultants ORC will present findings to staff at a Your Voice – Staff Forum on 5 April.

7.2 The Narrative and Benchmarking reports will be published on the intranet. The comments report will be circulated to CMT members. Additional demographic, trend and comparative service area reports can be generated on request from the highlights tool - email [consultation@brent.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@brent.gov.uk)

7.3 Draft action plan Appendix 1 to be signed off by CMT and implemented.

## 8.0 Background Papers

- Brent Council Staff Survey (draft) narrative report, Engage, Inform, Improve 2010
- London Borough of Brent Staff Survey Benchmarking Report 2010

### Contact Officers

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## **BRENT STAFF SURVEY ACTION PLAN 2011- 2012**

**Classification:Internal  
Release: Draft Ver 0.1  
Signed off CMT**

**Date created: 17/03/11  
Date of next review: 17/03/12  
Author: Margaret Newman  
Post Title: Strategic HR Manager  
Owner: Finance & Corporate Services – P&D**

## BRENT STAFF SURVEY ACTION PLAN 2011 - 2012

PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	BEGIN BY	RESOURCES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
<b>Staff Engagement</b>	Identify and train staff across the council	Directors/HR	April 2011	Staff/ORC	Survey Champions identified in departments and briefed  Facilitators identified and trained to support managers/staff in developing actions  Link to liP?
1. Training and Career Opportunities	Focus Groups to explore what lies under the decline in rating	HR/Consultation	April 2011 – ongoing	Staff Panels	Strong driver for staff engagement  Action plan in place to support findings  Improvement in next survey results 100%
Page 8	All staff should have their career aspirations and development need highlighted in Performance and Development form	HR/Communication/Line Manager	April 2011	Staff and Line Managers	Appraisals response rate increased to 100%
	Giving staff continue communication about the changes in Brent and career development opportunities	Communication	April 2011 - ongoing	Staff and Line Managers	Improvement in the next survey results  All career development opportunities are published across the council
2. Senior Management/Leadership	Update the website about new Directors and Assistant Directors details	Internal Communication	April 2011	Internal Communication Officer	Improvement in next Staff Survey results  Updated and correct information available and accessed by staff
PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	BEGIN BY	RESOURCES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE

	Directors and Assistant Directors to attend at least 2 “functions” outside of their line of responsibility	Directors/Assistant Directors	June 2011 - ongoing	Communication	Improvement in next Staff Survey results to at least 50 %
	Bi-Annual Roadshows with CEX and Directors	HR/Communication	October 2011	Communication	Monitor staff satisfaction through (survey monkey)
3. Improve perception of good working relationships between departments	All staff to include an objective in 2011-2012 appraisal an example of how they have worked across departments	All staff	April 2011	All staff	Sample check appraisal forms  Monitor staff satisfaction through (survey monkey)
4. Pay and Benefits	Increase satisfaction levels in relation to total benefits package	HR/Communication	May 2011	HR	Improvement in next Staff survey results to 65%
Page 5 Harassment bullying and discrimination	Review current policy decide if Zero tolerance policy required	HR/Communication	a.s.a.p	HR	Improvement in the next staff survey results and reflected in quarterly dashboard

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