

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY PROGRESS

Report By: Head of Human Resources

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider progress against the Council's Human Resources (HR) Strategy including main findings from the 2004 Staff Opinion Survey, and 2003-4 Exit Surveys, as reported to Cabinet in December 2004.

Considerations

2. HR Strategy performance is tracked twice each year using employee data (available at financial year end), and Staff Opinion Survey data available in the autumn (see Appendix A for the full performance update). This report is concerned with HR Strategy progress in light of the Staff Opinion information and Exit Survey information. It is worth noting that the Survey was issued during September, seven weeks after announcements regarding Job Evaluation and Single Status.
3. The current HR Strategy lifetime expires in 2005. The Pay and Workforce Development Strategy 2005-8, currently being developed, will replace it.
4. The 2004 Staff Opinion Survey response rate was 38%, slightly down on 2003 (41%). Work will be done during 2004 to find ways to capture employee opinions, in particular in geographically disperse groups - where lack of affiliation to 'the corporate centre' traditionally results in low response rates. The response rate is, however, sufficient for the information to be relied on as indicative for the majority of employees.
5. Five key themes for action were identified in the 2003 Staff Opinion Survey. Two can be directly linked to indicators in the HR Strategy – Communications, Recognition. These are shown in Appendix A alongside the relevant HR Strategy performance indicators. The three improvement themes from the 2003 Staff Opinion Survey indirectly linked to the HR Strategy are
 - a. Increase confidence in senior management's leadership. *The majority of questions relating to confidence in senior management have seen a positive improvement over 2003 Survey; there were improvements in views on senior managers' concern with how employees feel, that their decision making is fair, that information is believable, and that relations are good; this may in part be due to the high profile of senior managers over the summer re Job Evaluation and Single Status; there is increased confidence that the Council is committed to supporting employees during Job Evaluation 30% in 2004 against 21% in 2003. Exit Survey information cites 'the way people are managed' as the second main reason people leave the Council (first is Job*

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
David Johnson, Head of Human Resources on 01432 383055

Content dissatisfaction). Clarity about job objectives and priorities was 85% in 2004, against 87% in 2003.

- b. Increase belief that the Survey results will be taken seriously and things done as a result; *There was no significant difference between 2004 and 2003 opinions in this area;*
 - c. Improve confidence that things are getting better. *Confidence that things are getting better has increased slightly - 20% in 2004, over 18% in 2003. Motivation to perform well has also improved - 51% in 2004 against 46% in 2003.*
6. Responses around 'equality of opportunity' remain static compared with 2003. This may be a result of increased awareness of these issues, however the Diversity Group will consider improvement actions for 2005. This area will form part of proposals in the new Pay and Workforce Development Strategy.
 7. Satisfaction with terms and conditions has not moved significantly, nor has satisfaction with earnings. Organisational changes appear to have had some impact with job security confidence 41% in 2004 compared with 52% in 2003; intentions to be working in the Council in 12 months time were 51% in 2004 against 55% in 2003.
 8. There has been a significant increase in employees agreeing that their contribution is recognised – 59% in 2004 against 43% in 2001.
 9. There is an indication that communications confidence may be increasing – 34% in 2004 against 32% in 2003 (27% in 2001), but still short of the 60% target. On the four questions regarding communicating change (the Health and Safety Executive HSE recommended follow up questions), the results are more positive. Responses were in the range 55%-64%. The HSE recommended target is 85%. A communications audit recently underway will bring forward recommendations on how to improve this position. Communications preferences clearly indicate face-to-face (team meetings and briefings) and email. This area will be addressed in the Pay and Workforce Development Strategy, with clear links to employee communications (Communications Strategy).
 10. Agreement that 'opportunities for development within the job are good' was 36% in 2004 against 54% in 2003. This is supported by Exit Survey information where career progression is cited as the most common attraction of the new employer (next were Pay, and Work Environment). Over a third of leavers rated career opportunities as 'poor', whilst training rated 'good' by more than half. Consistent with the employee focus groups held during the summer, the issue here seems less about 'training', and more about opportunities post-training. Proposals on this issue will form part of the new Pay and Workforce Development Strategy so that, as far as possible, the Council provides transparent and viable career opportunities to help employees develop.
 10. Agreement about opportunities to work flexibly (to balance work/home life) was 77% in 2004, against 73% in 2003 (65% in 2001). This area has risen year on year. Proposals in the Pay and Workforce Development Strategy will include promoting this aspect of Council employment (alongside improved 'packaging and presenting' of existing attractive benefits) to proactively tackle recruitment and retention issues, and to help meet Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) targets (part of the Council's IEG Statement).

