

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council: 29 August 2007

Subject: Employee Survey

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report seeks to update the Council on the Employee Attitude Survey which was conducted in April and May 2007.
- 1.2** The attached report at Appendix 1 has been prepared by external consultants, IBP, and outlines the findings of the survey and associated staff focus groups as well as a proposed set of recommendations for future action.

2. Background

- 2.1** A key objective within the Best Value Improvement Plan was to “ensure that employees are listened to and their views taken into account. “ To take this forward a small internal working group was established and external consultants, IBP, were engaged by the Council to develop and undertake the survey, analyse returns, and run a series of staff focus groups to explore key issues.
- 2.2** The Best Value Audit of WDC included an employee survey which was completed by 17.4% (1033) of employees. This was a low response rate however significant weight was given to the survey findings, therefore in conducting the Council Survey every effort was made to maximise the response rate.
- 2.3** The employee survey was issued to all staff at the end of April with a closing date of 14th May. A paper copy was issued to every WDC employee’s home address with additional opportunities for completion electronically via a website or via the telephone. Issue of the survey was accompanied by a communications strategy which included posters, an article in Westlife, team briefings and payslip messaging.
- 2.4** The survey questionnaire included sections in relation to the following areas:
 - Working Life at WDC
 - Training and Development
 - Communications and Consultation
 - Leadership, Management and Council Performance
 - Dignity at Work
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Health at Work

- 2.5** Some of the questions were designed to gain greater insight and understanding of key issues raised through the Best Value Audit survey, e.g. Dignity at Work, so that future actions could be appropriately targeted. Some were designed to assist in meeting the criteria to go forward with key initiatives in relation to equalities issues and the silver award for Healthy Working Lives (formerly SHAW).

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** A total of 1,826 responses were received from employees, which equates to a response rate of just under 30%. Although disappointing this figure provides a significantly better return than that of the Best Value Audit survey and is considered to be a statistically reliable sample.

- 3.2** On a positive note some of the key findings indicated that:

- Most people enjoy their work and believe their colleagues to be supportive of them
- More people than not say they are happy with things like job security and terms and conditions
- Most staff are appreciative of the Council's efforts to promote a healthy workplace

- 3.3** The report however highlights a number of significant challenges which require to be addressed which includes issues in relation to staff feeling recognised and valued as well as the requirement for more effective support through an improved performance and development planning approach. Communication is also a key challenge as are the issues associated with Dignity at Work and the reinforcement of positive leadership behaviours across the Council.

- 3.4** The report outlines a number of recommendations to address all the issues contained within the report and these have been approved by the Corporate Management Team as the basis for a detailed action plan to take matters forward. The development of the action plan and the contents of the report will provide the focus for the small working group which has been established to oversee the staff survey and further updates will be provided on progress in these areas. It is encouraging however to note that a number of areas which require attention, e.g. Dignity at Work, are already being addressed through the Best Value Improvement Plan.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** The report highlights areas for improvement to support effective people management practices across the Council.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** Financial implications associated with addressing the issues arising from the survey and associated report will be determined through the development of a detailed action plan.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is a risk that if the Council fails to address the matters arising through the employee survey it will not be perceived to have listened to staff or engaged effectively in addressing issues of motivation and morale.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The Employee Survey has provided a significant opportunity for staff to provide confidential feedback on what it is like to work within WDC and identify areas for future improvement and development. It is now critical that the Council uses this information and the associated recommendations as a framework for improving employee's experiences to support delivery of best value services.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1** Council are asked to note the contents of the report from IBP Consultants and that the recommendations will form the basis of a more detailed action plan to take forward improvement in people management practices.

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Chief Executive
Date: 23 August 2007

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Appendices: Appendix 1 IBP Report

Background Papers: Report to Corporate Services Committee – 27 June 2007

Wards Affected: N/A