



EMPLOYEE 'HEALTHCHECK' SURVEY 2008

Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Implications for Action

March 2008

by

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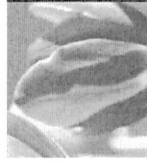
Appendix A-

Introduction



MORAY COUNCIL

- This report presents a summary of findings from an interim 'healthcheck' employee survey carried out in January 2008
- The Survey was conducted by Chris McGivern of employeesurveys and Martin Kirwan and Clare Park of The Moray Council
- Its aim was to assess progress since the Survey carried out during the summer of 2006
- The investigation provides only a 'snapshot' of employee opinion (a full census survey is planned for late 2008) and the findings that follow therefore not fully representative: we believe, however, that the findings give a fair overview of the current perceptions of the Moray Council staff who too part in the Focus Groups



Method and Approach



- Sixteen focus groups took place on 24th and 25th January 2008. Each discussion lasted approximately an hour
- The groups consisted of 87 randomly selected employees from each department:
 - Educational Services – 8 groups, 45 people
 - Environmental Services – 4 groups, 16 people
 - Community Services – 3 groups, 19 people
 - F&ICT, L&C, C-E – 1 group, 7 people
- The agenda for each meeting was semi-structured and focused on
 - The '06 survey – recollections, feedback
 - Awareness of post survey follow up work in own departments
 - Proposed initiatives (list supplied by the Head of Personnel Services)
 - Current perceptions on working life within the Council
- We present here the main themes which emerged, issues for each department, plus
- Conclusions and implications for the organisation as a whole



Findings

- Overview of positive feedback
- Recollections of the 2006 Survey
- Main themes
 - Council-wide
 - 'Big issues'
 - Communication
 - ERDPs
 - Working conditions
 - By Department
- Reactions to proposals for
 - Staff Handbook
 - 'Connections' communication strategy
- Department-specific feedback



Overview of positive feedback



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- **Moray continues to be seen by many as a good place to work**
 - "I've been happy working here"
 - "It's very satisfying and rewarding"
 - "Its small size as a Council makes it much easier to get to know"
 - "Training is readily offered in my Department"
 - "They provide benefits like the personal counselling service"
- **Communication shows some signs of improvement**
 - "They have improved" (some in Educational Services)
 - "Communication through our QIO is excellent"
 - "Donald Duncan's Development Plan"
 - "Communications from CMT are better ... our CMT Member holds quarterly meetings in mixed sessions " (Human Resources)
 - "CMT to DMT communication is good now"
 - "It's not difficult to find out if you really want to. The information is all there"
- **Human Resources / Legal / Health & Safety – all received praise**



Recollections of the '06 Survey



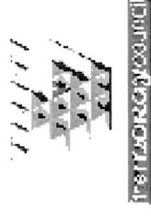
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- Generally, recollections of the 2006 Survey were limited: the majority of participants said they took part: fewer – 50%? – recalled any feedback
- Specific comments related to
 - Questionnaire length “Some people gave up”
 - Perceived relevance “Not relevant to us” (Educational Services)
- A small proportion of people recalled the results being posted on the Intranet
- A few also recalled a report in the *Press and Journal* which had a “positive spin”
- Some Community Services people reported receiving feedback in Team Meetings
- Only one participant referred to the official Report to Employees on the Survey: perhaps because it appeared to be written and produced internally (it was made clear on the Intranet Report that the survey was carried out independently, but in the paper version this was not the case) there was a degree of uncertainty that it did not, perhaps, contain **all** the findings



Main themes

- **Council-wide** the main themes were
 - ‘Big’ issues
 - Single Status
 - Shared Services
 - ‘The Future’
 - Communication
 - Generally
 - Senior management profile (inc CMT)
 - Team briefings
 - Intranet/Council Website
 - Connect magazine
 - ERDPs / Training and Development
 - Working conditions / work-life balance



Council-wide themes

'Big' issues'

