

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
PERFORMANCE MANGAGEMENT BOARD

17 MARCH 2009

EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2008

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Roger Smith
Responsible Head of Service	Jo Pitman

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 The Employee Survey 2008 was undertaken during September/October and the results received in November. The report was reviewed by CMT in December. The findings are summarised in Appendix A, and interpreted in section 5. The full report is available on request.
- 2.2 The 2008 survey follows on from those conducted in 2006 and 2007, using substantially the same design in order to provide a consistent picture. It has provided an interesting (and disappointing) contrast to the 2007 outcomes. The response rate was much lower – 33% compared with 53% last year – but the results are nonetheless valid. Broadly speaking, it indicated clearly that staff felt the improvements reflected in the 2007 survey had not been maintained and, in some areas, there was a marked downturn in satisfaction.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 15 of the questions asked in 2007 were repeated in order to get an accurate comparison and measure of progress; these questions were carefully chosen to test those areas that caused concern in the 2007 survey as well as areas where results were positive. Additional questions were designed specifically to test employee satisfaction with a range of initiatives and improvements brought in as a result of previous surveys and the recent Job Evaluation exercise.
- 3.2 A separate section entitled Stop, Start, Continue was introduced this year.

4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- 4.1 A response rate of 33% (135 individual responses) was received, a significant drop compared with 2007. There is no hard data to show why staff did not reply but there have been major changes for many staff and the uncertainties surrounding Job Evaluation implementation is likely to go some way to explaining the decrease.
- 4.2 The data shown in appendix A summarises the corporate results. Due to market research industry codes of practice, the survey company, Snap, is prevented from reporting on individual samples of less than 10 respondents, where the data is providing a negative trend. This is because in such small samples it will be possible to identify individual responses.
- 4.3 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 survey results show a significant reduction in satisfaction compared with 2007. As with previous surveys, satisfaction is higher for younger employees and for those with less service.
- 5.2 Of the 15 benchmark questions, 3 were *even better* or *roughly the same* as last year, 4 were *better but still not good enough* and the remaining 8 were *getting worse*. The positive response to the question “I feel my job is secure” continues to fall (68% in 2006, 57% in 2007 and only 31% in 2008). This is not considered surprising given the current economic climate and it suggests a realistic level of awareness by employees – and I think we should include reference to uncertainty arising from the shared services agenda/JE .
- 5.3 Of the remaining 44 questions, 14 were afforded green traffic light status.
- 5.4 A further 26 achieved amber traffic light status.
- 5.5 4 questions showed red traffic light status. These were connected with the Team Awards Scheme, motivation, positive atmosphere and Back to the Floor days. All are some way off achieving or regaining amber status, with satisfaction languishing in the mid to high 20s in terms of percentage points.
- 5.6 The rest of the questions in the survey were designed to test specific areas, such as:
- Leadership and Management (visible leadership)
 - Communication (Core brief)
 - Performance Management (grasp of objectives, priorities and performance measures)
 - Performance & Development Reviews (effective PDRs, face-to-face meetings)
 - Working Relationships (colleagues, managers and, where appropriate, Councillors)
 - Training and Development (appropriate training given, discussions about use of training)

