

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 21 OCTOBER 2015

REPORT BY CORPORATE PROJECTS CO-ORDINATOR

HERE TO HELP PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: None

Purpose/Summary of Report

- Members are asked to note the progress of the Here to Help programme October 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

That:

(A)	the Here to Help programme update report October 2015 be noted
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1.0 Background

- 1.1** The Here to Help (H2H) organisational development programme commenced in January 2014 which has been developed in-house to allow managers and employees to contribute to the development of the East Herts Council's performance, values and behaviours. It has been a major vehicle for driving improvement within East Herts Council.

2.0 Progress to date

A number of activities have been implemented following the second set of workshops ran in June 2014 to ensure H2H did not lose momentum.

Summary of key activities:

Date	Description	Output	Outcome/ Success
Oct 2014	H2H telephone improvement project	Changed telephone user set-up and introduced user protocols and better reporting	Improved the way East Herts Council delivers customer focused service by telephone
Nov 2014	Team boards installed	H2H whiteboards in all services to have a focal point for team information	Improved communication with a visual display of team information
Dec 2014	H2H office sort	Employees took part in a 'corporate clear out' of office areas	Better working environment - organised and clear of clutter
Feb/ March 2015	Bite size sessions – topics: celebrating our success stories, building on these for the future	250 success stories and 150+ ideas for sharing	Meeting colleagues from other services to better understand what they do and what they have achieved. Breaking down the silo mentality of working.
April/ May 2015	H2H pulse survey	Recommendations and conclusions fed into the H2H programme schedule	Employees have a voice in the development of a high profile corporate programme
June 2015	Corporate training programme 2015/16 and draft Learning and Development	Output from bite size training and survey fed into this programme and strategy	Employees have a voice in the development of a corporate strategy

	Strategy		
July 2015	Staff forum – terms of reference expanded	Informal dialogue on wider range of topics and high profile H2H actions	Employees empowered to input and shape the way services are delivered
July 2015	H2H steering group – date of final meeting	Steering group no longer required	N/A

2.1 **Corporate level action proposals**

H2H workshops completed in 2014 raised 130 improvement ideas for corporate level actions. 50% of these ideas have already been implemented. The remaining 50% breaks down as 31% agreed and on target for completion in 2015/16, 2% are behind schedule, 12% are not due to be started yet and 5% are not viable.

If an improvement idea hasn't been progressed or rejected, employees are encouraged to challenge this decision and put forward an alternative solution or suggestion so that it can be reviewed again. This approach reinforces the H2H ethos of encouraging and empowering employees to have a voice and try to find better ways of doing things every day.

A number of projects resulted from the H2H workshops. The Telephone Improvement Project (TIP) was the first H2H corporate project to be established in October 2014.

The key project objectives were to:

- Improve the way East Herts Council delivers customer focused service by telephone.
- To resolve the issues employees raised at the Here to Help workshops relating to telephony.

Project deliverables:

- New voicemail procedure and protocols to ensure consistent use of voicemail across the council.
- Training package developed to improve user knowledge and consistent use of handset functionality.

- Establish clear reporting to help manage and drive performance of call handling.
- Streamlined and updated internal telephone directories.
- Deployment of licences to improve service efficiency.
- Developed procedures, roles and responsibilities for the on-going management of telephone systems.

The output and successes of the TIP have demonstrated and delivered the council's H2H values and behaviours which include:

Here to Help

- The updated telephone directory has improved the way employees direct customers to the right service first time.
- The new voicemail procedure improves information given to customers by communicating response times.

We work together to support each other

- Pick up groups have been set up in some areas to enable employees to answer colleagues calls. Customers can speak to a person more often and not put straight through to voicemail.
- Working together in this way also provides better flexibility and resilience to cover colleagues when they are away from their desk.

We aim high to make a difference

- Reporting is in place to measure performance and improve call handling.
- Delivery of training has improved knowledge of the functions of telephone handsets to continually improve our performance and provide excellent customer service.

2.2 Team boards

Team whiteboards are now installed in all services and employees are developing ways to use these effectively. Ownership for the content of the board is given to the individual teams so they can tailor them to best suit their service.

