

	Agenda Item 8 ES/058/11
Committee:	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Date:	29 November 2011
Essex People Strategy 2012 and beyond, including 'Your Voice' staff survey results	
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Introduction

At its meeting on 20 July 2009, Central Services considered report CS/09/09 and received a presentation from Mr Keir Lynch, Executive Director for Transformation, in relation to the Essex People Strategy (2008 -2012).

The Essex People Strategy sets out how we foresee the challenges facing Essex in the management of the organisation and our people over the forthcoming years and how we intend to respond to these challenges.

In supporting ECC to achieve its goal of delivering the best quality of life in Britain, whilst addressing significant financial challenge and population growth, the EssexWorks transformation programme will result in a flatter organisational structure, and transition to a commissioning organisation working in partnerships, with a smaller directly employed workforce. The Council will have a highly engaged workforce, competent at cross-team working and project management.

The HR function itself will transform to meet the needs of the business. Summarised in Appendix 1 under the six strategic themes are the 2012/13 vision for each and the major 2011/12 milestones.

1. Leadership
2. Capability & Performance
3. Engagement
4. Change
5. Resourcing
6. HR function

It will also present the results of the 2011/12 'Your Voice' staff survey for the committee to note.

Action

The Committee is invited to note the progress made against the 2011-12 People Strategy, including outcomes from the 2011 'Your Voice' staff survey and agree the report and next steps.

Evidence

People Strategy 2011-12

The milestones for the 2011-12 People Strategy have either been delivered or are comfortably within timescales to deliver (Appendix 1). The only part that will run into next year are themes around leadership. It was considered most effective to link a series of emerging and existing projects connected to leadership (role, skills, capabilities, performance etc.) under the heading of Future ECC Leader and run them as a Programme to achieve more effective coordinated outcomes.

ECC future leader Programme is now in the planning stage, linking into the future ECC TOM. Milestones will be developed to deliver towards the end of 2011-12 as well as form part of the strategy and deliverables for the 2012-13 People Strategy.

Particular achievements to highlight include:-

- Successfully supporting employees through change. Approximately 82% of employees were either going through or had passed through change by mid year. HR plays a major role in leading and supporting this change. A poor change programme would have had a multi million pound negative impact and been evidenced by large increases in sickness absence, employee turnover, talent exiting, industrial action through strikes or work to rule, and highly disengaged employees. Instead the opposite has been the case.
- Renegotiating employee Terms & Conditions (excess time & travel, notice periods etc) saving in excess of £1.5M as an alternative to having to consider increased redundancies, or pay reductions that other Local Authorities have progressed with high employee disengagement.

External recognition has also been achieved through winning major awards and by being invited to share a conference platform with Coca Cola at the annual CIPD national conference.

Staff Survey 2011-12

The Your Voice survey in 2011 (Appendix 3) ran for a four week period (June/July). Of the 9,454 employees invited to participate, 6,304 took part, giving a response rate of 67% - ECC's highest ever response rate. The survey was available in hard copy format for those without email access/PC access, and electronically. The vast majority of respondents (5,689) took part electronically. The response rate for online surveys was 71%, compared with 41% for hard copies.

The results of the survey were mixed with the overall Engagement Index composite score going down to 56%, and although unwelcomed is not an unexpected reflection of that most of the organisation is being impacted by transformational change. However the population classified as disengaged is low at only 6%, whereas twice as many respondents were classified as highly engaged. The bottom 20 teams ranged from 23% to 46%, whereas the top 20 teams ranged from 75% to 90%.

Nine themes were found to be significant drivers of employee engagement within the Council. The most important theme was change. Being treated with fairness and respect is also reflected in all the directorates as a key drivers.

After the survey reporting period, including analysis of the 3,445 survey verbatim comments, Joanna Killian requested that the organisation continued the conversation started by the survey, through development of a day of conversations, to run concurrently as 48 separate employee insight events involving 800 different voices around the county. This event titled 'Your Voice Engagement Day' and hosted by Senior Leaders, ran successfully, reviewing four key themes that came out off the staff survey and captured nearly 1000 individual comments.

