

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE 3 SEPTEMBER 2009

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

STAFF SURVEY 2010

1 Introduction and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 In 2008 the Council undertook its first comprehensive staff satisfaction survey and made a commitment to repeat the survey every two years. This report updates the Committee on progress since the last survey and outlines the plans for the next survey in January 2010.

2 Wards Affected

None

3 Effect on Policy

- 3.1 None

4 Contact Officers

- 4.1 Anne Marie Scott, Head of Human Resources ext 1731

5 Background

5.1 2008 Staff Survey

In 2008 the Council undertook its first comprehensive staff survey which was run by Ipsos MORI. At that time the Council committed to repeating the survey every two years to make sure that the Council stays in touch with the views and feelings of its entire staff and has this information to hand as makes decisions in the future.

Understanding the prevailing organisational culture is essential to organisational development and staff attitudes and beliefs are fundamental to culture. There are clear links between levels of employee satisfaction and organisational performance. A workforce which feels involved and consulted is more likely to include employees who are motivated and therefore perform at a higher level. A commitment to repeat the survey regularly also provides a continuing focus on employee satisfaction and supports a culture of feedback and learning at all levels.

Ipsos MORI will be re-engaged to undertake this second staff survey which is planned for early 2010 (mirroring the timing of the 2008 survey). Ipsos MORI are the external experts in the field, providing statistical reliability, credibility and confidentiality.

5.2 2008 Findings

The 2008 survey was undertaken just as the Council was entering the final quarter of a year of major restructure and organisational change. Even so, the survey told us that, on the whole, the Council is seen as a good place to work and as an organisation that is effective and engaged with the needs of its staff. 64% of staff took the opportunity to complete the questionnaire which provided a clear idea of what the council needed to focus on and what was required to change for the Council to continue to be an employer of choice.

The 2008 survey identified a number of key strengths:

- Excellent working atmosphere
 - 90% of people satisfied with friendliness of their colleagues
 - 85% happy with working hours
 - 72% satisfied with working environment
- High commitment to customer service
- 67% of staff said they understood the Council's objectives
- Most were positive about internal communications with 3 in 5 saying they felt informed about what's going on
- Staff supportive of need for change – 75% said they understood why the changes were happening
- Effective line management practices: agreed that line manager is approachable (86%), open and honest (76%) and supportive (75%)

It also revealed a number of areas for improvement:

- Clear desire expressed for staff to have more consultation and opportunities to have their say
- There was a feeling that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) was out of touch and not interested in listening to staff ideas and concerns
- 54% did not agree that change is well managed
- Less than 50% were satisfied with job security
- Some staff felt undervalued and that there was a need to ensure staff are recognised and rewarded. Only a third felt they work for an employer that looks after its employees.

5.3 Response to 2008 Findings

As a result of the feedback from the 2008 survey, a detailed action plan was drawn up and endorsed by the Personnel & General Committee in September 2008. Eight key areas were identified for development in the action plan which has been used to inform the HR Strategy for the short-medium term in support of organisational improvement.

- Leadership and Management
- Communication/Consultation/Feedback
- Work-life Balance
- Customer Focus
- Managing Change
- Learning and Development
- Corporate Health (Engagement in Strategic Aims)
- Organisational Development

The action plan was developed through a process of consultation with 'staff survey champions' who were volunteers from around the Council who helped to promote participation in the survey and interpret what people were saying. The action plan, along with a summary of action/progress, is attached as Appendix 1 for information.

Some particularly successful examples of actions resulting from the feedback are:

- CMT 'back to the floor' days – three have been held during the last 18 months with excellent feedback
- Communication campaign via *Inside Cherwell* to explain the roles of the management teams and to introduce individual members of CMT;
- A weekly all-staff message from the Chief Executive
- The first annual management conference

The Council secured re-accreditation as an Investors in People (IiP) organisation in January 2009. This provided real evidence of the positive impact of the early work to implement the

action plan. The findings of the 2010 survey will be benchmarked against the 2008 results to measure changes in staff satisfaction and to give us the opportunity to measure the response to the new initiatives that we have undertaken.

6 Survey 2010

6.1 The 2008 survey was undertaken at the end of a period of significant change and at a time when many members of staff had not yet been able adjust to the changes. January 2010 will also be a challenging time to run a staff survey. The implications of job evaluation for individuals' grade and pay will have become clear shortly before the staff survey is run. We will also be getting very close to the beginning of the outsourced contract for the processing of council tax revenues and housing benefits and it is inevitable that staff will be concerned about the current and future financial constraints under which the Council operates.

