

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**23 OCTOBER 2007**

**EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2007**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Roger Smith, Portfolio for Human Resources and Legal and Democratic Services
Responsible Head of Service	Jo Pitman, Head of HR& OD

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the findings following the recent employee survey and an overview of the next steps.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 After a period of over 4 years, an employee survey was conducted at BDC in February 2006. The survey was of a generic nature, but it provided some very useful benchmark information. The response rate was high – 52% - which gave a usefully valid set of results. The results yielded a number of trends which painted a concerning picture about employee morale and satisfaction. More importantly, it indicated clearly that employees had very little faith in management and how the Council was run.
- 2.2 In April 2006, the 3-yearly Investors in People (IiP) assessment took place and the assessor's observations and findings completely mirrored the results of the employee survey. At this point, the Council entered a period of 'retaining recognition' with the IiP standards panel and was given 12 months to show significant progress.
- 2.3 A working group of staff and managers, representing all service groups and all levels, was established with the remit to look at both issues – employee satisfaction and IiP recovery. The working group identified solutions and created an implementation plan to bring about recovery in both these areas. This implementation plan was approved by the IiP standards panel in July 2006.
- 2.4 In April 2007, the IiP assessor re-visited to check the implementation of the recovery plan and he agreed that the Council had made 'significant

progress'. A further 12 months was granted in order to recover the full liP status.

- 2.5 A major component of this final recovery was the testing of employee satisfaction regarding the actions taken as part of the implementation plan. The Employee Survey 2007 was undertaken during May and the results received in July. The report was reviewed by CMT in August. The findings are summarised in Appendix A, and interpreted in sections 5. The full report (89 pages) is available on request.

### **3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The survey in 2007 was designed specifically to respond to the current BDC situation. 22 of the questions asked in 2006 were repeated in order to get an accurate comparison and measure of progress. The questions chosen were both those where the most concerning results had been received in 2006, and also where results were positive, to make sure things did not go backwards. Additional questions were asked to specifically test employee satisfaction with a range of initiatives and improvements brought in as a result of the survey/liP recovery plan.

### **4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

- 4.1 A response rate of 53% was received to the employee survey in 2007, a small rise compared with 2006. Such a large response rate is considered high in the field of employee surveys and it was pleasing to achieve this result. Again, it meant that the data collected had greater validity than if only a small sample of employees had responded.
- 4.2 The data shown in appendix A summarises the corporate results; data for each service group is available in the full report and from relevant heads of service. The data is presented with a traffic light system, where **green = more than 70% in agreement; amber = 36 – 69% in agreement; and red = less than 35% in agreement.**

### **5. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

- 5.1 **Overall, the employee survey results show a large shift in the right direction compared with 2006. Satisfaction is higher for younger employees and for those with less than 2 year's service.**
- 5.2 Of 22 questions benchmarked in 2006, all but 1 show an improvement, some of which are significant. The 1 question showing a worsening trend is: "I feel my job is secure". This shows a drop from 68% agreement to 58%. This is considered neither surprising nor of particular concern given the current climate and it suggests a realistic level of awareness by employees.

- 5.3 Of the remaining 21 questions, 10 were afforded green traffic light status, 3 of which were for the first time.
- 5.4 A further 10 questions were afforded amber traffic light status.
- 5.5 Only 1 question showed red traffic light status: "Bromsgrove DC is efficient and well run in the whole council". Despite the red traffic light status, this result shows a marked improvement on last year, with 14% agreement in 2006 rising to 34% in 2007. This result is on the 'brink' of an amber traffic light.
- 5.6 This question itself highlighted a very interesting trend across the council. It was split so that respondents were asked to comment on whether BDC was efficient and well run in a) their own team, b) their service group and c) the whole council. The picture emerging from these results shows that employees believe that their 'bit' of the council is better run than elsewhere, in other words, "I'm alright, it's the others". This is perhaps an echo of the observations made by CPA about 'complacency'.
- 5.7 Results were:
- BDC is efficient and well run in my team = 72% agreement
  - BDC is efficient and well run in my service group = 64% agreement
  - BDC is efficient and well run in the whole council = 34% agreement
- 5.8 This is a concerning trend which highlights a raft of work still to be done around culture change, removing barriers and silos, and bringing to life the 'working together' element of the corporate Vision.
- 5.9 The rest of the questions in the survey were designed to test specific things, such as:
- Leadership and Management (visible leadership and The Bromsgrove Way)
  - Communication (Connect, e-connect, core brief, team meetings, new intranet)
  - Performance Management (grasp of objectives, priorities and performance measures)
  - Performance & Development Reviews (Specifically the scheme launched for first use in 2007)
  - Working Relationships (colleagues, managers and Councillors)
  - Training and Development (preparation for and debriefing of training events)
  - Changing the Culture of BDC
  - Equality & Diversity
  - Health & Safety
- 5.10 Leadership and Management questions showed the same trend noted above; "I'm alright, it's the others".

