MINUTES OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING TASK GROUP

22 JANUARY 2013

PRESENT:

Members of the Group: Councillors Mrs O’Rourke (Chairman), Coles, Mrs Bragg, and Srivastava

Officers: Adam Norburn, Head of Resources; Suzanne Turner, Human Resources Manager; Paul Ansell, Scrutiny Officer; Linn Ashmore, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer.

Union Representatives: Chris Cooper and Paul Hancox, Unite; Karen McCulloch, Unison

24. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2012 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

25. MONITORING OF PROGRESS AGAINST MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Members agreed the outcomes previously proposed by the task group.

26. EMPLOYEE SURVEY

The Human Resources Manager gave the task group a presentation on the results and trend data from the staff survey and recommended actions. A copy of this is attached at Annex 1 to the minutes.

In addition to the presentation, the following points were made:

Survey Results

The 48% the response fell short of the target of 55% but was still a marked improvement on the 2009 survey’s return rate of 25%. Services with employees based away from the Town Hall had lower response rates.

Compared with the 2009 survey, the overall results were good with some ratings either the same or better. This was particularly encouraging in view of the effects on employees that single status, redundancies and restructure have had.

The second highest reason for ‘why people enjoying working here’ has changed from local job to flexible working. ‘Friendly colleagues’ remains the top reason.

The benefits of End to End reviews needed to be publicised more widely.

More work was required on ‘valuing our staff.

Further work was planned around review/evaluate learning.

The survey response for whether to continue with the Investors in People accreditation was negative and a decision had been made by Leadership and
Operations Team not to carry on with this. Comparisons against the national standards will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

A drop in ratings for embracing diversity in the workplace was down due to lower ratings from the Hunters Lane site. Union representatives informed the group that there was a feeling of mistrust of management, worries that survey responses would not remain confidential and a fear of retribution. There was also a degree of apathy on the grounds that changes won't be made. Members commented that a strong message needs to be sent that this was not the case.

Comments were made that Works Services Unit staff do not receive appraisals and small rewards such as certificates for training would make a difference to morale. Other issues raised included lack of basic respect by senior officers (supervisors upwards) when employees are spoken to.

It was agreed that ways of introducing some form of appraisal and awards scheme should be explored for the Works Services Unit.

Overall, scores from employees with disabilities were generally lower.

Members commented that the level of job satisfaction should be reviewed as there was a danger of a continued downward trend.

**Action Plan**

During this part of the presentation members considered the draft actions and timelines for each action and the following comments were made:

The benefits of End to End reviews should be publicised to employees through CMF and the Employee Briefings. Hard copies should be provided for the notice boards.

It was noted plans were already in place for the Business Transformation team to visit departments and give examples to encourage them into undertaking their own reviews. This should take place in partnership with the unions.

Employees would be less cynical about End to End reviews if staff that have been involved with a review could feed back their own experiences.

Single status took place 2 years ago and this was now a good time to review the ‘package’ to benefits that staff value. These include the car salary sacrifice scheme, flexi scheme, task and finish arrangements, annual leave and sickness leave.

Employees will lose pay protection next January so now is the right time to look at possible staff rewards that can be put into place.

Employees appreciate praise and recognition.

Hard copies of In Touch should be made available for notice boards.

It can be difficult to release WSU staff to be able to attend staff briefings due to lack of cover and the costs involved. The way in which the organisation communicates with all its employees should be considered so information is tailored to the audience.

Managers will receive support in ways of reviewing training. Training should be valuable and relevant. This takes place ‘in house’ where possible.
High risk teams were defined as those dealing with front line services. It was recognised that these roles were more likely to suffer from stress and abuse from customers.

It was suggested that conflict resolution training should be included in the training programme for front line staff.

The action plan timescales were agreed as in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reinforce the need for middle managers to cascade feedback, from Leadership &amp; Operations Team (LOT) and Corporate Management Forum (CMF), to their teams</td>
<td>End of March</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOT to ask staff through In Touch how they could better understand the ‘sense of direction’ for the Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emphasise how the End to End (E2E) Service Review approach builds on involvement and ideas from our staff (at all levels) to make improvements in the way we work. This will be through regular slots at CMF and through Employee Briefings and meetings of Business Transformation officers with teams</td>
<td>As per CMF timetable and Employee Briefing in March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of terms and conditions during 2013 – can we better tailor our ‘package’ to benefits that staff value?</td>
<td>From February - September</td>
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<tr>
<td>We will be looking at staff rewards as part of the Workforce Planning Actions in 2014/15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-branding of In Touch communications</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduce a 3 month post training evaluation which includes input from the manager</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance for managers on reviewing training completed at the following 1:1 Develop iTrent system to have automated reminders to review/evaluate training</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue with the Coaching Skills Gyms through the Academy and Consortium – possibly run a session in-house?</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
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<td>Run a second stress management course (first one ran this summer was</td>
<td>June</td>
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<tr>
<td>well received)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Run health at work day in the new year</td>
<td>29 January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An action in the Workforce Plan Actions is to carry out stress risk</td>
<td>Ongoing rolling programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessments starting with high risk teams (front line services) over</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>next three years</td>
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27. **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT**

The task group agreed that the effectiveness of the absence management policy should be reviewed by Corporate Performance Committee on a twice-yearly basis.

A robust process now exists which should reduce sickness levels, and in turn, reduce time spent on carrying out return to work interviews. These meetings should also be a way of asking employees what can be done to improve their working environment.

28. **HEALTH AND WELLBEING INITIATIVES**

The task group noted the range of health and wellbeing initiatives offered to employees.

29. **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER AREAS FOR SCRUTINY**

The task group agreed there were no further areas for scrutiny and no further meetings were required. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer would finalise the review report, with its recommendation being the implementation of the action plan. The report would be circulated to task group members and the portfolio holder before submission to Corporate Performance Committee on 14 February.

The Chairman thanked the trade union representatives for their support during the review and Suzanne Turner and the Human Resources Unit for their contribution.

CHAIRMAN