

Council Resources Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Recruitment and Retention Panel Meeting 9 February 2006

Additional Information

The following information is in support of agenda item 5 regarding recruitment and retention corporate issues. It is a summary of the Staff opinion survey, in particular the overall corporate issues arising from the survey.

The information is detailed according to the sections in the survey and identifies key results and possible actions required to address them. The Panel can use this information when considering corporate recruitment and retention issues facing the Council.

Staff Opinion Survey Information

In order to establish which issues were the most important a format was used in the survey designed to show the strength of feeling associated with statements and issues covered.

Within the questionnaire statements were made which required the employee to agree strongly, agree, disagree or disagree strongly. The following values were assigned to the responses and inverted where disagree was the preferred answer

- Strongly disagree value 1.0
- Disagree value 2.0
- Agree value 3.0
- Agree strongly value 4.0

For each statement a total value based on the responses received was generated, in simple terms the lower the average survey value the more important that the issue was perceived as a problem, or issue that needed addressing

To identify the key issues within the survey the issues where responses were either below the Council average, below local Authority Benchmark average, in the top 2 lowest responses for a particular section or where the average survey value was below 2.5 have been identified.

1. (C/LA) Areas where responses were below Council and Local Authority (LA) Performance
2. (C) Areas where responses were below Council Performance
3. (LA) Areas where responses were below LA Performance
4. (top2) Areas where the lowest average survey values were demonstrated
- 5 (Under 2.5) Areas where the average survey score was below 2.5

Key to the Words/numbers in colour in the information:

Words/ colours in red indicate average survey scores below the Local Authority Benchmark Average

Words/ colours in green indicate average survey scores equal to the Local Authority Benchmark Average

Words/ colours in blue indicate average survey scores above the Local Authority Benchmark Average

1.0 Staff Opinion Survey

- 1.1 The Staff Opinion Survey was commissioned by the Panel in February 2003 and a questionnaire was agreed with the Panel and staff groups. The survey was undertaken by a firm of external consultants, Pay and Workforce Research (PWR).
- 1.2 To increase employee participation the Scrutiny Officer attended meetings with all seven Departmental Management Teams to discuss the implementation of the survey. The Scrutiny Officer also organised a staff meeting with Representatives from all departments in the Council Chamber for more information and the opportunity to receive answers to any queries and PWR also undertook a presentation at the meeting.
- 1.3 To further publicise the survey and increase participation an article was published in the September issue of Council Talk, information was made available on the Council intranet, posters were also put up at all staff locations and a leaflet was distributed to all staff with the August payslips prior to the survey being sent out.
- 1.4 The Staff Opinion Survey was distributed on 22 September 2003 to employees' home addresses with a return date of 15 October 2003. The Outline results were reported to the Panel Members and representatives from all Departments in presentation form in November 2003.
- 1.5 A newsletter outlining the results was distributed via e-mail to all staff in December 2003 and an individual copy was sent in February).
- 1.6 The detailed reports for each Department were received between December 2003 and February 2004 and a benchmark report to compare results from other authorities was received in February 2004.
- 1.7 The Scrutiny Officer and PWR undertook individual Departmental presentations between December 2003 and March 2004 (seven in total). The Scrutiny Officer also met with all Departmental Human Resources (HR) representatives at separate meetings (seven in total) between January 2004 and March 2004.

Staff Opinion Survey – Results

- 1.8 Due to the success of the work and publicity regarding the Staff Opinion Survey it achieved a very good response rate of 53.4% that was 10.6% higher than the Local Authority benchmark average and 5% higher than the next highest return rate by any one authority (within the benchmark authorities). This was a significant achievement particularly as Harrogate Borough Council had at least twice as many staff as the next largest authority.
- 1.9 The results indicated that overall the Council was a good employer and that it preformed very well when compared with other similar Councils in the benchmark sample. The newsletter outlining the results was also included in the information considered as part of the CPA process.
- 1.10 The survey covered all aspects of employee work life ie Retention issues and had an extremely successful response rate 53.4% (highest in Local Authority (LA) Benchmark averages)

DLAS	36.9%
DTS	62.5%
DHH	49.1%
HIC	43.0%
DoA	56.3%
CED	61.0%
DF	62.9%

2.0 Corporate Results

2.1 The Council could address the sections in the survey in the order of largest variance from the LA Benchmark average as perceived by employees:

- 1 Pay and reward
- 2 Equalities
- 3 Job Satisfaction
- 4 Health and Safety
- 5 Being Part of the Council
- 6 Managing Change
- 7 Training and Development
- 8 Communication

	T&D	Bp of C	MC	H&S	Comm	JS	Eq	P&R	Average
DLAS	2.64	2.77	2.66	2.67	2.72	2.74	3.14	2.40	2.72
DTS	2.63	2.82	2.55	2.65	2.73	2.78	2.94	2.53	2.70
DHH	2.71	2.94	2.58	2.76	2.73	2.78	3.03	2.55	2.76
HIC	2.72	2.85	2.65	2.93	2.87	2.87	3.03	2.61	2.82
DoA	2.60	2.90	2.65	2.69	2.76	2.85	2.99	2.67	2.76
CED	2.76	3.06	2.73	2.82	3.00	3.11	3.12	2.69	2.91
DF	2.62	2.86	2.66	2.67	2.70	2.75	2.97	2.72	2.74
Council	2.65	2.85	2.62	2.76	2.74	2.78	3.02	2.55	2.75
BM	2.57	2.79	2.55	2.70	2.63	2.78	3.02	2.57	2.70

2.2 Departments could identify areas of good practice in other Departments where they have not achieved a good result ie the best result achieved by a Department for a particular question

1 Pay and Reward

2.3 The Council could address the pay and reward issues identified by employees in the priority order of lowest perception by Department compared to the LA Benchmark. Priority should be given to DLAS, DTS and DHH as the scores for these Departments were the only ones in the Council that were below the LA Benchmark and resulted in the average score for the Council being lower than the LA Benchmark.

- 1 DLAS
- 2 DTS
- 3 DHH
- 4 Council
- 5 HIC
- 6 DoA
- 7 CED
- 8 DF

- 2.4 In this section the Council could address the issues within the four questions relating to Employees' perceptions regarding feeling fairly paid (Under 2.5).eg research other local employers, authorities etc and circulate the information to staff.
- 2.5.1 As all questions within the section achieved a lower average survey value than the benchmark average for similar authorities the Council could address the issues raised in the order of lowest perception

2 Equalities

- 2.6 The Council could address the equalities issues identified by employees in the priority order of lowest perception by Department compared to the LA Benchmark. Priority should be given to DTS, DF and DoA as the scores for these Departments were the only ones in the Council that were below the LA Benchmark and resulted in the average score for the Council being the same as the LA Benchmark

1	DTS
2	DF
3	DoA
4	Council
5	DHH
7	HIC
8	CED
9	DLAS

- 2.7 The Council could ensure that the principles of equal opportunity and valuing diversity are promoted within teams and to individuals to enhance commitment. (LA)
- 2.8 The Council could review the Council policy on Equal Opportunities and provide appropriate training particularly about putting the principles into practice (Top 2)
- 2.9 The Council could improve employees' knowledge concerning policies on equal opportunities, harassment/bullying and grievance and disciplinary procedures. In particular the Council could improve employees' knowledge concerning the whistle blowing procedure (Only 34% of employees indicated that they knew a little/a lot about whistle blowing policy).
- 2.10 The Council could ensure that adequate support and advice is available to employees regarding discrimination and that this is promoted adequately. (28% of employees did not feel that support and advice regarding discrimination was readily available to them)
- 2.11 The Council could address the issues of discrimination indicated in the survey with the intention of introducing/reinforcing methods to reduce them particularly regarding employees feeling discriminated against because of their level or their role in the organisation. This should also address employees' perceptions about the sources of discrimination (that senior managers and line managers/supervisors were the main sources of discrimination) and the forms of discrimination (15% of employees indicated that the main form of discrimination was being left out of communication).
- 2.12 The council could also encourage employees who have felt discriminated against to report it (24 % of staff who have felt discriminated against have not reported it). The reasons for this lack of reporting could be investigated and changes to procedures introduced to overcome them particularly regarding employees feeling that nothing would happen or being concerned about being labelled a troublemaker.