We will, however, run the survey in January as planned to make sure the results are as a comparable as possible with those from 2008.

The draft project schedule is outlined as follows:

Survey Summary Milestones	Date
Set-up meeting between Cherwell and Ipsos MORI project teams	By mid September
1 st draft of questionnaire	By end September
Final questionnaire (including content and formatting)	By 4 December
Distribution of paper questionnaires On line survey goes 'live'	By 12 January 2010
Top line results available	End of February 2010
Draft summary report available	Early March 2010
Report on survey findings to Personnel Committee	June 2010
Action plan to be approved by Personnel Committee	September 2010

6.2 What can be done better

The two project teams will review the implementation process used in 2008 to make any improvements and adjustments deemed appropriate.

6.3 Questionnaire

As a matter of principle the 2010 will not be significantly different from the one run in 2008 so that the findings can be directly compared. However, as the 2010 questionnaire is developed the project teams may take into account:

- Prevailing economic climate and its impact on the Council
- Where the organisation sees itself now and where it wants to be in the future
- Changes in government initiatives
- Changing organisational priorities
- Action plan, processes and responses as an outcome of 2008 survey
- Review of relevance of 2008 survey categories

The survey, which will take approx 20 minutes to complete, will be in two formats. All those with a Council email address and with access to the internet will be sent an online questionnaire. Those members of staff who do not have internet access will be sent a paper version, together with a reply-paid envelope for return direct to Ipsos MORI.

6.4 **Confidentiality**

The individual responses to the survey will be kept confidential by MORI. An analysis of results for different groups will be carried out but no individual responses will be identified. Ipsos MORI will not supply data to the Council in any format that would allow an employee to be identified. Ipsos MORI is a member of the Market Research Society (MRS) and is bound by its Code of Conduct not to identify individual respondent's views.

6.5 **Survey Champions**

Approximately 20 employees will be appointed as staff survey champions so that there is at least one champion for each service area – a method repeated from the first survey. These employees will be involved in supporting the process by answering questions and/or helping with completing the survey. They will encourage colleagues to complete the survey within the time frame, help allay concerns over confidentiality and encourage involvement. This will ensure that the response rate is maximised.

6.6 **Survey Results**

Staff will be told about the survey results as soon as possible after Ipsos MORI has provided its report. The information will be made available on the intranet and paper copies will be available to all staff who do not have web access.

6.7 **Action Planning**

Once MORI has presented the findings, all service areas will be asked to discuss the staff survey feedback with their teams and provide feedback for the corporate action plan as well as develop local action plans. The staff survey champions will meet to discuss the overall feedback and make recommendations towards the development of a final action plan. These facilitated meetings are an opportunity to get some real examples of good and bad practice and some concrete ideas for doing things differently. The final action plan will go to Personnel Committee in September 2010. Staff will be informed of the key actions to be taken as a result of the survey.

7 **Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contribution to Efficiency Savings**

7.1 The following details have been approved by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance ext 1551 and Rosemary Watts – Risk Management and Insurance Officer ext 1566 .

7.2 **Risk Assessment**

There are no direct risks as a consequence of this report.

7.3 **Financial Effects**

There are no direct financial consequences of this report.

7.4 **Efficiency/Savings**

There are no efficiencies arising directly from this report.

8 **Recommendations**

8.1 The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the plans for the 2010 staff survey and the progress which has been made against the action plan arising from the 2008 survey

AIMING FOR EXCELLENCE IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT (STAFF SURVEY ACTION PLAN)

This action plan outlines areas for improvement in people management as the Council moves through the next phase of organisational development. Having completed a structure and process review this plan aims to establish a new identity and culture for the organisation, facilitating staff engagement and commitment. It is informed by the **MORI survey** undertaken in January 2008 and the feedback from the **Investors in People assessment** in June 2008. The aims and actions are also integrated into the development of the Council's new Human Resource Strategy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Develop and launch an on-going campaign via Inside Cherwell to explain the roles of the management teams (CMT, EMT, SMT) and introduce individual members of CMT.

A series of articles featuring the management team ran in Inside Cherwell:

June 2008 – Mike Carroll introduced performance management

July 2008 – Ian Davies featured encouraging staff to cycle to work

August 2008 – feature on 'Meet the management' explaining what each level of management is responsible for.

