

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE
18 SEPTEMBER 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Fourth Employee Survey - Interim Report
Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

SUMMARY

This report provides members with an interim report on the Education Culture & Sport (ECS) Service response to the fourth employee survey carried out over November and December 2007.

1. 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. 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 for each theme are attached to this report marked **Appendix 1**.

- 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 improvement themes through the Employee Survey Reference Group and through the Chief Executive's Quarterly Performance Review meetings.

3.0 Service Specific Improvements

- 3.1 In addition to the Corporate improvements which have been approved by Resources Committee, there is a need to consider where improvements might be made which would be specifically related to staff in ECS Service.
- 3.2 In order that ECS staff are consulted in identifying Service specific improvements, it is proposed that a small number of focus groups be formed to :
- a) consider the detailed results from the Survey and assess how they impact on ECS Service; and
 - b) offer views and suggestions on what might be done to improve.
- 3.3 Following a short period of consultation through these focus groups, a detailed report will be presented to a future ECS Committee outlining proposals for ECS Service specific improvements

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Members are asked to:

- i note the Corporate improvements with the Employee Survey.
- ii agree the proposals for developing ECS Service specific improvements as outlined in Section 3 of this report.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Author: Elaine Kirkham, Principal Staffing Resource Officer

Date: 2 September 2008

Background Papers

Annex 1 Employee Survey 2007 Corporate Improvements (as agreed at Resources Committee, 21st August 2008)

**EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2007
CORPORATE IMPROVEMENTS**

Improvement Theme 1:

COMMUNICATION

Areas for development:

There is a 11% decrease (down to 34% which was the 2000 level) in those saying that Highland Council as a whole keeps them fully or fairly well informed and the effectiveness of communication varies across the Services.

Whilst 'e-mail' is one of the most preferred ways of receiving information, so is 'personal contact with immediate manager/supervisor' and 'meetings with manager'. Face-to-face contact is less frequent and showing a downward trend.

'Informal Conversations' remains the most used source of information whilst it is one of the least preferred.

Staff also feel that senior management in their Services could improve how they communicate their views and decisions and listen to staff opinion.

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.

Improvement Actions:

- Ensure The Highland Council Internal Communication Standards' requirement for all teams to meet at least six weekly is implemented
- Issue a corporate team brief (presented by team manager) to all office based staff quarterly
- Issue a corporate team brief (presented by team manager) 3 times per year plus newsletter to all other staff
- Provide training for all managers on delivering team briefs, if required
- Support managers at all levels in undertaking their communication responsibilities through the Management Competency Framework
- Encourage managers to provide regular, informal team time to discuss issues with staff
- Maintain the Management Intranet Site to ensure it is current, relevant and useful
- Promote development events that allow staff from different Services to work together and to understand their aims and requirements

**EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2007
CORPORATE IMPROVEMENTS**

Improvement Theme 2:

PDPS/TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Areas for development:

Only half the staff said that they had received induction training. The numbers having had a Personal Development Plan and their training needs analysed has improved since 2005, but still only 45% of staff have had a Personal Development Plan and 40% have had their training needs analysed. There is considerable variation across Services and grades and staff have expressed concerns regarding this inconsistency. Whilst figures on training are also improving, a third of staff feel that they do not receive the right amount of training to do their job well and only 30% of staff feel that they receive training relevant to their career development.

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.

Improvement Actions:

- Complete Personal Development Plans for all staff by 2009
- Ensure the PDP process is followed up, reviewed and quality assured
- Review the PDP documentation to ensure relevance to all levels of staff
- Include a Service Training & Development Plan within Service Plans by 2010
- Each Service to introduce a system to monitor implementation of PDPs and their outcomes
- Report on PDPs and Induction training through the Service Quarterly Performance Review
- Develop staff coaching skills to support on-the-job training
- Review management training available to ensure that management skills in delivering effective performance feedback, praise and recognition to staff are developed
- Consolidate the identification and organisation of training across the Council to ensure most efficient use of resources
- Provide more opportunities for training and progression through improved workforce planning and analysis of staff profiles and skill requirements within the Services.

**EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2007
CORPORATE IMPROVEMENTS**

Improvement Theme 3:

PAY & TERMS & CONDITIONS/WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Areas for development:

Over two thirds of staff are satisfied with the employment benefits available, but satisfaction with job security has dropped by 11% since 2005 and satisfaction with pay has dropped by 6%. Issues of pay and staff reward and recognition form a significant part of staff suggestions for improving the Council. Whilst 74% of staff are still satisfied with working hours, concerns are expressed about the effects of the management of vacancies and absence.

A significant proportion of staff (just under half) still feel that they experience high or above average levels of stress and this figure has remained consistent across the four Employee Surveys, although the sources of stress have changed.

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.**

Improvement Actions:

- Complete the implementation of Job Evaluation process across the Council
- Introduce a single pay structure which meets the requirements of modernised service delivery
- Introduce a package of harmonised terms and conditions of employment
- Ensure that all staff have sufficient information regarding the processes of Job Evaluation through newsletters, helpline and information from managers
- Equip managers to support staff effectively through Job Evaluation implementation
- Introduce specific training for managers on absence management as part of the Management Competency Framework
- Review the Flexible Working Policy and make recommendations for improvements
- Manage staff workload through Personal Development Plans and regular one-to-one meetings with line managers
- Provide support for managers in managing workload, job design and people management
- Implement Stress Risk Assessment (Work Positive) and monitor action plans through the Stress Management Steering Group
- Deliver training in stress awareness for individuals
- Deliver training in the management of stress for managers

**EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2007
CORPORATE IMPROVEMENTS**

Improvement Theme 4:

EQUIPMENT & ENVIRONMENT

Areas for development:

60% of staff said that they are satisfied with their working environment, including health, safety and security. However, a fifth (20%) of staff were dissatisfied with the working environment but only 10% were actually dissatisfied with their personal safety at work. 38% of staff were also dissatisfied with the resources to do their job. Whilst this is comparable with other Scottish Local Authorities, working environment and equipment contribute significantly to staff morale and 25% of staff rated having sufficient resources as one of the most important aspects of their job. 30% of staff said that they would be critical of Highland Council as an employer.

Commitment:

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

Improvement Actions:

- Provide training in Health, Safety and Property Management with intranet resources for all managers, particularly those responsible for premises.
- Ensure that all Senior Managers attend IOSHH Health & Safety for Senior Executives
- Support and promote occupational health activities
- Implement the programme of asset management and review of accommodation
- £2 million per annum to be spent on office rationalisation and improvement
- Complete ICT re-procurement to ensure effective systems of hardware and software
- Complete Pathfinder project to provide high speed network links to all offices
- Use findings and action plans for the Stress Risk Assessment (Work Positive) to identify and implement improvements to the working environment

**EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2007
CORPORATE IMPROVEMENTS**

Improvement Theme 5:

GENERAL

Areas for development:

Only 23% of staff would speak highly of the Council as an employer and only 15% would speak highly of morale in their Service. There is considerable variation across Services in staff perceptions of morale. Staff have raised the need to be listened to and to have the opportunity and confidence to comment and contribute. They have also identified the need to ensure that communication, using appropriate means, reaches all levels of the organisation. Attitudes towards change are less positive than other Scottish Local Authorities, although views on how change is managed are comparable or slightly higher. However, still only 18% of staff feel that change is well managed. There is still a relatively low awareness of the Corporate and Service Plans, although improved from 2005, and there is a great degree of variation between Services. A better understanding of corporate and service objectives would also help people to recognise where they fit in.

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.

Improvement Objectives:

- Increase opportunities for face-to-face communication between management and staff through the implementation of Internal Communication Standards
- Explain corporate and service objectives and the organisational changes to all staff through the Corporate Team Brief
- Reduce variation between Services by sharing good practice and implementing corporate management and communication standards
- Increase the use of team days and cross-Service events
- Include scrutiny of communication, consultation and training activities as part of the governance of business change projects
- Increase the uptake of Change Management and Dealing with Change training
- Create consistency across the organisation in policies, procedures and practice
- Increase visibility of senior management through face-to-face meetings and direct communications
- Introduce a Coaching Scheme for managers at all levels to focus on both general managerial capacity and specific skill areas
- Provide appropriate supervisory training and development for all who have some responsibility for supervising staff