

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 15 APRIL 2009

REPORT BY HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

12. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS OF C3W PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: None

“D” RECOMMENDATION: - TO approve the draft action plan and recommendations made to support the C3W Programme

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1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 To provide Human Resource implications of C3W Programme and detailed analysis on the traffic light assessment and outcomes of the 1-1 employee consultation process.

2.0 Contribution to the Council’s Corporate Objectives

2.1 C3W Programme will support delivery of all East Herts priorities but particularly;

**Promoting prosperity and well-being; providing access and opportunities**

*Enhance the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.*

**Fit for purpose, services fit for you**

*Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.*

3.0 Background

3.1 The Programme Board agreed on 25 November 2008 the approach to be used for C3W employee consultation. The Change Management Toolkit sets out the process for initial employee consultation on the C3W Programme. Managers were asked to complete a 1-1 meeting with each employee using the 1-1

consultation form. The deadline for completion was 31 January 2009.

- 3.2 98.66% of employee consultation forms have been received by HR. A letter was sent in March 2009 to employees who had not completed their 1-1 form, ensuring that they are aware of the consultation process and have been given the opportunity to express their views.
- 3.3 The process for the traffic light assessments was completed by HR to ensure consistency of ratings across the Council. A training session was held for HR Officers on 4 February 2009 to ensure they had the skills and applied the same method of categorising employees as Red, Amber and Green. To ensure the ratings were correct the HR Officers in February/March 2009 discussed with Heads of Service the traffic light assessment for their Service. On completion of that meeting Heads of Service were asked to share their Service's assessment at team meetings and to ask managers to discuss with employees individually their individual traffic light assessment at 1-1's. These meetings and 1-1's are still being carried out.
- 3.4 The process for staff who do not agree with their traffic light assessment as agreed in the Change Management Toolkit is to discuss their assessment with their line manager to agree a colour which they feel reflects their current position. It is important to restate that the assessments are a starting point and could change as Heads of Service look at how they want their service to run, how they would like that individuals post to work and corporately new policies and processes are implemented. For example an employee could be red because they are unable to work from home; the Head of Service does not require that person to work from home so they become a green.
- 3.5 It was agreed at Programme Board on 25 November 2008 the information gathered from the traffic light assessments will determine the order of HR policies to be reviewed.

#### 4.0 Report

The employee consultation has been broken down by section as set out in the employee consultation form; traffic light assessment; mobile working; travel; disability and caring; technology and other.

## 4.1 Traffic Light Assessment

- 4.1.1 The traffic light assessment has been completed for the Council and has been agreed by Heads of Service as 34 Red, 85 Amber and 224 Green. A break down by service is detailed in Appendix A (page 12.11).
- 4.1.2 **Red** - the employee has stated that they either do not want or are unable to adopt the new ways of working or move to the Wallfields site due to legitimate reasons, i.e. care of dependent or travel difficulties. Individual solutions will need to be explored and agreed.
- 4.1.3 **Amber** – the employee has some issues regarding the new ways of working /move to Wallfields site, but these should be resolved between the manager and employee.
- 4.1.4 **Green** – the employee is able to move to the new ways of working /Wallfields site. They may have some minor issues but these can be easily worked through.
- 4.1.5 This is a positive starting point for the Council. However the Council must take into consideration that the traffic light assessment will change as Heads of Service start their service phase and have a clearer picture on what their future service will look like. This will impact on how employees work and therefore we may find as we continue through the consultation process that employees that are red become green and vice versa.
- 4.1.6 As detailed in the Change Management Toolkit, the Programme Group and HR will work with the Head of Service and line managers to resolve any issues raised and gain a green status for employees where possible. Where a green status cannot be achieved HR will work with the Head of Service and line manager in accordance with the Achieving Organisational Change Policy.
- 4.1.7 It is important that the traffic light assessment is kept up-to-date to be of value to Heads of Service. As a new C3W phase starts Heads of Service will be sent their traffic light assessment to update. Heads of Service are also asked to inform HR of any changes to employees' circumstances. HR will hold the details of the traffic light assessment, so it can be accessed by the Head of Service at any point.