- 5.11 Communication questions - 7 out of 11 yielded green traffic lights, with team meetings being top of the list. There were correspondingly high satisfaction levels with Connect, Staff forums, E-Connect and the Intranet. 2 out of 11 yielded amber traffic lights – core brief being communicated fortnightly face-to-face; fully informed about council developments – which suggests that whilst team meetings are popular with employees, they are not consistently effective in delivering these two key aspects of communication. Finally, 2 out of 11 questions yielded red traffic lights – too much information to deal with; managers not referring to Connect. In conclusion, the results for communication are much improved on 2006.
- 5.12 Performance Management questions yielded 4 out of 5 green and 1 amber traffic light. High results for knowing and understanding vision, objectives and BVPIs, but a lower result (amber) for receiving the right amount of support to perform to the right standard. This is a significant finding which perhaps needs to be seen in conjunction with the question in Health & Safety about pressure of workload and other sources of information such as sickness absence statistics.
- 5.13 Performance & Development Reviews yielded a clean sweep of green traffic lights; 8 out of 8. This demonstrates that most employees and managers are satisfied with the new PDR Scheme and the manner in which it was carried out in 2007. The highest score was 90%; the lowest 77% agreement. This is excellent news and supports the Council's decision to press ahead with the Scheme despite the decision by GMB and Unison unions not to support its use.
- 5.14 Working relationship questions yielded 3 out of 4 green and 1 amber traffic light. Employees felt strongly that they experienced good working relationships with their colleagues and managers, although managers felt their relationships with staff were slightly better than staff did! The amber traffic light was for relationships with Councillors; 61% satisfaction compared with 87% plus for colleagues/managers. A number of respondents commented that they had no relationship whatsoever with Councillors (we would not expect more junior members of staff to have contact with Members), which could have affected this result.
- 5.15 Training & Development questions yielded 1 green and 2 amber traffic lights out of 3 questions. Of particular concern are the low scores for briefing and debriefing of training, which has a direct impact on our ability to recover full liP status. The trend emerging from the written comments in the survey is that employees feel there is insufficient funding for training directly relating to their job. Satisfaction with the corporate offering was higher.
- 5.16 Culture Change questions yielded 7 green and 9 amber traffic lights. Top of the list was the Bright Ideas Scheme and bottom team awards. 80% agreed that things had started to change for the better. In all but 1 question more than half of respondents agreed. This is a positive trend, but there is clearly still some way to go.

- 5.17 Equality & Diversity questions yielded a clean sweep with 4 out of 4 green traffic lights, top of the list being fair and consistent treatment by management. This is a very encouraging result which demonstrates a hoped-for outcome of the Management Development Strategy around consistency of management behaviour.
- 5.18 Health & Safety questions yielded 3 out of 4 green traffic lights, all around the Council's commitment to providing a healthy & safe workplace. The other question – "I sometimes feel under uncomfortable pressure because of my workload" yielded a red traffic light. The corporate stress audit, to commence 15<sup>th</sup> October 2007 will provide a more detailed picture in this area and provide real information upon which to act. On the face of it, there is a concern around stress-levels in the Council.