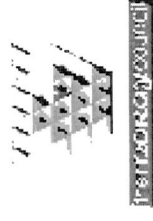


- Three 'big' issues came up – all with communication implications:
 - 1. Single status:** There seems still to be considerable bad feeling about the consequences for pay and grading, across all Departments. There's a divide based on seniority – managers/supervisors (also perceived to be the main beneficiaries) have found it difficult to deal with the disaffection
 - "We've been stabbed in the back"
 - "It's those lower down who've suffered most"
 - "We've lost trust in the senior people"
 - "The Appeals Process was unfair ... there's inequality ... I can't understand it"
 - 2. Shared Services:** seen (*only by those working in Central Services departments*) as a serious threat to jobs
 - "We're leading on a couple of projects but we need to do much more"
 - "We need to hear more from DMT to discuss shared services"
 - 3. The Future:**
 - "Every three months there's a rumour that we're to be split"
 - "Some managers feel we've lost the battle to Aberdeen and Inverness"
 - "They should come and speak to us about how it will work"



Council-wide issues

Communication



- **Generally, there are some signs of improvement – not universal, but clear**
 - “Communications are better ... the Development Plan (Educational Services)
 - “Communications locally have improved ... communications here are pretty good” (Environmental Services, some staff)
 - “Communication has improved over the last couple of years” (Community Services)
 - “I’m a regular user of the Council’s website ... we use it a lot at work checking on services that are available”
- **Senior Management Profile – more photos of CMT, but majority report little improvement**
 - “No change”
 - “Management should get out to meet people”
 - “Nobody knows what comes out of CMT”
 - “I don’t know who the Chief Executive is”
 - “We’ve seen the photos now but not the actual people”

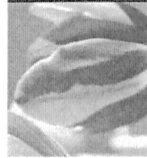


Council-wide issues

Communication (cont'd)

- **Team Briefings*** – disseminate information to all employees, however
 - Appear to rely *exclusively* on email and paper,
 - “... always circulated via email and not everybody has access to a computer”
 - No examples of regular face-to-face briefings emerged
 - No examples of *local* information being added to core briefings emerged
- **The Intranet / Council Website** – usage seems to be high
 - “We all use the Website for work, to find out about Services available”
however ...
 - “It’s very difficult to find what you want ... you have to wade through a lot of material before you can get going”
 - “It needs a search facility”
- **‘Connect’** – relatively few positive comments
 - “A complete irrelevance... I couldn’t repeat what people say about it”
 - “Nothing on the major issues like Shared Services”
 - “We’d like to know more about what other Departments are doing”

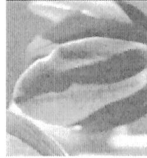
* *‘Team Briefings’ refers to the Council-wide Communication system, not local or departmental briefings which do tend to be face to face*



ERDPS



- All participants were aware of ERDPS (interpreted as individual reviews between managers and job holders) and most have participated: Educational Services Department seem to have widest coverage and produced most examples of good practice / personal benefit
- Doubts about relevance to 'blue collar' / junior jobs
 - "No promotion prospects, therefore whole process a waste of time"
- Some claim Single Status renders ERDPS irrelevant (misinterpreting its purpose accidentally or otherwise)
 - "We're sealed into our jobs, so what's the point?"
- A few gaps remain – "no ERDPS in our area for three years"
- Certain managers seem to be 'going through the motions'

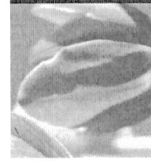


Working conditions/work life balance



THE EDGECUMBE GROUP

- Various comments about the working environment, accommodation and H&S
 - "Too cold in morning, too hot in the afternoon" (controllability of old heating systems)
 - "Taking on new people when we're already cramped - there's no dedicated workspace for them - we're desk-hopping" (Community Services)
 - "All H&S matters are followed up-we have regular meetings" (School)
- There were some very positive comments about H&S staff
 - "Very informative, really positive and try to establish ways round things"
- Concerns expressed about workloads – some changed attitudes since Single Status; a few staff reported being less willing to be flexible/'go the extra mile'
 - "I take work home every night" (Educational Services)
 - "Management are working long hours and taking work home" (Community Services)
- On the other hand
 - "Flexitime is really good" (Environmental Services)
 - "I never take work home" (Environmental Services)