## 4.2 Mobile Working

- 4.2.1 The mobile working section of the employee consultation form allowed the Council to start exploring the different ways of working available to employees subject to service need.
- 4.2.2 167 employees were interested in working flexibly (a mixture of home and office based). 44 employees were interested in working predominately from home. 19 employees were interested in field based working (home/office based but frequently mobile, visiting sites, offices etc).
- 4.2.3 Other options of flexible working employees wanted to discuss with their manager as part of changing the way they work and subject to service need was job-sharing (16 employees); compressed hours (90 employees); term time only (8 employees); career breaks (17 employees); secondments (23 employees); flexible retirement (26 employees) and working part-time (15 employees). This information will be fed back to Heads of Service by the HR Officers for them or their line managers to explore with individuals in accordance with the Council's current policies that support these options.

HR and Unison have also agreed to explore these options further under management actions to mitigate increased pressures on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2009/10 to 2012/13.

- 4.2.4 A question the Programme Group was keen to ask employees were whether they would like to be considered an 'Early Adopter'. The definition of 'Early Adopter' is an employee who wishes to adopt a new way of working before their service phase has started or they wish to try a new way of working during their service phase to identify any problems the service may have in terms of working practices, ICT, facilities etc. 77 employees were interested in exploring this option with their line manager.
- 4.2.5 One option open to the Council to support employees working flexibly and travel to Wallfields, is to extend the current flexi scheme hours. The current scheme is from 0800 to 1830 Monday to Friday. 88 employees were interested in the Council exploring this option further. The Implications and feasibility will need to be explored to identify the impact on customer service and facilities.
- 4.2.6 The main comments made under this section were:
- No space at home

- No desire to work from home
- Rather be home based than relocate to Wallfields
- Loss of team working
- H&S issues of working at home
- Role not suitable for home working
- Additional costs by working at home
- Compressed hours – can this be changed to a 4 day week?
- Can the option of term time, working school hours be explored?
- Service cover if not in the office
- Fear of isolation, stress from working at home

### **4.3 Travel**

4.3.1 Travel to any new location can be a concern to employees. This was expressed by employees who raised issues under this section regarding parking facilities, the extra time and cost to travel to a new location. Feedback was also received from the C3W User Group and Unison regarding issues with lack of parking space at Wallfields and the additional time it would take staff to travel to work.

4.3.2 Employees were keen to try and resolve these issues by exploring options such as car sharing (63 employees) and car pool (66 employees).

### **4.4 Disability and Caring**

4.4.1 Many employees detailed caring responsibilities and the impact of that on the way they work. Employees were keen to explore ways in which they could change the way they work without having a detrimental impact on their caring responsibilities. Interest was expressed in working term time, part-time and extending the flexi-time scheme.

Concerns raised were:

- Additional travel time and cost – impact on caring responsibilities.

4.4.2 It is important that information on workplace adjustments and disabilities are captured to support any employee relocating or working more flexible. Comments raised were about workstations adjustments and disabled parking.

### **4.5 Technology**

4.5.1 The technology section of the employee consultation form gave the

Council the opportunity to explore the current ICT provisions employees used and to establish whether they will meet the needs of the employees after the move. Employees need to have the right equipment to do the job and have no barriers to using it in the form of any outstanding training needs.

4.5.2 The information gained in this section will be passed to ICT for detailed analysis by Service. The main points raised were the access to systems from home, employees wanting to be able to access any systems they currently use in an easy and quick way. Comments made from employees, the C3W User Group and Unison were:

- How will I access systems from home?
- How will the phone system work?
- Will EDRM be ready in time?
- Are there enough resources in ICT to support home working and the C3W Programme?
- If my service does not have the ICT in place we cannot change the way we work.
- Will I have Broadband?

4.5.3 A number of employees specified they wanted to be Early Adopters because they were concerned about the ICT in their service and therefore felt that if they became an Early Adopter they would have a long period of time for any problems to be resolved before their service phase commenced.

4.5.4 Overall employees were happy with the level of training they had on ICT. Some training was identified for Microsoft packages and this is addressed in the Corporate Training Plan 2009/10.

## **4.6 Other**

4.6.1 Employees were given the opportunity within the employee consultation meetings and on the form to raise any other concerns or worries they may have regarding the new ways of working.

Comments made:

- Employees wanted to explore how team working and service cover would work in practice in the new ways of working. How could we ensure that customer service wouldn't be affected and that the team wouldn't suffer as a result of new arrangements?
- Access to line management. Would this be more difficult if my manager and I were working flexibly?

- Desk space and team desks – what would these look like and how would the system of team desks work?
- When would the desk space plans and timescales for relocation to Wallfields be communicated?