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1 Heads of Service have analysed their own service group results and are to communicate these to all their employees by the end of October. Support is available for HoS from Learning & Organisational Development Manager in formulating action plans within service groups.
- 6.2 The Learning & OD Manager will set up staff focus group(s) to look at what staff think needs to be done – including, but not exclusively, having a focus on motivation. This could also involve specifically targeting some of the negative groups to ask the specific question..."what would have to change for you personally to say that things are starting to change for the better at BDC?"
- 6.3 The Learning & OD Manager will work with a group of staff and managers, including the GMB rep, to fine-tune the PDR Scheme ready for use in early 2008.
- 6.4 CMT and the Learning & OD Manager to urgently focus on the need for briefing and debriefing delegates after training. A proposal for how to do this, and the supporting 'policing' system, is to be reported to CMT in October. This action is vital for the recovery of full liP status.
- 6.5 CMT and the Learning & OD Manager to agree a Training & Development Strategy for 2008 onwards

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no specific financial implications from this report.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no specific legal implications from this report.

**9. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

9.1 Sound management practice and motivated staff underpin all of the Council's objectives.

**10. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 There are no specific risks associated with this report.

**11. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no specific customer implications associated with this report; however, motivated staff are a key part of delivering improved customer service.

**12. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no specific equalities or diversity issues associated with this report.

**13. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Please include the following table and spell out any particular implications in the relevant box. If there are no implications under a particular heading, please state 'None':-

Procurement Issues: None.
Personnel Implications: Further improvement required to retain IIP status.
Governance/Performance Management: None.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998: None.
Policy: None.
Environmental: None.

**14. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Please include the following table and indicate 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate. Delete the words in italics.

Portfolio Holder	<b>No.</b>
Chief Executive	<b>*See below.</b>
Corporate Director (Services)	<b>*See below.</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	<b>*See below.</b>
Head of Service <i>(i.e. your own HoS)</i>	<b>*See below.</b>
Head of Financial Services <i>(<u>must</u> approve Financial Implications before report submitted to Leader's Group)</i>	<b>*See below.</b>
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services <i>(for approval of any significant Legal Implications)</i>	<b>*See below.</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR <i>(for approval of any significant HR Implications)</i>	<b>*See below.</b>
Corporate Procurement Team <i>(for approval of any procurement implications)</i>	<b>No</b>

\* CMT have not considered this report directly, but have considered the Full Employee Survey.

## 15. **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Summary of Survey Results

## 16. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Employee Survey 2007 (available on request)

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## APPENDIX A

Traffic light colours are shown (definitions per section 4.2 of this report). The figure at the beginning of the sentence is the result for 2007; at the end of the sentence the result for 2006 is shown.

### Results compared with 2006 measured against benchmark questions:

#### Even Better Than Last Year

^94% were aware of the Council's Equal Opportunities policy 79%

^87% agreed that Health & Safety procedures relevant to them were appropriate, 76%

^79% felt the Core Brief was useful way of keeping them up to date with what is going on 70%

^79% felt that The Council is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment 75%

#### Roughly the Same as Last Year and Still Good

=84% received the Core Brief issued by Senior Management, from their manager 84%

^76% were satisfied with their job 75%

<73% got recognition from their manager for doing their job well 74%

#### Better Than Last Year and Now Good

^82% agreed that their manager had helped them to understand what their work objectives are 55%

^76% had enough information to do their job properly 65%

^73% felt issues associated with aggression from the public were managed appropriately 51%

^71% felt that their training and development needs were reviewed regularly 50%



## **Better, but Still Not Good Enough**

**^68%** felt their manager was effective at providing leadership **57%**

**68%** of those who had been with BDC a year ago felt that Performance and Development Reviews were now better overall

**^65%** got effective coaching and feedback from their manager to do their job better **51%**

**59%** of those who had been with BDC a year ago felt that Communication was now better overall.

**^59%** were confident that senior managers were as frank as they could be about what they plan to do **41%**

**^51%** were kept fully informed about developments in the Council **41%**

**49%** of those who had been with BDC a year ago felt that Leadership and Management was now better overall.

**44%** of those who had been with BDC a year ago felt that Performance Management was now better overall

**^40%** agreed that their manager talked to them about expectations before they attended training **37%**

## **Better, but Still a Concern**

**^34%** felt that Bromsgrove District Council was well run in the whole Council **14%**

## **Getting Worse**

**<58%** felt that their job was secure **68%**

## **Results for all other questions:**

### **About you**

Two fifths of respondents (42%) were male and three fifths (58%) female.

