

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 22 OCTOBER 2014

REPORT BY: HEAD OF PEOPLE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

“HERE TO HELP” PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: None

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To update Human Resources Committee on the progress of the Here to Help programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

That:

(A)	Members note the “Here to Help” programme update report for September 2014
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1.0 Background

1.1 “Here to Help” is an organisational development programme which has been developed in-house to allow managers and staff to contribute to the development of the East Herts Council’s performance, values and behaviours.

The purpose of “Here to Help” is celebrating what is good, sharing good practice, making things better and unlocking barriers to better working. It is about giving employees greater opportunity to think about how we can improve the way we work together to deliver a high quality customer experience every time.

2.0 Progress to date

2.1 Here to Help Steering Group

A “Here to Help” Steering Group was set up in January 2014.

The Steering Group's primary purpose is to be responsible to East Herts CMT for the implementation and delivery of Here to Help. The group is responsible for the delivery of the roll out project timetable, headline activities and management of project resources so that "Here to help" is properly resourced.

Monthly "Here to Help" steering group meetings have been held and minutes distributed and shared with all staff via the intranet.

2.2 "Here to Help" workshops

In April 2014, Managers and staff attended the first of two workshops. In the first workshop they were asked to contribute to developing behaviours under the three core values that the Council have developed ("Here to Help, We Work together, We aim high to make a difference").

The workshop covered identifying who our customer is, what good and bad service looks like and identifying barriers that stop us working in a way that supports our values.

In May and June 2014, the second workshop was rolled out and staff were asked to work in their own teams with their managers to develop ideas/suggestions at a local, service and corporate level. The action planning process allowed teams to record their successes, what good ideas/practices they can share and what their barriers are.

2.3 Workshop outputs - Action proposals

The action planning process identified ideas/suggestions that allowed staff to improve what we do, the service we provide for our customers, to unlock some of the barriers to allow us to work in a way that supports our values and behaviours.

The ideas were documented and categorised as either 'Corporate level; working with others and local service level'.

Each service action proposals has been captured and all proposals are on the intranet and all staff can view each other's proposals.

Output of the action planning workshops:

- 43 action proposals were received across all services.
- 115 ideas for corporate level

- 104 ideas for working with others
- 369 ideas for local service level
- 179 responses for the question 'what are we doing well?'
- 169 responses for the question 'what can we celebrate?'
- 106 responses for the question 'we good ideas we can share?'
- 192 responses for the question 'what can we fix?'

Corporate level action proposals

At the SMG away day on 30 June 2014 and subsequent special SMG meeting on 21 July 2014, action proposals at corporate level were assigned to the appropriate Head of Service. The responsible person is reviewing their assigned proposals and where applicable feeding them into existing service plans. For example; there are several ideas for the use of the telephone system and this will be incorporated into the telephone project and not a separate project.

Corporate level actions will form part of more complex projects as they affect all services and part of the review process will be to assess which will become short/ medium/ long term actions or projects.

The responses from SMG were distributed to staff on the corporate level action plans on 30/09/2014.

Local service level action proposals

The majority of services have either completed some of the actions on their proposals or have assigned target dates and are planning the implementation of their ideas. The summer holidays slowed progress a little but momentum has picked up in September.

30 updates on the status of local actions were received in August 2014. 13 are outstanding and a catch back plan has been devised to receive the outstanding updates by 14/10/2014.

Nikki Roberson - Project Co-ordinator, will attend department team meetings to support, assess resources required and advise on taking the proposals forward to ensure Here to Help continues and is not a one off exercise. It is planned that quarterly reviews with the services will be scheduled to keep the actions on track.

Working with others action proposals

The outputs have been captured and documented. The next stage is to devise an action proposal for next steps for 'working with others' staff action proposals. Target date for devising an action proposal: 30/09/2014.