#### **4.7 Training and support**

4.7.1 To support the C3W Programme it is proposed to provide managers and employees with support and training in three main ways:

4.7.2 The first is to support Heads of Service using the business improvement toolkit to develop the skills to identify opportunities in change, streamline processes and deliver efficiencies.

4.7.3 The second is closely linked to the first and is to provide training and support to managers on Managing and Supervising Change. To provide them with tools, techniques and an opportunity to develop plans to enable them to respond positively to the forthcoming organisational and service changes, leading teams through change and developing continuous improvement methods.

4.7.4 Training and support would also be provided to employees on Surviving Change. To support employees developing an understanding of change, identifying the positive impacts and negative impacts that change initiatives can have and learning how to address these in order to achieve the full benefits of change.

4.7.5 The third is help managers and employees adapt to new ways of working. Training will be provided on Managing Flexible Workers and Introduction to Flexible Working. Giving both managers and employees the skills and techniques they need to manage flexible workers or to work successfully at home and in the office.

#### **4.8 Action Plan**

4.8.1 The following actions for the Programme Group are recommended based on the feedback received to date from the employee consultation forms, C3W User Group and Unison:

1. Develop a Home Working Policy – to pick up the specific needs of home working including health and safety, place and hours of work, provision, use and maintenance of equipment, materials and insurance, communication, privacy, security, absence reporting, visits and expenses.
2. Encourage employees and managers to complete the self

assessments available on the intranet on home working, managing mobile workers, role suitability for home working.

3. Use the approved Change Management Toolkit to ensure the change process is fair and consistent.
4. Provides employees and managers with the training and support on Business Improvement Toolkit; Managing and Supervising Change; Surviving Change; Managing Mobile Workers and Introduction to Mobile Working.
5. To review the Flexible Working Policy to ensure the policy supports employees with caring responsibilities as far as possible. Look into other options to support carers.
6. To encourage employees to explore flexible working options further in accordance with our policies and procedures.
7. Support services through workshops on how team working and service delivery will look like in their service. Helping to identify any problems and work through solutions.
8. To review policies and procedures to support C3W Programme as identified in Appendix B (pages 12.12 – 12.13).
9. Create a Travelling Green Policy supporting the C3W Programme, Climate Change Strategy and Health and Safety action plan. To explore the options of car pooling and car sharing. Alternative ways to travel and reducing our carbon footprint.
10. Car Parking – based on the numbers that will need parking facilities at Wallfields look into the options available to us.
11. Team Desks protocol – develop a protocol on how the team desks system will work. Provide training where appropriate.
12. Develop ICT standards for EDRMS, team desk and telephony.
13. Complete a survey on 'Early Adopters' identified to ascertain what facilities and ICT they would need to become Early Adopters.
14. Develop standards for home working and flexible working.



15. Develop a process for back scanning to enable employees' access to documents from home. Provide training on workflow usage and special indexing.
16. Review the flexi scheme, looking at feasibility and implications of extending the flexi scheme hours.
17. Complete Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that employees have equal opportunity to work flexibly.
18. Use the information gained through employee consultations to carry out further 1-1s with Heads of Service to ascertain their desk space requirements to develop the desk space plan for Wallfields.
19. ICT to carry out detailed analysis on ICT issues raised as part of the employee consultation process and to develop an ICT action plan.

4.8.2 As agreed by the Programme Board the draft action plan will be developed further to include responsible officer and timescales. The timetable for policy development is detailed in Appendix B (pages 12.12 – 12.13).

## **4.9 Communication**

4.9.1 The overall traffic light assessment for the Council has been communicated to staff in Team Update and Core Brief.

4.9.2 The C3W User Group and Unison will also be asked to contribute to the action plan based on the traffic light assessment. A session will be held with both groups to go through the assessment in more detail.

## **5.0 Consultation**

5.1 As detailed in the report. Further consultation to be carried out with C3W User Group, employees and Unison.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

6.1 As detailed in the report.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

7.1 Financial implications will be assessed via the business case for each individual service.

## 8.0 Human Resource Implications

8.1 As detailed in the report.

## 9.0 Risk Management Implications

9.1 Strategic risks associated with this programme are being reported elsewhere. The main risks associated with this report are:

- Risk of alienating staff by not giving them information
- Risk of putting a service in a phase that clashes with another period of abnormally high work load
- General service disruption

The first risk will be mitigated by the C3W User Group and by having a comprehensive communications strategy. The second and third risks can be controlled by effective project planning and management that involves Heads of Service.

### Background Papers

Brief for managers on 1-1 employee consultation

1-1 employee consultation form

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