One third (32%) were under 35, 58% were in the 35-54 age group, and the remaining 10% being 55 or older.

Three quarters (76%) of respondents were full time employees and one quarter (24%) part time.

37% had been employed by BDC for 2 years or less, 37% for 3 to 10 years and 25% for 11 years or more

## **Leadership and Management**

42% felt that managers demonstrated “The Bromsgrove Way” in the whole Council, 63% in their service group and 61% in their work group.

41% of respondents felt that managers demonstrated Visible Leadership in the whole Council, two thirds in their service group 67% and in their work area 64%.

## **Performance Management**

75% felt that their manager helped them to understand the Council's vision and objectives.

74% felt that their manager let them know which Best Value and local performance indicators applied to their work.

93% of respondents knew what was expected of them to perform their work to the right standard and:-

67% two thirds got the right level of support and guidance to perform their work to the right standard.

74% felt that they received fair and constructive feedback if their work needed to improve or if they had done something wrong.

## **PDR**

82% found the staff briefings about the new PDR scheme useful.

90% of managers found the training for managers about the new PDR scheme useful.

87% were given enough time by their manager to prepare for their annual PDR meeting.

77% of managers were able to find enough time to prepare for all the annual PDR meetings they had to do.

82% found the self-assessment form useful to prepare for their annual PDR meeting.

82% believed their manager had prepared properly for their annual PDR meeting.

83% received an effective PDR this year.

85% felt the new PDR scheme to be an improvement

## **Training and Development**

74% reported that their manager made them aware of the training available.

61% got all the training they needed to do their job.

42% felt their manager discussed what they had learnt with them and how they would use it to do their job better.

## **Communication**

93% said Team meetings were a useful method of communication and/or source of information

93% received "Connect"

86% said they read "Connect"

84% regarded "Connect" as a useful way of keeping them up to date

79% said Staff forums were useful

78% said E-Connect was useful

77% found the Intranet useful

69% felt that the Core Brief was communicated to them on a face to face basis approximately fortnightly.

51% were kept fully informed about developments in the Council

67% said there was so much information that it was difficult to absorb, prioritise and communicate everything that they needed to do.

26% only one quarter were encouraged to read Connect by their manager or discussed it with them

## **Working Relationships**

96% agreed that they had good working relationships with colleagues in their work area

94% of managers felt they had a good working relationship with their staff

87% of staff felt they had a good working relationship with their manager

61% of staff felt they had a good working relationship with elected Councillors

## **Equality and Diversity**

89% felt they were treated fairly and consistently by all managers they came into contact with

84% felt that they were treated fairly and consistently by their line manager

80% felt that their work schedule allowed sufficient flexibility to meet personal or family needs

80% felt that their manager made them aware of equality and diversity training they needed to do their job and ensured that they received such training

## **Health and Safety**

87% agreed that Health & Safety procedures relevant to them were appropriate

79% felt that The Council is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment

76% felt that their manager made them aware of health & safety training that they needed and ensured that they got it

64% sometimes felt uncomfortable pressure because of their workload

## **Changing the Culture of BDC**

85% of staff felt that the Bright Ideas scheme was a good way to encourage employees to suggest ways to improve things

80% felt that things had started to change for the better

80% agreed that the 'Building Pride' motto and logo were right for BDC at the moment

75% positive about the changes taking place at BDC

75% felt encouraged to suggest ideas for innovation and change

74% felt that BDC was a good place to work

72% of non-management staff agreed that staff forums gave them the chance to be listened to by senior managers

69% were satisfied with their level of involvement in decision making that affected their work and performance

68% agreed there was more of a positive atmosphere than this time last year

67% felt they were consulted about things that affected them

66% were proud to work for BDC

63% believed that senior managers will do what they say they are going to do

62% felt that senior managers were serious about being Investors in People

61% felt that their opinion counted

51% said that 'Back to the Floor' days had resulted in positive changes

48% felt motivated by the Team Awards scheme to do a good job for customers