Additionally there is standardised information on all team boards including visual branding H2H, space for writing improvement ideas and copies of the local action proposals.

Team members are using the boards to write thank you to colleagues and also displaying compliments from customers.

2.3 Bite-size training

One hour mandatory H2H bite size training sessions took place in February and March 2015.

Training content was devised and delivered by the corporate projects co-ordinator and Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development. They delivered the sessions along with three HR officers and two volunteers.

The objective of the training sessions was to give all employees an update on the H2H programme, to look at what tools are available to support change, what 'we achieved together' in the last year and how we can build on our successes to encourage the development of improvement ideas.

There were two training sessions, one for managers and one for employees.

Managers training session covered three topics:

- Tools to support implementing change
- How can we encourage employees to continue to raise and develop ideas?
- Successes – 'we achieved'

Employees training session covered three topics:

- Celebrating our achievements and success stories
- How do we build on this?
- How do we get better at sharing successes?

During the sessions, over 250 success stories and 100+ ideas were shared with colleagues. Two recurring themes were requests for more job shadowing, networking opportunities and cross service working to increase knowledge of what others do, work better together and improve our services. These requests have been fed into the learning and development programme for 2015/2016.

2.4 Employee pulse survey

A H2H 'pulse' survey was sent to all employees in April 2015. The purpose of the survey was to give employees a voice on the direction of travel for the H2H programme, what positive changes employees have seen since H2H began and areas for improvement.

Key conclusions

Understanding of our values and behaviours, the branding of H2H and the relevance to employees roles is an area we are performing well. Employees wanted us to do more on our behaviours and how we can challenge our colleague's behaviours if they do not reflect our values.

Team meetings are now being used more effectively to continue raising improvement ideas and employees are listened to. More sharing of success stories and compliments received from customers are discussed within the teams and this is seen as a positive output of the H2H programme. Recognition of achievement had improved but a lot of respondents were neutral on this point and therefore it was felt we could do more.

A number of employees responded with 'neutral' for a number of questions. Their comments in most cases explained that this was due to a good level in their service/team/manager before the H2H programme and therefore they hadn't seen a significant change because of the programme but just an increase in awareness.

Respondents agree communication of the progress and next steps of H2H via team update and quarterly staff briefings is working well. Some employees indicated that they do not access the intranet for H2H information and use other communication methods.

2.5 Here to Help staff forum

The H2H staff forum was established in September 2014 and meetings are held monthly. The purpose of the forum is to act as a direct link between employees and the H2H Steering Group, SMG and CMT; to provide a channel for two-way communication.

It is a mechanism to get direct feedback/ consultation from the bottom up, empowering employees to have a say in the way we work and deliver services.

From July 2015, the H2H staff forum had its terms of reference expanded to become an employee forum. The forum agenda will continue to be driven by employees and there will be a revolving chairperson for each meeting.

2.6 Communications

The way we communicate both from top down and bottom up was identified by employees as one of the main areas of the organisation requiring improvement. There have been a number of success stories for how communication has improved since the H2H programme including regular team meetings, H2H staff forum, team whiteboards and staff briefings.

Building on the foundation of all the communication tools used since H2H started, the way we communicate H2H messages has developed and evolved to represent the changing phases of the H2H programme.

Internal communication

It is vital to have a H2H article every month in team update to keep H2H at the forefront of everyone's mind and the continuing importance of our H2H culture. Every month success stories are shared by services and recent articles have included outputs of the telephone improvement project; corporate action proposal updates and successes; pulse survey results; sharing compliments; ideas for team meetings; work shadowing.

The new weekly email newsletter, Connect, is used to drip feed information on H2H via short news articles. The articles are used to signpost employees to H2H updates and success stories on the intranet.

Communication to new members

New councillors were briefed on the H2H programme and the council's values and behaviours in July 2015. The briefing included a summary of the objectives, process and future of H2H.

A copy of a case study produced for the District Councils' Network's stand was also included.

2.7 Next steps

H2H has moved to “phase 2” of delivery with two distinct strands:

- Improvement and efficiency (integrating the H2H brand into the core Business Development function) Lead: Head of Business Development.
- Organisational culture (using the Organisational Development Strategy to take forward H2H work on values and behaviours) Lead: Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

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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