September 2008 – Pull out chart showing photos of EMT

October 2008 – Profiles of each member of CMT

November 2008 – Feature on Cherwell's first 'back to the floor' event, featuring CMT. Also feature on management conference

December 2008 – new series to profile council members introduced, starting with Cllr Wood.

February 2009 – Cllr Reynolds featured

March 2009 – Excellent edition, featuring messages from Mary Harpley and Cllr Wood

April 2009 – Excellent reception, featuring Cllrs Wood and Reynolds, and Mary Harpley. Cllr Turner featured.

May 2009 – Staff awards with CMT, and Back to the Floor preview

Cllr Pickford featured.

June 2009 – back to the floor report. Cllr Edwards featured.

July 2009 – Mary Harpley and the chairman opened the picnic area, thanking staff.

August 2009 – Councillor Turner goes back to the floor. Cllr Morris featured.

Include information on management team at recruitment and induction, including photos and personal messages. Involve all directors in induction process.

Org chart of extended management team (including photos) now included with all recruitment packs.

HR org chart issued at induction meeting.

Member of CMT invited to corporate induction day.

Run an annual management conference, to include all members of CMT, EMT and SMT to work on, and cascade, key corporate issues

Conference held on 17th Oct with EMT CMT & SMT attendance.

Action plan developed as a result of the day combined with results of recent staff survey

CMT to engage in 'back to the floor' days, initially within own directorates.

There has been 3 in total:

1 Reverse back to the floor - 9th Feb 09

2 Back to the Floors - 8 Oct 08 & 27 April 09

Introduce a weekly intranet message from a member of CMT about something they have been directly involved in.

Mary's weekly message started in October 2008 and has continued almost every week since. It has been well received by staff and many take the opportunity to mail Mary direct with their thoughts on the message or anything else.

CMT to regularly attend departmental meetings (own directorates initially) - including delivery of Cascade

All DMT members have been encouraged to request attendance by CMT as required, both from their own Director and where helpful across Directorates. In addition, individual SMT members are able to request attendance at any time.

Examples in services include:

Mike Carroll attending DMTs and team meetings with regards to performance management and data quality

Karen Curtin attending all DMTs and a number of team meetings (for example Housing) re the financial challenges for the 10/11 budget

Julie Evans attending conference / away days for finance, ICT and Customer services and having a slot on the corporate induction programme)

John Hoad contributing to other directorate meetings i.e. Finance and Customer Services / ICT team meetings, E&C DMT

Mary Harpley and Julie Evans – Revenues and Benefits staff meetings

CMT to communicate clearly reasons for office location and take steps to ensure visibility.

We published a regular staff newsletter dedicated to the Accommodation Review as a vehicle for communicating both the rationale for the changes but also the progress we were making at any point. CMT members have been trying to maximise the opportunities of the new open plan arrangements to be more visible to staff on a day-by-day basis as they move around the building.

Develop the use of the competency framework 360 feedback to collect feedback on leadership performance.

Pilot 360 delivered through May to 15 managers, also being incorporated in ILM level 5 development to 10 managers

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION/FEEDING BACK

Develop a corporate framework for meetings, to include 121s, team meetings, directorate meetings and cascade.

Planned for development during 2009/10 Q3 and Q4

Add staff photos to telephone directory (Intranet)

Pending Sharepoint

Issue Cascade directly to SMT

Done – since May 2009

Invite guest speakers to team meetings to promote understanding of other services

Examples from service areas include:

Communications team - has had visits from the job evaluation team, head of major developments and head of planning policy.

Housing - During the past 12 months or so Housing have had a number of external speakers at our team meetings including Julie Evans to talk on Customer Services, Dave Bennett to talk on Health & Safety issues, John Hoad, Councillor Gibbard, Viv Hutchins to talk on procurement, Job Evaluation team, Go Active Co-ordinator, David Peckford & Philip Clark on LDF and AHPP, Claire Taylor on Community Plan.

Claire Taylor has attended team meetings and DMTs to talk about the community strategy

Urban and Rural:

Craig Forsyth to set out how comms and press are managed

Liz: To review website progress

Service Accountant: to do budget update

Claire Taylor; CSCS

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Tender for a new occupational health service with a broader remit for proactive health management and employee wellbeing initiatives.

Additional resource will be required to support this

Develop further flexibility in working practices

New flex policy launched

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Pre-paid response cards to be handed out to customer to gain feedback on quality of service

A template for this is being produced, based on the standard document used by housing. This has been produced in consultation with members and will be rolled out to all service areas in September enabling them to produce their own service standard in a consistent format.