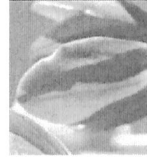


Proposed Handbook/'Connections' Strategy

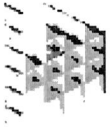


the edgecumbe group

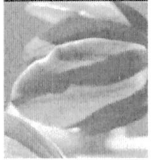
- The focus group participants were also invited to comment on
 - **An Employee Handbook** in electronic and/or paper form:
 - Responses to this idea tended to be positive “Very useful to new employees and especially to those people who are new to Moray too”
 - Some concerns were expressed about cost and keeping it up-to-date
 - Some expressed a mild preference for an electronic version – if linked with an Intranet search facility people felt that it could be very useful: but a paper version would be essential for those without PCs
 - **'Connections' – communication strategy**:
 - There was some difficulty in gauging opinion because the name is so similar to the magazine, which seems unpopular
 - The principle seems sound, therefore, but a new name may be needed
 - Mixed views on the notice-board element
 - “Good idea, I miss having a notice board ...”
 - vs.
 - “Waste of money ... we already have notice boards that work well in our department”



Department-specific feedback



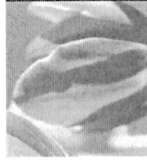
temporary council



Department-specific feedback:

Educational Services

- **Communication** - a number of staff have seen some improvement
 - "We're always working hard to improve communication in our school"
- **Relationships / communication with the Centre**
 - "Senior management (within the Department) are always available and approachable"
 - "Good communication with head office management"
 - "Staff still feel that the Senior staff of the Council don't know them"
- **QIOs – Mixed views: the system works well for some**
 - "Our QIO is really excellent, very helpful indeed ... a real asset"
 - "The QIO is very focused on results"
 - "Our QIO keeps saying he'll visit but he never does"
- **The role of the Department: advocate / facilitator vs. policy enforcer**
 - "The Director should represent us with the Scottish Executive, argue our case"
 - "They impose initiatives on us that are completely impractical, make no sense"
 - "No time to implement initiatives"
 - "Let us use our professional judgement, let us teach"

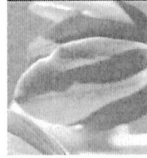


Department-specific feedback :
Educational Services (cont'd)

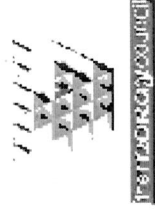


TEMPORARY COUNCIL

- **Job insecurity / temporary contracts**
 - Insecurity/pay among Nursery Nurses / Classroom Assistants on temporary contracts
 - "Big fears among them ...they have no security ... can be moved without warning"
 - "It's not a good way to treat people"
- **IT**
 - The system (hardware and software)/ Fujitsu contract seem to be having a major effect on the work of schools: almost all respondents in one group showed considerable concern about the high costs and logistical problems of making any changes to either hardware or software via Fujitsu engineers. As a result, to many staff ...
 - "Fujitsu is a dirty word"



Department-specific feedback
Environmental Services



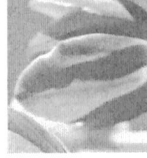
- **'06 Survey**
 - Feedback was generally good - via management and intranet
- **Communication**
 - "We hold regular foreman meetings, which are useful."
 - "We're kept in the dark regarding communications from HQ."
 - "We've only seen our boss twice in three years" (Roads)
 - "Lack of consultation (surveying van) means we deliver a worse service" (Lighting)
- **Lack of cohesion/collaboration in schools**
 - "There's a them and us in schools - school staff, catering and cleaning" (mirrored by some Education staff)



Department-specific feedback :

Community Services

- **The Council as an employer**
 - "Couldn't have been more supportive" (family crisis)
 - "Wages as good as other employers"
- **Recall of '06 Survey** tended to be reasonable, (not home carers)
- **Communication generally**
 - No mention of care Team visits or Sandy at development days, however
 - "You can find out ... communication here is pretty good"
 - "Communication has improved over the last couple of years"
- **Team briefs**
 - Over-reliance on email system
 - Limited interest "I don't know when I last read it"
- **Management style**
 - 1-1s ('regular supervisions') "very good - you don't really need the ERDPs"
- **Training** (inc Induction)
 - "No issues with training, it's openly offered" - *although*
 - "My request for training was refused due to budget"