- Changing the Culture of BDC (Staff Forums, consultation, atmosphere in the Council, Back to the Floor days)
 - Equality & Diversity (work-life balance/family-friendly policies, fair treatment)
 - Health & Safety (workload pressures)
- 5.10 Leadership and Management questions showed the same trend as last year: “I’m alright, it’s the others”.
- 5.11 The Communication question on Core Brief resulted in an amber rating.
- 5.12 Performance Management questions yielded 4 out of 4 green ratings, though three of those areas had reduced in satisfaction compared to last year. These areas were: Knowing what is expected to perform to the right standard, managers helping staff to understand the Council’s vision and receiving constructive feedback and praise.
- 5.13 Performance & Development Reviews yielded three green ratings and two amber. In common with other areas, there has been a drop in the percentages but the green areas are well above the 70% marker while the amber areas are close to it.
- 5.14 Working relationship results were rather mixed. Of the 5 questions, three were green and one was rated amber. Both managers and staff felt that their relationships with each other and colleagues across BDC were excellent – these all attracted green ratings well above the 70% marker. Relationships with Councillors resulted in a 35% amber rating, though this should not be viewed as a disappointment: the question was amended this year so that staff had the option of saying that they had no regular contact. However, the fifth question – comparing working relationships over time – generated unfavourable outcomes with 14% commenting that they had deteriorated in the last year and only 28% saying they had improved.
- 5.15 Training & Development questions yielded 2 amber ratings. The proportion of staff who felt that they received the training they needed reduced to 58% while 51% felt their manager carried out post-training briefings, an improvement on last year.
- 5.16 This year’s Culture Change questions yielded some very disappointing results. Of 10 questions, 8 were amber and worsening and two were red and similarly worsening. Only 28% of staff said that there was more of a positive atmosphere than this time last year and only 25% said that Back to the Floor days had resulted in positive changes.
- 5.17 Responses to the Equality & Diversity questions brought a similar result. Though a pleasing 83% said that they were treated fairly and consistently by their manager, this green rating represented a dip compared to last year and only 50% said that the family-friendly policies worked for them. One of the free-format comments indicated that staff might be unaware of the Council’s policies in this area.
- 5.18 We decided to test only one Health & Safety question: “I sometimes feel under uncomfortable pressure because of my workload”. Last year, this was rated red but, mirroring the outcomes of the 2007 Stress Survey, this is moving in the right direction and is rated amber in 2008.
- 5.19 The questions on Job Evaluation were designed primarily to see how well BDC responds to major exercises affecting all staff and it was made clear that questions

related to the process not individual outcomes. All five questions were rated amber with two bordering on green. Though staff broadly felt that the process had been handled well by their line manager, fewer (63%) felt that their Senior Manager had been sensitive towards their individual outcomes and only 46% felt that information about JE was communicated well across the Council.

- 5.20 Outcomes from the Stop, Start, Continue section reflected the answers elsewhere with concerns expressed about JE, the shared services agenda and effective management.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Heads of Service have considered the corporate outcomes and communicated these to all their staff. Support is available for Heads of Service from the Learning & Organisational Development Manager in formulating action plans.
- 6.2 Staff Forums which took place in February provided staff with the opportunity to work in groups to suggest ways of moving forward on some of the red and amber questions and how to maintain progress in the green-rated areas
- 6.3 CMT will consider setting up focus groups to look at specific areas.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications.

9. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 Performance reporting & management links to the Improvement objective

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:
- Not making changes as a result of the Survey which staff recognise.
- 10.2 These risks are being managed as follows:
- Survey Action Plan.
 - Service business planning.

11. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 A motivated workforce underpins good customer service.

12. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no implications for the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policies.

13. **VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 ■ There are no VFM implications

14. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues None
Personnel Issues None
Governance/Performance Management – Results needs to be fed into Service Business Plans.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act 1988 None
Policy None
Environmental None

15. **OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

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

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	No.
Executive Director (Partnerships & Projects)	No.
Executive Director (Services)	No.
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	No.
Head of Financial Services	No.
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No.
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No.
Corporate Procurement Team	No.

13. **WARDS AFFECTED**

ALL.

14. **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Employee Survey Results.

15.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact officer

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APPENDIX A

Traffic light colours are shown (definitions per section 4.3 of this report).

Benchmark question results compared with 2007 and 2006 (where applicable)

	2008	2007	2006
Even better than last year			
I have enough information to enable me to do my job properly	79	75	76
Roughly the same as last year and still good			
My manager has helped me to understand what my work objectives are	82	82	-
I am satisfied with my job	72	86	-
Still not good enough			
Bromsgrove District Council is efficient and well run	47	34	-
My manager is effective at providing leadership	68	69	57
My manager talks to me about expectations before I attend training	47	40	37
I'm kept informed about developments within the Council	50	51	51
Getting worse			
My training & development needs are reviewed regularly	66	71	50
Receive Core Brief face-to-face approx. every two weeks	62	84	84
I feel performance management is better overall than last year	37	44	
I feel that communication is better overall than last year	31	59	-
I'm confident that senior managers are as frank as they can be about their plans	49	59	41
I feel that leadership and management is better overall than last year	38	49	-
I feel that PDRs are better overall than last year	48	68	
I feel my job is secure	31	57	68

Leadership and Management

71% felt that their Service Group was efficient and well run with 83% feeling happy about this in their work area.

