



Equalities Committee
11 January 2016

Report from the HR Director

Brent Council's Collaborative Mentoring programme

1.0 Summary

The Collaborative Mentoring programme was approved by CMT in December 2015 and will be rolled out from January 2016. It aims to promote and facilitate regular dialogue between senior managers and staff as a means of empowering junior staff members, fostering good cross-organisational working relationships, developing a greater understanding of diversity from differing perspectives and improving the sense of belonging to One Council.

The programme will be managed by the HR team and participants will be provided with relevant support and guidance.

2.0 Recommendations

The Equalities Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and supporting Appendices.

3.0 Detail

3.1.1 The first cycle of Collaborative Mentoring initiatives will start from January 2016, although some elements of the programme such as the 360° feedback will be piloted by Strategic & Operational Directors between January and March 2016.

3.1.2 The proposed timetable for the Collaborative Mentoring programme is available in **Appendix 1**.

3.1.3 The Collaborative Mentoring programme will consist of the following initiatives:

Shadowing / Back to floor days

It is proposed that this initiative is piloted by CMT members, with each having two shadowing days per year.

Each CMT member should select two service areas they would like to shadow and liaise with the relevant Heads of Service / Directors to arrange a date and a staff mentor.

This initiative will provide participating staff members with the opportunity to 'manage' senior managers on that day/half day. This experience will be beneficial for both the staff and senior managers. Staff members will have the exposure to and gain confidence in interacting with senior managers, while senior managers will get an insight of the day to day work of staff and their service.

Reverse mentoring circles

It is recommended that the first Reverse mentoring circle is launched by the Chief Executive, with subsequent bi-monthly circles delivered by Strategic & Operational Directors.

It might be appropriate to adopt a theme-based approach to the mentoring circles linking the discussions to key priorities and themes for the organisations. For example, in the IIP assessment report performance management has been identified as a key weakness so it might be worth having Appraisals as the first theme to be discussed.

Other themes could be agreed based on CMT's five key priorities and when the staff survey is completed, the areas of concern can be further discussed at these circles to find out what are the underlying reasons for staff dissatisfaction.

The first mentoring circle/s will be advertised to all staff, with places allocated on a first come first served basis. There will be a waiting list collecting the contact details of those staff who didn't have the chance to attend.

While senior managers will be there to respond to staff questions, it is hoped that staff will also share any challenges they face in their workplace and explore creative solutions to resolve these.

This initiative will empower participants and will also provide them with an opportunity for networking outside of their own departments, which will foster cross-organisational partnership and more effective working as One Council.

Web chats with senior managers

It is proposed that web chats with Strategic & Operational Directors are organised on a monthly basis starting from January 2016. Through the web chats staff will get answers to their questions live, via a secure and anonymised web platform. The frequently asked questions could then be shared on an anonymised basis on the Intranet.

This initiative will enable those employees who are less confident in having face-to face contact with senior managers to interact with them in a less intimidating setting.

360° feedback

It is proposed that a pilot of the 360° feedback for the Chief Executive and Strategic & Operational Directors is run between January and March 2016.

As the timeframe for the pilot of this initiative is very tight, it is proposed that participants who are subject to the 360° feedback appraisal, select: two peers, two subordinates (managers) and two staff members (suggested by the managers) by mid-January. These names will then have to be given to HR who will contact the above staff members for feedback by end of January, and will then provide the senior manager with the aggregated data based on the feedback questionnaire. This exercise will be repeated again in the new financial year.

The competencies and the rating system will be consistent with or aligned to those used in our employees' competency framework. The feedback questionnaire will cover questions related to the following competencies: communication style, leading people, leading change, delivering results, shaping the future vision for the organisation.

Apart from providing a more robust and accurate appraisal framework, the 360° feedback will also enable senior managers to triangulate their understanding of organisational, service users' and workforce needs, and make more informed and transparent decisions.

- 3.1.4** The Collaborative Mentoring programme will be launched in January 2016. The proposed timetable is available in **Appendix 2**.

4.0 Financial and staffing / accommodation Implications

There are no significant financial and staffing/accommodation implications arising from this report.

5.0 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 Diversity Implications

It is anticipated that the proposed initiatives will have a positive impact on all participating staff members, particularly those from under-represented groups as they will have a regular exposure to senior managers, which will hopefully increase their confidence in sharing their experiences and motivation to apply for more senior roles within or outside the organisation.

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