

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE
15 JANUARY 2009

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Fourth Employee Survey 2007

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

SUMMARY

This report provides members with an update on the actions being taken by the Education Culture and Sport (ECS) Service in response to the findings of the fourth employee survey carried out over November and December 2007.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The fourth Employee Survey was conducted during November and December 2007 with results being reported to Resources Committee on 20th February 2008.
- 1.2 Following staff consultation on the results, five Corporate improvement themes have been developed. These Corporate improvement themes were approved at Resources Committee on 21st August 2008.

2.0 The Corporate Improvement Themes

- 2.1 The Corporate improvement themes are as follows:

1. Communication
2. PDPs/Training and Career Development
3. Pay and Terms and Conditions/Working Arrangements
4. Equipment and Environment
5. General

- 2.2 Each theme provides:

- a summary of the results from the Employee Survey indicating the areas for development
- an overall statement of commitment of the theme
- key actions to support that commitment

Further details summarising each Corporate theme are attached to this report marked **Appendix 1**, along with details of ECS Service specific improvement actions.

- 2.3 The ECS Service is fully committed to the Corporate improvement themes and will contribute to the monitoring of progress against the action plan for the Corporate improvement themes through the Employee Survey Reference Group and through

the Chief Executive's Quarterly Performance Review meetings.

3.0 Service Performance

3.1 Job satisfaction/Interesting work

The results under this heading are encouraging, with a high number of staff feeling satisfied with the type of work they are doing. However, there is virtually no change in the results from the last survey and therefore there is potential for improvement.

3.2 Job security

The results are concerning, with an overall reduction of 14% from the last survey. This could be, in part, as a consequence of the Admin/Clerical review that is on-going and the restructuring of the Service which was completed in Spring 2007. In addition Service-wide discussions on budget savings were on-going at the time of this survey.

3.3 Career development

Results here are broadly similar to the previous survey, with 35% satisfied and 26% dissatisfied. There is potential for improvement.

3.4 Feedback on performance/ Praise for doing a good job

Overall the results were poor, although there is some evidence of feedback being given. However, the number of staff feeling they do not receive feedback and praise for doing a good job is high enough to cause concern and there is potential for improvement.

3.5 Team ethos

Generally the results here are good and up slightly from the previous survey, with staff feeling they are given the opportunity to show initiative.

3.6 Factors most important to staff

Of the various factors listed in the survey the 3 most important are pay, enjoyment in work and interesting work. Job security, supportive colleagues and working hours are the next most important categories.

3.7 Morale in Service

Results are much the same as for the previous survey and are concerning with only 18% saying that they would speak highly of the Service and 37% saying that they would be critical. The remaining staff indicated a neutral view.

3.8 **Workload**

Generally, results are similar to the previous survey, with 26% who feel that they have too much work to do, 43% feel that they have a heavy but manageable workload and only 24% who feel that they have the right amount of work to do.

3.9 **Stress**

Results are similar to the previous survey. However, there are concerns as around 40% of staff indicated that they are experiencing above average levels of stress.

3.10 **Line management**

Most line managers are well thought of. However, some staff feel they do not respond well when required to do something about staff under pressure.

3.11 **Senior management**

Staff believe that senior managers within the Service do not communicate well.

4.0 **Service Improvements**

4.1 The Service is under-taking a programme of self evaluation and the outcomes of the Employee Survey are a central element in this process. The self evaluation process will result in the creation of specific improvement actions that will address the concerns outlined in section 3 above.

4.2 In parallel a number of improvements are in the process of being implemented and they are detailed in **Appendix 1** under the corporate improvement themes

5.0 **Monitoring Progress**

5.1 The specific improvement actions arising from the self evaluation process and the specific actions outlined in **Appendix 1** will be consolidated into a single action plan with appropriate timescales and individuals tasked with taken these forward.

5.2 Progress against this will be monitored internally through the ECS Senior Management Team, the Employee Survey Reference Group and through the Chief Executive's Quarterly Performance Review meetings. A report will be presented to Resources Committee in Autumn 2009 and staff will receive an update with progress at that time through the team briefing frame-work.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) Approve the proposals for developing ECS Service specific improvements as outlined in Section 4 of this report.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Authors: Ron MacKenzie and Elaine Kirkham

Date: 19 December 2008.