51% felt that all managers demonstrated visible leadership, 63% in their Service Group and 71% in their work area.

Performance Management

↓85% of respondents knew what was expected of them to perform their work to the right standard

↓74% felt that their manager helped them to understand the Council's vision and objectives.

↑74% got the right level of support and guidance to perform their work to the right standard.

↓72% felt that they received constructive feedback and praise where appropriate.

PDR

↓80% were given enough time by their manager to prepare for their annual PDR meeting, with 82% encouraged to do so by their manager

↓75% received an effective PDR this year.

69% felt the new PDR forms were an improvement

66% had face-to-face meetings approx monthly with their manager

Motivation

↓58% felt that BDC is a good place to work

↓59% felt proud to work for BDC

28% felt that the Team Awards Scheme motivated them to do a good job for customers

↓29% felt that BDC employees were motivated and only 22% felt more motivated this year than last

Health & Safety

↓50% of staff said that sometimes felt uncomfortable due to workload pressures

Job Evaluation

68% said their manager was supportive during the JE process with 68% saying their manager made sure they understood the process and 65% saying that their manager had helped as needed with their JE questionnaire.

63% agreed that their Senior Manager had handled their JE outcome sensitively

46% felt that information about job evaluation was well communicated across the Council

Training and Development

↓58% got all the training they needed to do their job.

↑51% felt their manager discussed what they had learned and how they would use it to do their job better.

Communication

53% of staff found the monthly issue of Connect useful

Working Relationships

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

=86% of staff felt they had a good working relationship with their manager

↓78% agreed that they had good working relationships with colleagues in other work areas across the Council

↓35% of staff felt they had a good working relationship with elected Councillors (though the significant drop here is almost certainly due to staff being able to indicate if their job did not bring them into contact with elected members.)

28% of staff felt that working relationships were better than at the same time last year, with 53% feeling they had stayed the same and 14% felt they had got worse.

Equality and Diversity

↓83% felt they were treated fairly and consistently by their manager

65% felt that work-life balance policies worked for them and 50% felt that the family-friendly policies worked for them

Changing the Culture of BDC

61% found Staff Forums gave them a chance to be heard by Senior Managers

↓54% of staff felt that the Bright Ideas scheme was a good way to encourage employees to suggest ways to improve things

↓52% felt that things have continued to change for the better

↓51% felt they were consulted about things that affected them

↓51% felt encouraged to suggest ideas for innovation and change

↓43% felt positive about the changes taking place at BDC

↓42% felt that their opinion counted

↓43% said that Senior Managers are serious about being Investors in People

↓28% agreed there was more of a positive atmosphere than this time last year

↓25% said that 'Back to the Floor' days had resulted in positive changes

Management questions:

62% said that the Modern Manager Framework had helped to build their skills

74% said there was so much information that they found it difficult to absorb, prioritise and communicate everything they needed.

Results for all other questions:

About our respondents

- Just over half the respondents (54%) were male. 10% were aged under 25, 45% were aged 25-44, 44% were aged 45-64 and 2% were 65 or over.
- 2% of staff described themselves as disabled.
- 9% had worked for the Council for less than a year, 49% for 1-5 years, 25% for 6-10 years and 18% for over 10 years.
- 47% of the respondents said that they worked in Street Scene and Community Services, 15% worked for E-Gov and Customer Services, 14% worked for Planning and Environment Services, and 9% worked for Financial Services.
- 74% said that they had no management responsibilities, while the remaining 26% were responsible for staff.