Department-specific feedback :

F&ICT, L&C, C-E



TEMPORARY

- Respondents from these departments (only one group) tended to be less positive overall – they appeared to be particularly affected by Single Status re-gradings and the related appeal process
- **Pay:** mixed messages
 - Pay for IT is “brilliant for the north of Scotland”
 - Not so good in Accounts “We’ve had lots of turnover”
- **Communication**
 - Seen to be better from CMT to DMT
 - Regular quarterly meetings
- **ERDPS**
 - “Still not happening in all areas”
- **Training**
 - “It’s there but there’s a lack of money”

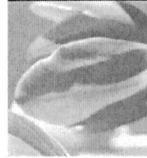


Conclusions & implications for action

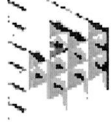


TEMPORARY COUNCIL

- **The '06 Survey:** Seems to have had limited impact; similarly the follow-up activities
 - *Implications for action*
 - More effective communication needed, *before, during and after* surveys
 - Place much more emphasis on feedback
- **The Moray Council as an employer:** Single Status has dented the reputation of the Council internally and its Senior Managers. Nevertheless, most people continue to enjoy working for the Council.
 - *Implications for action:*
 - Continue to work on better, more **personal** (i.e. face to face) communication – focus a particular message on the value placed by the Council on the contribution made by all its staff (acknowledge the difficulties that have arisen as a result of Single Status??)
 - Find new ways of improving quality of working life where *the Council has control* – e.g. by continuing to extend ERDPs, increasing budgets for training and (career?) development; find other 'quick wins' which may have a small but noticeable effect (heating, ventilation?)



Conclusions & implications for action - 2



the council group

- **Communication:** it's improving, but not consistently; – relatively isolated, fragmentary examples only. There's a clear need for the proposed Council-wide communication strategy
 - *Implications for action*
 - Complete the development of / implement the 'Connections' strategy (name?)
 - Emphasise importance of **face-to-face** communication at all levels
 - Review application of Team Briefing - ensure *ora/* application as well as written (one possibility might be to explore ways of introducing KEY Team Brief messages into local / department team meetings)
 - Review/overhaul 'Connect': staff seem unhappy with the concept. Review/ relaunch?
 - Review Intranet (already underway?) – add search facility
- **CMT / Senior Management visibility:** again – improvements, but still some way to go: potentially a very powerful way to have a positive impact on morale
 - *Implications for action*
 - Council-wide and Departmentally, commit to a continuing programme of face-to-face communication – dates, locations to be published
 - Clarify key messages well in advance – ensure all channels and media are used to communicate consistently

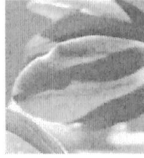


Conclusions & implications for action - 3



INTEGRATION

- **ERDPs:** Good progress, but some managers still going through the motions; follow through isn't always consistent
 - *Implications for action*
 - Continue to press for Council-wide application – identify remaining gaps
 - Monitor quality of process, particularly follow-up (include topic in Autumn survey?)
 - Take all possible action to ease access to training and development – given budget constraints, perhaps investigate possibilities of more in house/on the job development – job swaps for example?
 - Explore ways of extending longer-term staff development
- **Training:** well rated in the focus groups. Budget limits are seen to restrict access, however
 - *Implications for action*
 - Explore ways of improving effectiveness of training spend and extending use of in-house training services



Conclusions & implications for action - 4



TECHNOLOGY SOURCE

- **Proposed Employee Handbook:** the encouraging response suggests continuation
 - *Implications for action*
 - Continue development – perhaps do some market testing on early drafts
 - Find effective ways of maintaining currency
 - Link with Intranet (search facility will be important)
- **'Connections' communication strategy:** this has to be right in principle: name change?
 - *Implications for action*
 - Continue development – responsibility should be at CMT level
 - The approach must be truly strategic i.e. organisation-wide, apply to all Departments and be managed and co-ordinated centrally
- **and finally,** we suggest that
- Departmental management teams should review and update original survey action plans
- Progress is monitored and measured in late 2008, as planned