Our customers

One of the key objectives of the Here to Help programme is to make improvements which directly benefit our external customers and residents. To achieve this and build on our success stories, over the next quarter we will develop staff ideas to be less inward facing and focus will need to continue to shift towards process improvements to front line services.

Staff Survey

Ideas and suggestions from the 2014 staff survey have been added to the action proposals to ensure all staff ideas are captured and followed up.

2.4 Values and Behaviours

To succeed in the goal of developing a Here to Help culture, all employees were given the opportunity to select five behaviours that they felt best supported the Council's values of Here to Help, We work together and We aim high to make a difference.

The outcome was:

- 169 people responded with their selections.
- 'Respect and value colleagues' behaviour was 69% of staff choices.
- 'We go the extra mile' and 'we take pride in what we do' were the two highest choices under the value of we aim high to make a difference.

East Herts Councils chosen values and behaviours are:

Here to help

- We are helpful and understanding
- We listen and explain
- We are knowledgeable and informative
- We make time for our customers
- We take ownership of an issue and we try to get it right first time

We work together

- We respect and value colleagues
- We work together as one team
- We recognise each other's skills and utilise them
- We offer help and support to each other
- We support colleagues to be flexible and resilient, able to respond to service changes and developments

We aim high to make a difference

- We go the extra mile
- We take a pride in what we do
- We continually look to improve our performance
- We are flexible in our approach
- We pride ourselves on providing excellent customer service

2.5 Communications

Communication will be key to embedding our values and behaviours. Keeping employees informed about the organisational change process will ensure commitment and success. News stories celebrating our successes will be communicated as often as possible and in several ways (team update; notice boards; team boards) to demonstrate how our behaviours are having a positive impact on the services we provide.

There is a “Here to Help” Communications Strategy which is complimentary to the council’s internal communications strategy and this will support the aims of the Here to Help initiative by:

- Ensuring that the benefits of the initiatives are understood
- Ensuring that stakeholders are aware of key dates and milestones in the programme
- Ensuring there are opportunities to feedback comments or concerns
- Ensuring staff are informed and consulted

To reinforce “Here to Help” communication, a number of mechanisms have been implemented to ensure all staff are updated regularly via the intranet; dedicated Here to Help email address; notice boards; team meetings; staff briefings; team update; staff forum.

Intranet

All outputs from “Here to Help” workshops, “Here to Help” steering group minutes and presentations pertaining to “Here to Help” will be published on the “Here to Help” page on the intranet.

Notice boards

There will be a number of notice boards around the office which will display hard copies of “Here to Help” documentation (i.e. workshop outputs), communicating achievements, values and behaviours, communications schedule etc. This is to give another channel for communication and be available for all to view. An electronic version will be developed to reach out to homeworkers.

Team meetings

Include “Here to Help” as an agenda item at all team meetings. This will give an opportunity for two-way communication; Managers to update staff on “Here to Help” progress and staff to communicate to Managers new ideas or raise concerns.

Staff briefings

Quarterly staff briefings will be used to present updates on the “Here to Help” programme. New ways of communicating the Here to Help message will continually be sought to improve staff engagement and attendance. Review and incorporate staff ideas for changing staff briefings.

Team update

“Here to Help” success stories, updates and implementation of ideas will be given to the communications team to be included in the monthly Team Update magazine.

Staff Forum

The “Here to Help” staff forum will perform an important role in communicating updates to colleagues in their own service including reaching out to homeworkers.

The role of the delegate:

- Communicating updates on all “Here to Help” activities to colleagues in their own service including reaching out to homeworkers
- Feeding back the views of staff on the progress of the “Here to Help” action plans within their service
- Raising concerns that staff may have and identifying barriers that may prevent the programme going forward
- Celebrating success stories to be published in team update to communicate to the wider audience of the council

- Sharing best practice and improvement ideas with colleagues across all services
- Updating the user group of what their service is working on at that time
- Reporting back what is working well and lessons that can be learnt along the way
- Listen to and respect colleagues point of view and be impartial at all times
- Champion the objectives of the “Here to Help” programme and support colleagues with new ways of working
- Continually demonstrate the behaviours that support the council’s three values of “Here to Help”, “We work together” and “We aim high to make a difference”.
- Be actively engaged in user group activities to help the programme move forward

It is anticipated that in the first instance the forum will meet once a month, however staff will be asked how often they would like the forum to meet and asked what items they would like included on the agenda.

