

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Employees' Consultative Forum
Date:	Wednesday, 4th February 2004
Subject:	Working Draft Improvement Plan in response to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and IDeA Peer Review - Priority 9 (Human Resources Strategy)
Key decision:	No
Responsible Chief Officer:	Chief Executive and Executive Director Organisational Development
Relevant Portfolio Holders:	Portfolio Holder For Finance, Human Resources & Performance Management
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	N/A
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Extract from Cabinet Report on Working Draft Improvement Plan in response to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and IDeA Peer Review, 18 March 2003. Appendix 2 – Staff Survey – Executive Summary of Findings - To Follow Appendix 3 – Draft leaflet on Staff Survey Findings – To Follow Appendix 4 – A review of management of employee absence – Summary Report Appendix 5 – Draft HR Strategy and Progress Report

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report details the progress against Priority 9 (Human Resources Strategy) of the Working Draft Improvement Plan in response to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and IDeA Peer Review, agreed by Cabinet.

2. Recommendations (For Decision by the Forum)

- 2.1 That the Forum notes the progress made against Priority 9 (Human Resources Strategy) of the Working Draft Improvement Plan in response to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and IDeA Peer Review agreed by Cabinet.

Reason: An improvement plan is needed as part of the process for the IDeA Review and the Audit Commission expects councils to draw up their priorities for further action in response to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment

The 'Improvement Plan' requires that the Organisational Development Directorate report progress on a regular basis to the Employees' Consultative Forum.

3. Consultation with Ward Councillors

- 3.1 N/A

4. Policy Context (Including Relevant Previous Decisions)

- 4.1 This report complies with the 'Improvement Plan' requirement to report progress against Priority 9 (Human Resources Strategy) to the Employees' Consultative Forum, as agreed by Cabinet.

5. Relevance to Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 The 'Improvement Plan' is relevant to all corporate priorities as it helps support the changes and improvements being made in front line services as part of the New Harrow Project. It is also needed as part of the process for the IDeA Review and the Audit Commission expects councils to draw up their priorities for further action in response to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment
- 5.2 Priority 9 of the 'Improvement Plan' deals with the development of an effective, motivated and well-trained workforce equipped to work in a changed organisation. This involves aligning the Human Resources Strategy with other changes through, amongst other things, the New Harrow Project and includes the development of staff skills for innovating, challenging the status quo and responding to change.

6. Background Information

- 6.1 Priority 9 (Human Resources Strategy) identifies that the following changes will result from the 'Improvement Plan':
- The council will have an effective, motivated and well trained workforce, that is supported by HR policies and practices designed to reinforce the changes required by NHP.

- There will be reduced sickness absence across the authority.

6.2 The 'Improvement Plan' also lists the tasks i.e. the major activities, which need to be carried out and areas for further development at the end of 2003. The tasks, with timescales and an update on progress made against them are detailed in table 1 below.

7. Progress Update on Tasks

7.1 Table 1.0 details the progress made against the tasks identified in the 'Improvement Plan'.

Table 1.0

TASKS	DATES	PROGRESS
Commission bi-annual staff attitude survey	Initial Survey to be undertaken in 2003-4 and thereafter every 2 years	<p>A Working Group involving HR staff and Unison developed and commissioned a survey, which was undertaken by the Work Foundation in November 2003.</p> <p>An executive summary of the survey findings is attached at appendix 2.</p> <p>A briefing note has been prepared to enable managers to brief their staff on the findings, which are also being published on the intranet distributed in the form of a leaflet to all relevant staff.</p> <p>A copy of the draft leaflet is attached at appendix 3.</p>
Programme of measures to address sickness absence	Currently underway, with report to cabinet 2002 proposing programme of actions to begin in March 2003.	<p>Improved monitoring and management of absence resulted in the number of working days per employee lost due to sickness falling from 10.65 to 9.98 in 2002-03 (BVPI 12). This trend is continuing and absence levels are decreasing, however based on the figures as at 31 December the projected outcome is 9.80 days, which is above the Council's current year target of 9.50 days.</p> <p>Marsh Consultants have undertaken an audit and review of current council policies and practices. The review included an audit of relevant policies and procedures, followed by meetings with key stakeholders including representatives from the trade unions and Occupational Health Service. The information gained from these interviews formed the basis for a series of focus groups involving managers and staff from all services.</p>