3 Job Satisfaction

2.13 The Council could address the job satisfaction issues identified by employees in the priority order of lowest perception by Department compared to the LA Benchmark. Priority should be given to DLAS and DF as the scores for these Departments were the only ones in the Council that were below the LA Benchmark.

- 1 DLAS
- 2 DF
- 3 DTS
- 4 DHH
- 5 Council
- 6 HIC
- 7 DoA
- 8 CED

2.14 The Council could work to improve its' image to local residents and provide training for staff regarding the role of the Council and the public (LA/Under 2.5)

2.15 The Council could address employee satisfaction with the following issues:

- Current role and level of responsibility (LA)
- Motivation at work (LA)
- Opportunity to use abilities (LA)

2.16 The Council could establish effective training and development opportunities between employees and elected members (Top 2/Under 2.5)

a) Line managers/Supervisors

2.17 The Council could address the line manager/supervisor issues identified by employees in the priority order of lowest perception by Department compared to the LA Benchmark. Priority should be given to DLAS, DF and DHH as the scores for these Departments were the only ones in the Council that were below the LA Benchmark and resulted in the average score for the Council being lower than the LA Benchmark

- 1 DLAS
- 2 DF
- 3 DHH
- 4 Council
- 5 DTS
- 6 DoA
- 7 HIC
- 8 CED

2.18 The Council could ensure that line managers/supervisors have the necessary training/skills with particular reference to the following (all issues scored lower than LA Benchmark average:

- Dealing with poor performance effectively
- Motivation of employees to give their best
- Managing people

- Treating people equally including valuing and respecting employees
- Communication of reasons behind major decisions
- The Provision of help and support to enable employees to achieve their objectives
- Being receptive to suggestions from employees

b) Staff Appraisals

- 2.19 The Council could improve on the number of employees who had been given a staff appraisal in the last 12 months (26% of staff had not had one and of these 19% indicated that they would have liked one)
- 2.20 The Council could review the effectiveness of the staff appraisal system (of the 76% of staff who had been given an appraisal 24% did not find it useful)

4 Health and Safety

- 2.21 The Council could address the health and safety issues identified by employees in the priority order of lowest perception by Department compared to the LA Benchmark. Priority should be given to DLAS, DF and DHH as the scores for these Departments were the only ones in the Council that were below the LA Benchmark.

- 1 DTS
- 2 DF
- 3 DLAS
- 4 DoA
- 5 Council
- 6 DHH
- 7 CED
- 8 HIC

a) Personal Safety

- 2.22 The Council could address the incidents of employees' experiencing violent/aggressive or verbally abusive incidents at work (LA) with particular reference to the following:
- 33 % of staff had personally experienced a violent/aggressive or abusive incident at work in the last 12 months.
 - 22 % of staff did not report the incident (22% of staff in total not of the 33%) because generally it was considered part of the job or that nothing would happen
 - Of the 225 responses 16% reported one incident, 54% 2-5 incidents and 30% over 6 incidents (therefore the total number of incidents is significantly more than 225)
 - The Incidents were generally verbal (face to face) or verbal (over the telephone)
 - The assailants/offenders were generally customers/members of the public

b) Working Environment

- 2.23 The Council could address employee concerns regarding the following:
- Rest Area/Canteen/mess facilities (LA under 2.5)

- Temperature (LA under 2.5)
- Ventilation (LA under 2.5)
- Refreshment Facilities (LA)

c) Stress

2.24 The Council could address employees' perceptions that stress is affecting their job performance (LA) with particular reference to the following:

- 45% of staff felt unduly pressured, 34% due to work and 9% due to work and home
- This was generally due to work demands and to a lesser extent lack of support from their manager, conflicting instructions, insufficient feedback and conflict with managers.

2.25 The Council could address employees' perceptions that they often worry about work outside working hours (Under 2.5)

2.26 The Council could address employees' perceptions that their workload has increased over the last 12 months and that they have had to put in a lot of extra time to meet the demands of this workload (Under 2.5) with particular reference to the following:

- 37% of employees perceived a lot and 29% a little that their workload had increased over the last 12 months
- 29% of employees perceived that regularly and 43% occasionally that they had to put in a lot of extra time in the last 12 months to meet workload demands

2.27 The Council could review counselling as an aid to addressing stress, etc including promotion to employees (Under 2.5). (39% of employees did not know that counselling was available through the Council)

d) Harassment and Bullying

2.28 The Council could address current procedures/training regarding harassment and bullying with particular regard to the following:

- 7% of employees indicated that they were currently being harassed or bullied at work, 5% do not report it generally because nothing would happen, concerns about being labelled a troublemaker and confidentiality
- Employees indicated that harassment and bullying was generally by colleagues or their line manager and took the form of verbal abuse, excessive criticism and victimisation.