The first staff forum took place on 17 September 2014.

All representatives gave feedback to the group on the progress of their services’ local level action proposals. On the whole feedback was positive, however there are still concerns that need to be addressed. A snapshot of staff comments and key concerns are below:

- The meetings have set the ball rolling and have opened up communications in the team.
- The meetings have given a clear way forward.
- A few quick wins have been put in place.
- Here to help is already part of our team meetings and each team has had individual team meeting to develop plans.
- Unison is broadly supportive of the project (particularly staff remuneration and staff resourcing for services) and wants to ensure that it is effective.
- We regularly discuss “Here to Help” and are on board; we have developed our action plan.
- We are a small team and have explored the good areas for development.

There were three main areas for concerns raised by the group:

1. Forum representatives

There isn't a representative from each team and they all felt there is a need for all teams to be represented at the forums.

2. Agency Staff

- There is a general feeling that there are too many agency staff and issues are coming to the surface and that is reflected in the customer complaints; becoming a barrier to our residents.
- Training of temporary staff needs to be improved and values and behaviours need to form a part of their induction and be included in the corporate induction.
- Unison want staff to be employed directly rather than employing agency workers.
- Agency staff are arranged by the services and not by HR so there is not always awareness of how many are employed and who they are. There is also a concern about carbon footprint as we don't report the true numbers of staff in the building.

On a positive note; agency staff can be helpful to look at our processes with 'fresh eyes'.

3. How to deal with negative behaviour

Since the "Here to Help" programme started, they have had a heightened awareness of people's behaviour and have seen some bad examples. Feedback from the group was that negative behaviour needs to be addressed and the question was asked how management will deal with this.

All concerns will be feedback to the Here to help Steering group.

The expectation is that reps will feedback to their teams in their team meetings. The minutes of the forum will be circulated to reps and will be on the intranet for all staff to access.

If reps receive feedback on a "Here to Help" issue but the next meeting isn't for a few weeks' time, Nikki would prefer to receive the feedback directly rather than wait for the next monthly meeting.

Team Meetings

"Here to Help" will be an agenda item for all team meetings. This will give an opportunity for two-way communication; managers to

update staff on “Here to Help” progress and staff to communicate to managers new ideas or raise concerns. Nikki Roberson, Project Co-ordinator, will attend department team meetings to support this.

121's and PDR process

Our three values will be discussed in 121's and included in the PDR process. It will be compulsory for all Managers to follow this process by doing so it will improve communication and ensure “Here to Help” carries on after the initial launch and becomes an integral part of the organisational culture.

The PDRS process will be reviewed to consider ideas raised by staff and to include East Herts values. The aim is for the PDRS to become an online process on launch of the new HR system in 2015.

“Here to Help” will also form part of the recruitment process and include questions that ask candidates how they would demonstrate our Values and Behaviours.

2.6 Branding

The launch of the branding of our values and behaviours took place on 15 September 2014. This was launched as a double page spread of September's team update, which is circulated to all East Herts staff.

The brief for the branding was created by Nikki Roberson - Corporate Projects Co-ordinator, and agreed by the “Here to Help” steering group.

The roll out of the branding will be completed in four phases:

- 1) Simple design (infographic) to display our values and behaviours - easily recognised as part of the Here to Help initiative and will be used in all communications going forward.

Design agreed and launched 16/10/2014. Task completed.

- 2) Three ‘posters’ displaying our three values; “Here to Help”, “We work together”, “We aim high to make a difference”. Posters to include staff in their role helping residents.