Risk Management

11. Risks inherent in the above will be detailed in a new Pay and Workforce Development Strategy for the Council. They will centre on the need to generate capacity to deliver in areas identified for improvement, and the need for forward planning to deliver improvements. There are risks to the Council in terms of its ability to attract and retain suitably skilled employees to provide quality services if a Pay and Workforce Strategy is not developed by 31st March 2005.

Consultees

12. The Chief Executive's Management Team, Staff Opinion Survey Group, Human Resources Management Team, all employees via Staff Opinion Survey, Trade Unions (Joint Consultative Forum) were consulted. Further consultation will take place with managers forum members.

Recommendation

THAT performance against selected targets in the Human Resources Strategy 2002-5 indicators be noted.

Background Papers

- Exit Survey Report 2003-4
- Staff Opinion Survey 2004 Headline Report
- Human Resources Strategy 2002-5

HR STRATEGY PERFORMANCE AGAINST SELECTED TARGETS

* ***bold italics*** = one of the five priority areas from 2003 Staff Opinion Survey

Performance Indicator	Council 2001	Council 2002	Council 2003	Council 2004	Council Target	By When
<i>*% agree their work is valued in the organisation(see question on recognition)</i>	51%	59%	43%	See question below	50%	End 2005
% agree they know how their work contributes to organisational priorities	51%	60%	61%	(64%)	55%	End 2005
% agree they are treated equally and fairly whatever their religion	84%	80%	75%	75%	90%	End 2005
% agree they are treated equally and fairly whatever their race	81%	78%	73%	73%	90%	End 2005
% agree they are treated equally and fairly whatever their gender	76%	75%	72%	72%	85%	End 2005
% agree they are treated equally and fairly whatever their sexual orientation	73%	71%	66%	66%	75%	By end 2005
% agree they are treated equally and fairly whatever their age	N/A	N/A	68%	68%	Not set	Not set
% satisfied with terms and conditions	63%	73%	62%	{61%}	63%	End 2002
<i>* % agree communications in the organisation work well</i>	27%	39%	32%	(34%)	60%	End 2005
<i>* % agree managers communicate well</i>	48%	55%	48%	(49%)	60%	End 2005
% agree they can develop their skills and potential in their current job	60%	N/A%	59%	{36%}	75%	End 2005
% agree opportunities for developing and keeping job interesting are good (replaced by above question in 2004)	48%	60%	54%	See question above	75%	End 2005
% agree there is flexibility to help meet home/work commitments	65%	68%	73%	(77%)	80%	End 2005
<i>*% agree that their contribution is recognised</i>	43%	52%	n/a	(59%)	60%	End 2005
% agree they know when they have done a good job (see question on recognition)	58%	72%	74%	n/a	70%	End 2005
% agree their manager takes steps to reduce H&S risks	70%	80%	72%	72%	90%	End 2005

Performance Indicator	Council 2001	Council 2002	Council 2003	Council 2004	Council Target	By When
% agree they sometimes feel bullied/harassed by members	11%	12%	13%	13%	0%	By 2005 & beyond
% agree they sometimes feel bullied/harassed by managers	19%	17%	16%	<u>(18%)</u>	0%	By 2005 & beyond
% agree they sometimes feel bullied/harassed by colleagues	13%	12%	11%	<u>(12%)</u>	0%	By 2005 & beyond
% agree they sometimes feel bullied/harassed by clients/service users	38%	37%	41%	{39%}	0%	By 2005 & beyond

KEY

{ } = lower than 2003 Survey

() = higher than 2003 Survey