

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**Chief Executives Service – Improvements in response to the Employee Survey  
Report by Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive**

**Summary**

This paper outlines the proposed improvement actions to be taken by the Chief Executive's Service in response to the views expressed by staff within the Service in the fourth Highland Council Employee Survey.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The fourth Employee Survey was conducted at the end of 2007 and the results have been analysed at both corporate and Service level.
- 1.2 482 questionnaires were issued to staff within the Chief Executive's Service and 317 were returned, giving a high response rate of 66%.
- 1.3 The responses provide a relatively positive picture of staff views about aspects of their jobs, views of line management and views on stress and workload issues. However, the responses show less positive views about the Council, morale, communications and some aspects of training and change.
- 1.4 As well as taking into account the suggestions gathered from staff in the corporate Employee Survey events, the Assistant Chief Executive has met with the different parts of the Service and taken their views on specific issues.
- 1.5 The improvement actions for the Chief Executive's Service have been drawn up from the survey results and the direct proposals from staff and will include the delivery of the corporate improvement actions.

**2. Factors showing improvement**

- 2.1 The Chief Executive's Service has maintained high levels of job satisfaction and satisfaction with having interesting work, good employment benefits, supportive colleagues, working environment and personal safety.

There has also been an increase in satisfaction with:

- Pay (+3%) to 59%
- Feeling you have accomplished something worthwhile at work (+4%) to 71%
- Working as part of a team (+3%) to 69%
- Opportunity to show initiative (+2%) to 62%

- 2.2 The most important aspects of work for staff are having interesting work, enjoyment in the work, pay and good employment benefits.
- 2.3 There has also been an increase (+8%) in those saying that they have the right amount of work to do (36%) and a decrease (-12%) in those stating that they experience above average levels of stress (26%).

- 2.4 Positive views of line managers have generally been maintained and have shown increases in the following areas:
- Acts on my ideas and suggestions (+9%) to 51%
  - Appreciates the pressure I come under (+2%) to 62%
  - Listens to my ideas and suggestions (+3%) to 70%
  - Makes it clear what is expected (+3%) to 71%
  - Does something about the pressure I come under (+3%) to 48%

### 3. Areas for Improvement

- 3.1 Despite positive views of most aspects of their work, there is still a decrease in the number of staff within the Chief Executive's Service who say that they would speak highly of the Council as an employer and of the quality of the Services it delivers.
- 3.2 Satisfaction with some aspects of training and career development are comparatively low or have decreased:
- Career Development (41%)
  - Making the best use of skills and abilities 54% (-2%)
  - Feedback on performance (46%)
  - Morale in the workplace (50%)
  - Receiving sufficient training (56%) (-4%)
  - Line manager discussed my training needs (37%) (-1)

Only 52% of Chief Executive's staff feel that they receive sufficient training (or CPD) that is relevant to their job and only 58% state that they have received a Personal Development Plan.

- 3.3 Views on communication are also less positive. There is a significant decrease in those feeling well informed about the Council as a whole (-13%) to 48% and about the Service (-3%) to 66%.
- 3.4 Personal contact from immediate manager; meetings with immediate management and team briefings are all rated as among the top five preferred methods of communication. These have all decreased as sources of information available and used by staff:
- Personal contact from immediate manager (-6%) to 65%
  - Meetings with immediate management (-13%) to 36%
  - Team briefings (-14%) to 35%

However, e-mail and intranet continue to be preferred sources of information and are widely used.

- 3.5 The views on change are mixed. Whilst 42% of staff (+8%) agree that the process of change causes concern and worry and only 25% feel that change is well managed, there is an increase in those understanding the need for change (+3% to 71%) and supporting the need for change (+6% to 55%). This suggests that improved management of change would considerably lessons staff's concerns.
- 3.6 Finally views on senior management in the Service demonstrate room for improvement with only 39% of staff, a decrease of 5%, feeling that senior management keeps them informed of their views and decisions and a drop of 6% to 41% in those stating they have confidence in senior management. However, it should be noted that these results are significantly higher than the average for the

Council as a whole.

#### **4. Improvement actions**

4.1 In addition to delivering the corporate improvements agreed by Resources Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> August, the Chief Executive's Service has identified specific commitments under the following headings:

- Communication
- PDPs/Training & Career Development
- Equipment and Environment

4.2 Communication

- Provide a Spring Conference for all Customer Service staff, bringing together all Service Point, Service Centre and Registrars staff in 3 or 4 events and include presentations from senior management on wider corporate issues.
- Provide quarterly Senior Management meetings involving all senior managers in the Chief Executive's Service to focus on strategic issues and to share information and good practice.
- Ensure that senior managers cascade relevant information from these events to their staff.
- Maintain effective information to staff on agreed improvement actions and progress in implementing them.
- Meet the corporate Employee Survey improvement actions in communications by ensuring that the corporate brief is fully implemented and that team meetings are held regularly.

4.3 PDPs/Training & Career Development

- Ensure that all staff within the Chief Executive's Service receive a Personal Development Plan in 2008/2009.
- Develop a system of recording and managing the identified training needs of each section and the Service as a whole to ensure fair and appropriate access to training and development.
- Ensure that all managers within the Chief Executive's Service work to the Management and Senior Management Competency Frameworks, including training on personal development planning, performance feedback and management of change as required.

4.4 Equipment and Environment

- Complete the access improvements required by Disability Discrimination legislation.
- Implement Stress Risk Assessment (Work Positive) in Policy & Performance and e-Government teams
- Undertake stress risk assessment with other areas of the Service as required.

#### **5. Monitoring progress**

5.1 An Action Plan will be developed from the improvement actions specifying responsible officers and targets.

5.2 Progress against the action plan will be monitored by the Employee Survey Reference Group and through the Quarterly Performance Review for the Chief Executive's Service.

- 5.3 Staff will receive an update on progress through their managers as a result of the quarterly senior management meetings.
- 5.4 A report on progress will be presented to Resources Committee at the same time as the report on the corporate improvements in September 2009.

## **8. Recommendation**

- 8.1 That the Resources Committee:
- a) notes the results of the fourth Employee Survey for the Chief Executive's Service
  - b) approves the proposed improvement actions identified in response to the results
  - c) agrees the proposals for monitoring the actions as outlined in Section 5 of the report

Signature:

Designation: Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive

Author: Cathy Christie, Employee Development Manager

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2008