5 Being Part of The Council

2.29 The Council could address the issues regarding being part of the Council that were identified by employees in the priority order of lowest perception by Department compared to the LA Benchmark. Priority should be given to DLAS, as the score for this Department was the only one in the Council that was below the LA Benchmark.

- 1 DLAS
- 2 DTS
- 3 HIC
- 4 Council
- 5 DF
- 6 DoA
- 7 DHH
- 8 CED

2.30 The Council could promote the work of the Council and its mission and values to employees (LA)

2.31 The Council could help staff understand the role of elected Members (top 2)

2.32 The Council could consider the rank order of why employees decided to work for the Council when advertising vacancies. These were the top 3 as indicated by employees:

1. Secure job
2. Working for local employer
3. Providing useful public service

6 Managing Change

2.33 The Council could address the issues regarding being part of the Council that were identified by employees in the priority order of lowest perception by Department compared to the LA Benchmark.

- 1 DTS
- 2 DHH
- 3 Council
- 4 DoA
- 5 HIC
- 6 DF
- 7 DLAS
- 8 CED

2.34 The Council could ensure that the need for change is effectively communicated to employees (LA/Top 2/under 2.5)

2.35 The Council could ensure that more is done to help employees prepare for and cope with change than is done at present (Top 2/under 2.5)

2.36 The Council could effectively communicate the positive need for change and feedback to staff the positive improvements that change has made (Top 2/under 2.5)

2.37 The Council could review and improve the management of change within the Council generally (under 2.5)

7 Training and Development

2.38 The Council could address the issues regarding being part of the Council that were identified by employees in the priority order of lowest perception by Department compared to the LA Benchmark.

- 1 DoA
- 2 DF
- 3 DTS
- 4 Council
- 5 DLAS
- 6 DHH
- 7 HIC
- 8 CED

- 2.39 The Council could ensure that all employees have a personal training and development plan (TOP 2/LA/under 2.5)
- 2.40 The Council could ensure that there is consistent application of the guidelines for approving qualification training and should improve employee awareness (TOP 2/under 2.5)
- 2.41 The Council could ensure that line managers agree possible achievements with employees before training and what has been achieved after training (under 2.5)
- 2.42 The Council could investigate the response that 3% of employees indicated that the training and development opportunities they were given did not take full account of their disability or special needs.

8 Communication

- 2.43 The Council could address the issues regarding being part of the Council that were identified by employees in the priority order of lowest perception by Department compared to the LA Benchmark

- 1 DF
- 2 DLAS
- 3 DHH
- 4 DTS
- 5 Council
- 6 DoA
- 7 HIC
- 8 CED

- 2.44 The Council could ensure that employees get adequate recognition for ideas and suggestions to improve efficiency and effectiveness and that feedback is given back to those employees who put them forward (Top 2/under 2.5)
- 2.45 When considering communication with employees the Council could use the 5 existing methods that employees have indicated are effective these are:
 - E-mail
 - Word of mouth
 - The Intranet
 - Letters/memos
 - Team meetings
- 2.46 When considering communication with employees the Council should consider the 5 existing methods that employees have indicated are ineffective these are:
 - Briefings by Chief Officers/Chief Executive
 - The departmental magazine
 - Faxes

- External publications
- Unions

2.47 When considering improving communication with employees the Council could use the 5 methods that employees have indicated would be effective these are:

- Team Briefings
- More staff feedback
- More staff facilities
- More use of the Intranet
- More meetings with line managers/supervisors.

2.48 When considering improving communication with employees the Council could consider the 5 methods that employees have indicated would be ineffective these are:

- 'Ask the Chief Executive' sessions
- More frequent staff appraisals
- More informal management style in their section
- Setting up of departmental internal communications groups
- More social events

2.49 The Council could ensure that the information sent to employees is relevant (LA)