Other customer feedback routes in place including on- line complaints procedure, web site changed to say 'compliments and suggestions instead of 'complaints' . Govmetric device in One Stop Shops.

Develop corporate customer service standards and principles and communicate to all staff

Housing have developed a set of services standards, leaflet available on the website - the standards are linked to our performance monitoring and customer satisfaction work. Scrutiny and Overview Committee reviewed our standards and recommended them as a template for the rest of the Council's service standards - we are very proud of this!!

Performance Scrutiny Working group has looked at the current Housing Standards leaflet and agreed it should be our working model, as its overall look and feel was good. Members agreed to consider the content, suggest what they wanted to change, and that this would then be combined with appropriate elements from the national Customer Service Excellence standard.

Input received from Cllr Steward:

- Service specific phone numbers to be used
- Customer-friendly style required
- Lose the references to "five rings" and replace with something along the lines of "promptly"
- The specific (but possibly statutory) timeframe referred to in the Housing standard on page 5 (33 days and 56 days) are accurate but sound very long. Comms to review a way of getting this across.

Elements from the customer service excellence standard that should be included (where not already)

- Information on wait times for initial responses to telephone, e-mail, text and personal callers, and for all stages of the customer journey.
- How we tell you if there's a problem
- Where you can find Information about trends in complaints, both formal and informal, and the action we have taken as a result.
- Responses to specific survey questions and how we compare.
- National, statutory and local standards and targets for of timeliness and quality. Details of how often we monitor performance and the methods we use.
- How we consult and involve customers and others about local standards and targets.
- Where you can see the outcomes of consultation on standards and targets.

This was then taken back to Performance Scrutiny Working group as a marked up version of the Housing leaflet, agreed by Members, and is now with Communications to produce a template for all services. Jo expects to have that template ready for CMT in September.

There are consultation standards in the consultation strategy, she has also added some generic comments on consultation in the new customer charter

Develop routes for accessing community groups to facilitate communication and consultation

The council has established an equalities and access advisory panel which provides a forum for the council to talk to community groups about how to improve access to council services and develop them to be in tune with customers needs. There is now an online consultation portal which can be used for all types of consultation and also provides a database of consultees. The council continues to host a voluntary sector forum which provides an opportunity for two way dialogue with a large number of voluntary sector organisations from the district.

A Cohesion group has now been established for the Banbury area as a pilot and it is hoped that this will then be rolled out to other areas of the District. The aim of the group is to raise awareness and understanding between the different cultures in Banbury and enable liaison between the group and the District Council.

We continue to develop our feedback forms enabling service users to comment on current services and a help us develop new services. We also access community groups through The Seniors Forum, Voluntary Organisations Forum and Community Association Forum. In addition the content of our publications - the Seniors Directory, Guest Speakers booklet, seniors and voluntary organisations newsletters - are regularly reviewed as these are a source of information for community groups and Cherwell residents.

Introduce service standards for all areas which clearly identify customer groups and service standards, include monitoring in performance management systems.

Awaiting final version of corporate standards before review of existing service standards

MANAGING CHANGE

Develop guidance on managing change to include a clear and robust communication strategy at the outset of any change process. Include clear guidance/definitions of consultation, negotiation and staff involvement.

Corporate training programme includes two sessions on change management.

Create a staff forum to facilitate informal discussion of key issues.

Staff consultation group established - already used to consult on new policies and assist in appointing JE scheme provider.
Meets on an ad hoc basis when appropriate.

Develop a reward and recognition strategy which ensure recognition is demonstrated at all levels

Celebration lunch completed on 30/3/09 with 61 employees attending to receive congratulations

Refine and develop the competency framework to explicitly include change management skills

This has become part of a broader review of the competency framework and how it supports performance and development.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Focus further development on SMT and team leaders to enhance their role as a key part of the leadership team.

Key L&D subjects incorporated in Corporate training schedule including performance management, absence management and managing change

Develop and strengthen the leadership development programme.