Design work to start October 2014. Posters will be rolled out following discussion with and feedback from the “Here to Help” steering group and staff forum. Due date: 31/10/2014

- 3) Develop the initial design to include corporate strategy values and people strategy objectives.

Design work to start following the roll out of phase two.
Actions and due date: tbc

- 4) Simple design displaying results/ achievements of the H2H projects, using the message of: ‘You said, We listened, Together we achieved’.

Design work to start following the roll out of phase three.
Actions and due date: tbc

The branding design is shown in **Essential Reference paper “B”**.

2.7 Programme schedule (May 2014 to Oct 2014)

An overview of scheduled tasks (status as of 23 September 2014)

		Resp.	Target/ Due date	Status
Key Milestones	H2H steering group meetings	NR	Monthly	Ongoing
	Feedback to staff (intranet and team update)	NR	Monthly	Ongoing
	Quarterly review of status of local service level action proposals	NR/ Managers	Quarterly	Ongoing
No.	Task	Resp.	Target/ Due date	Status
1	Staff workshops (2) - deadline	Mgrs	13/06/2014	Completed
2	Corporate Project Co-ordinator to attend a selection of staff workshops	NR	30/05/2014	Completed
3	Start Here to help branding designs (meeting)	NR/RC	20/05/2014	Completed
4	Agree and sign off branding	NR	21/08/2014	Completed
5	Staff action proposals received	Mgrs/ HoS	13/06/2014	Completed
6	Action proposals collated and split into corporate/ working with/ local level	NR	23/06/2014	Completed
7	Add staff survey ideas and suggestion to action proposals	NR	11/07/2014	Completed
8	Publish Here to Help outputs/ updates on the intranet	NR	08/07/2014	Completed
9	Request staff input for selecting behaviours	GAR	20/06/2014	Completed
10	Chosen Values & Behaviours - feedback to staff	NR	11/07/2014	Completed
11	SMG away day (assign owners)	EF/NR	30/06/2014	Completed

12	Staff briefing - Here to Help update	NR	17/07/2014	Completed
13	Review Comms strategy (Here to Help section)	WON	29/08/2014	Completed
14	Agree and sign off Comms strategy (inc. Here to Help section)	CMT	29/08/2014	Completed
15	Request updates from services for local level action proposals	NR	08/08/2014	Overdue (revised date 17/10/2014)
16	Attend local service level action proposal meetings	NR	29/08/2014	Completed
17	Collate shared/ working with action proposals	NR	04/08/2014	Completed
18	Request for delegates for Here to Help staff forum	NR	05/08/2014	Completed
19	Deadline for Here to Help delegate nominations	NR	22/08/2014	Completed
20	First Here to Help staff forum meeting	NR	27/08/2014	Completed
21	Notice boards (request print quote and stationery order)	NR	11/08/2014	Completed
22	Devise and agree simple visual for response to staff of action proposal status	NR	19/08/2014	Completed
23	Put up Here to Help notice boards	NR	26/08/2014	Overdue (revised date 30/09/2014)
24	Proposal to Here to Help steering group 5s policy, team boards	NR	21/08/2014	Completed
25	Launch Here to Help branding	NR/Comms	16/09/2014	Completed
26	Devise an action proposal for next steps for 'working with/ to be shared with' staff action proposals	NR	20/09/2014	Not due
27	Set up one proposal on covalent - test if this will be the best process for updates	CP	30/09/2014	Not due
28	Start phase two design – Here to help branding	NR/RC	30/09/2014	Not due

29	Launch phase two of Here to help branding	NR/Comms	31/10/2014	<i>Not due</i>
30	Roll out 5s/ team boards (re-brand as part of Here to help programme)	NR	31/10/2014	<i>Not due</i>
31	Here to Help quarterly update January 2015	NR/EF	13/01/2015	<i>Not due</i>

3.0 Implications/Consultations

None

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

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