		<p>A copy of the Marsh Summary Report is attached at appendix 4.</p> <p>A Project Group comprising all key stakeholders, including the trade unions and chaired by the Area Director, Urban Living has been established to consider the recommendations of the Marsh Report and implement action as appropriate.</p> <p>The Project Group first met in December 2003 and continues to meet regularly.</p>
Review current management competencies and management development programme	Review to be instigated from April 2003, based on vision and values referred to in Key Priority 2	Analysis of the results from the development centres using the current competencies has been completed and key areas for improvement have been identified. A review of the current Certificate in Management programme has also been completed and options for change identified. Hay management consultants are working with a team of managers to draft revised competencies by the end of February 2004.
Develop Human Resources Strategy incorporating vision and values (Key Priority 2) and the need to bring about organisational change as part of the New Harrow Project	Begin in April 2003 with completion by September 2003	<p>Consultation workshops for key partners and stakeholders took place in July 2003 and the final Strategy was due to be presented to Cabinet in January 2004. However, further development was postponed pending the drafting of Council's Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The draft Strategy is now being circulated for consultation and is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet for approval in March 2004. A Progress Report, which includes a revised schedule and a copy of the draft Strategy, is attached at appendix 5.</p>

8. Areas for Further Development at End of 2003

- 8.1 The 'Improvement Plan' identifies the need to audit and re-write 6 key policies - Recruitment and Retention, Grievance, Disciplinary Procedure, Performance Management, Absence and Training & Development as areas for further development at the end of 2003.
- 8.2 Research is underway, which will result in the development of policies to replace the current Recruitment & Selection Policy and address retention issues. Consultation on the new policies is expected to commence during April 2004.
- 8.3 A 'Fair Treatment Policy' is currently being drafted, which will replace the current Grievance and Harassment Procedures. A 'Performance Management' policy /

procedure is also currently being drafted. Consultation on both these policies / procedures is planned to commence during February 2004.

8.4 The Marsh review of the management of sickness absence included an audit of the council's procedures. Marsh's recommendations, including those for amending the council's absence policies and procedures, are currently being considered by the Project Group.

8.5 Representatives from Unison and Harrow Teachers Consultative Committee will continue to be fully consulted on the audit and development of these policies and procedures.

9. Consultation

9.1 Priority 9 (Human Resources Strategy) of the 'Improvement Plan' has been considered by Unison and representatives of Harrow Teachers Consultative Committee at the Corporate Joint Committees on 26 March and 24 June 2003.

9.2 Further consultation with the trade unions on progress against the tasks identified in the 'Improvement Plan' has and will continue to take place at all key stages.

9.3 Unison were represented on the Working Group which developed and commissioned the Staff Survey and will be fully consulted on the findings and any resulting action plans

9.4 The trade unions are among the key stakeholders represented on the Project Group considering the recommendations of the Marsh report into management of employee absence.

9.5 The trade unions were among the key partners and stakeholders involved in the workshops, which shaped the initial development of the HR strategy. Further consultation arrangements for the draft HR strategy are set out within the Progress Report attached at appendix 5.

9.6 Consultation with the trade unions on auditing and re-writing the 6 key policies identified under 'Areas for Further Development At the End of 2003' will be undertaken via the Corporate Joint Committee.

10. Finance Observations

10.1 These are incorporated within the report to Cabinet.

11. Legal Observations

11.1 These are incorporated within the report to Cabinet

12. Conclusion

12.1 Progress has been made against all the tasks identified under Priority 9 (Human Resources Strategy) of the 'Improvement Plan' and, with the exception of the HR Strategy, all tasks are scheduled to complete in accordance with the original timescales. Development of the HR Strategy is scheduled to be completed in March 2004.

13. Background Papers

13.1 Cabinet Report on the Improvement Plan for IDeA Review and Comprehensive Performance Assessment - December 2002.

13.2 Cabinet Report on the amended Improvement Plan for IDeA Review and Comprehensive Performance Assessment - March 2003

14. Author

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