LM programme at level 2, 3 & 5 either being delivered or planned for Sept & Oct 2009

Communicate new learning and development priorities and policies

L &D policy briefings delivered through 2008. Included in Cascade and Inside Cherwell and dedicated intranet site
CPD/conference application process firmly embedded into culture and used at all levels

Identity and deliver enhanced training and communication on Health and Safety

- Set up a group of departmental safety reps within the RMWG, as the first point of contact for Health and Safety issues
- Offered to attend section meetings and departmental meetings and as a result attended a number of meetings to discuss specific health and safety issues within those sections.
- Had discussions with Chris Harvey to ensure that the training schedule is available for all staff.
- Included various articles throughout the year within the staff magazine covering issues such as fire and first aid.
- Erected notices in all print areas in Bodicote House covering fire evacuation, assembly points and emergency exits
- Helped compile a booklet covering emergency codes and procedures at the offices at Bicester, Kidlington and TIC.
- Undertaken training for fire wardens, liaison officer and work station assessors.

Include learning evaluation at team level in leadership development programme.

Within ILM programme has a development plan embedded within the structure to take learning back to the workplace which also requires supervisory support. Line managers are included in the process. Level 5 includes 360 appraisal to benchmark performance followed by 1 to 1 coaching to support change. All corporate training is subject to the personal development process.

CORPORATE HEALTH (ENGAGEMENT IN STRATEGIC AIMS)

Develop wider team involvement in service planning for 2009-10 including production of corporate framework and facilitation guide

A service and financial planning launch event was held on 12 June 2008 with all EMT members which used an 'ideas exchange' to identify possible ways to involve staff in service planning. These ideas were recorded and circulated to EMT, along with being posted on dedicated service planning intranet pages.

A more formal guidance note was issued to all managers to set out expectations of how staff would be involved in service planning and performance management in general. This was also made available on the intranet site.

The improvement team also attended DMTs and SMTs to discuss the need for staff engagement on the service planning process.

The service planning guidance and timetable for 2010/11 includes staff involvement.

Produce departmental summary in plain English, outlining how each service area contributes to strategic objectives

The approach adopted was to ensure the Service and Financial Planning process was driven by the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives. This is clearly emphasised in the guidance issued, the ongoing communications around the process, the format of the service plans and in particular in the engagement of staff and the wider community. Individual managers to decide how best to communicate to their staff on the details of their service plans and its subsequent delivery.

Use wider range of visual aids to communicate corporate aims and objectives (screen savers, coasters, payslips etc)

Screensavers changed monthly to reflect comms messages since May 2009.

Other options still under consideration but not yet actioned due to budget.

Use Inside Cherwell to promote examples of teams contributing to corporate targets

June 2008 – Cleaner greener – recycling team, environmental strategy group

July 2008 – District of Opportunity – No place like home campaign featured

Cleaner, greener – recycling pledge.

August 2008 – Accessible, value for money council – one stop shops feature

Cleaner Greener – feature on OWP

September 2008 –

Cleaner greener – staff asked to save energy

District of opportunity – new flex policy

Accessible value for money – Democracy feature

October 2008

Cleaner, greener – feature on rural team

Recycling team's roadshow

District of opportunity – staff training improvements

November 2008:

Accessible value for money – focus on staff diversity group

Feature on plain English

District of opportunity – new buddy scheme

Cleaner greener

Switch on and switch off

December 2008:

Safe and healthy – Christmas drinking campaign

Emergency planning feature

Cleaner greener – new trucks

Accessible value for money – ICT focus

February 2009

Accessible value for money – cheques change, Cherwell maps

District of opportunity – Training

Safe and healthy – lunchtime walks

March 2009 – Excellent special – covers all.

April 2009

Safe and healthy – new sickness policy

District of opportunity – housing in hard times

May 2009

All – improvement feature

Accessible value for money – new community strategy

District of opportunity – staff awards

Safe and healthy – shape up for summer

Older people groups feature

July 2009

Safe and healthy – staff rounders

Cleaner greener – switch off

August 2009

Safe and healthy – swine flu

Cleaner greener – stay cool this summer

District of opportunity:

Delivering affordable housing

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Clearly outline a vision for the type of culture the organisation aspires to work within

Corporate Improvement Plan for 2009/10 agreed by the Executive. Not a vision as such but does include key areas for improvement that are ultimately about organisational culture.

Develop a shared set of corporate values and commitment statements

Planned for development during 2009/10 Q3 and Q4

Continue and extend development of soft skills through the leadership programme with emphasis on recognition

Part and parcel of the ILM programmes and corporate training schedule

Develop the role of the Internal Review Team to take the lead on cross-Council working groups to act as liaison between management team and staff.

The Internal Review team has had four additional members trained to reviewer level