Background Papers: Appendix 1 ECS Service Improvements

**EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2007
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**

Corporate Improvement Theme 1: COMMUNICATION

Council's Commitment:

Increase the effectiveness of organisational communications and communication within the services by increasing face-to face meetings between staff and their managers and improving the consistency of information available.

ECS Improvement Actions:

- Team meetings and briefings continue to be used as a key means of communication. The corporate team briefing framework is in the process of being rolled out on a phased basis across the Service.
- A new Service-wide newsletter has been developed and is distributed both electronically and as a hard copy.
- A new approach to web-based information for all staff is to be launched in January 2009. Information will be updated regularly.
- Information relating to Service policies and procedures will be maintained in a more user-friendly and easy to access format.
- All managers to be provided with the appropriate training to ensure that they communicate effectively and regularly with their staff.

Corporate Improvement Theme 2: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS/TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Council's Commitment:

Complete the roll-out of the Highland Council Personal Development Plans to all staff by March 2009 and ensure appropriate training and development opportunities are available.

ECS Improvement Actions:

- Full implementation of PDP process across the Service by March 2009 and on-going thereafter.
- Leadership programme being delivered to promote interest in career development across the Service.
- A training programme to raise awareness of health and safety issues is currently being delivered to over 300 janitorial and care-taking staff

across the Service.

- Culture of staff participation through working groups and development groups.
- Increased Service participation in the MDP programme.

Corporate Improvement Theme 3: PAY AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS/WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Council's Commitment:

Introduce a fair pay structure with harmonised terms and conditions of employment. Ensure effective support and communications are in place for all changes to working arrangements and to manage workload and stress.

ECS Improvement Actions:

- The Work Positive scheme has been trialled with positive results and the Service has identified a further group of management staff who will be offered the opportunity to participate.
- Managers will be encouraged to respond to staff experiencing high levels of stress, through the PDP process and through regular monitoring of workloads.
- Managers will be encouraged to use the Employee Development Unit's training courses in stress management.

Corporate Improvement Theme 4: WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Council's Commitment:

Provide a healthy, safe and supportive working environment and work to improve the workplace accommodation for all staff.

ECS Improvement Actions:

- The Service has created a Health & Safety improvement plan that has been developed by a working group drawn from all sectors of the Service, including trade union representation. This improvement plan will be delivered over the next 3 years and on-going thereafter.
- The plan includes actions to implement asbestos management plans, generic risk assessments, ensuring that Responsible Premises Officers

are aware of their role and responsibilities, fire safety training, moving and handling training and managing aggressive behaviour and violence towards staff.

- New dust extraction systems will be installed in all Secondary school wood-work rooms by autumn 2009 thereby improving the working environment of staff and pupils alike.
- There is an on-going investment commitment to improve the ECS Estate evidenced by the creation of 15 new community schools in recent years and an extensive building refurbishment programme.

Corporate Improvement Theme 5: GENERAL

Council's Commitment:

Increase staff morale and motivation by strengthening managers' skills in communication, people and performance management and the management of change and ensuring the requirements of the Internal Communication Standards and Change Management Guidance are met.

ECS Improvement Actions:

- There is a review of all administrative and clerical functions on-going across the entire Service. The objective of this review is to remove duplication and fragmentation and improve systems and processes. As a result job content will be enriched by the creation of a support structure that is more closely aligned to the effective support of service delivery.

In addition there is a move towards greater integration within the Service by co-locating support functions.

Throughout the review process to date there have been regular face-to face staff briefings, quarterly newsletters and trade union briefings.

- The Service is currently developing an enhanced management information system which will improve work processes and increase job satisfaction.
- As a consequence of the Review, staff have been learning new skills in project management, change management, business process improvement and benefits realisation.
- A new Business Support structure has recently been introduced across the Service, led by the newly created post of Business Support and Performance Manager. This structure will ensure continuous improvement in processes and systems.