The key outputs from the Staff Survey and Your Voice Engagement Day were combined into four themes for ECC'S Corporate Action Improvement Plan. The four themes (details in Appendix 2) are personal development, role of the manager, face to face communications, and managing change.

Next Steps

People Strategy 2012-13

Detailed work the will take place in Dec to Jan to formulate specific milestones against the 2012/13 People Strategy visions, linking into ECC'S Transformation plan and Corporate Vision and Priorities. Publication of the People Strategy is planned for February/ March following consultation and agreement with key stakeholders.

Staff Survey 2012-13

Work will continue throughout 2011-12 and into early 2012-13 to deliver against improvements targeted in the Corporate Action Improvement Plan and across all specific Directorate, Service Area and Teams plans, with progress communicated back to employees.

A report has been commissioned for the Employee Communication & Engagement team to review and recommend how employee engagement research should be carried out and used most effectively to meet the needs of Essex County Council (ECC) in 2012 and beyond.

The report will consider options around procurement, linking employee engagement to performance, frequency & timing, reviewing the question set to ensure it meets ECC's future needs, Your Voice Engagement Day's role, extending employee engagement research to understand the employee value proposition, specialist added value insight. The report will recommend ECC'S approach for employee engagement research for 2012 onwards.

Appendix 1

Essex People Strategy 2011/12 -13

Theme 1: Leadership

Our vision for 2012/13

We will have highly visible and respected leaders who are equipped to create, articulate and drive the Council forward to achieve its vision. They are effective, innovative and recognised nationally as role models.

Our leaders' work collaboratively to commission better outcomes for our customers using new and innovative approaches, nurturing ideas and creativity.

Our leaders are aware of their strengths and development needs and actively seek feedback to enhance their capability.

We plan succession and develop talent internally, as well as attracting, fostering and retaining future leaders.

Our key milestones for 2011/12

- **The role of leaders within ECC is re-evaluated and reinvigorated with clear expectations and behaviours expressed through the introduction of a Leadership Charter**

Leadership Charter created July 2010. To be reviewed and incorporated into a comprehensive Leadership review programme

- **Revise the 360 degree feedback tool to establish higher benchmark and increase frequency and clarity of feedback**

A revised 360 has been agreed with Executive Director of Transformation and used with CLT. This will be incorporated into the comprehensive Leadership review programme.

- **Identify key new skills required to enable value for money commissioning of services and partnership working**

Partnership working course piloted.

Commissioning still the subject of discussion within ECC and skills required yet to be identified. Indications are that this will require external input.

- **Provide commercial skills development for those who are required to run commercial enterprises**

Specific skills requirements will be based upon circumstances – type of enterprise, individuals and previous experience etc. – bespoke development.

- **Revise the Talent identification process in order to better identify the future leaders of ECC (reduced number from previous pools)**

To be reviewed and incorporated into a comprehensive Leadership review programme.

- **Ensure that the Talent Pool is used as the first point of review when filling critical roles**

To be reviewed and incorporated into a comprehensive Leadership review programme

- **Impact evaluate the whole Leadership Academy and ELP programmes to date**

Evaluations completed for all programmes with ELP4 continuing to be assessed. LA now cancelled and ELP5 programmed.

- **Agree, develop and deliver a revised leadership development programme for current and future leaders**

To be reviewed and incorporated into a comprehensive Leadership review programme

- **Provide CLT with the ability to quickly review succession plans for key roles identified by CLT / DLTs**

To be reviewed and incorporated into a comprehensive Leadership review programme

Theme 2: Capability and Performance

Our vision for 2012/13

ECC is recognised as one of the top performing public sector organisations and has a highly skilled, chiefly professional workforce who focus on policy, partnerships and commissioning to achieve customer outcomes.

Employees across the organisation perform at a high level against clearly communicated business goals and objectives. Our senior managers understand their capability gaps and utilise this knowledge to alert us to the business' learning needs. Our culture of innovation promotes performance management at all levels, measured through a single scheme with core elements and flexibility to meet service requirements.

Performance is tracked and progress in meeting challenging targets rewarded, achieving year-on-year individual improvement and clearly distinguishing between high and low

performance. Every employee takes responsibility for their 'my performance' targets and development plan. All managers are equipped to manage performance in a changing organisation, and constructive feedback supports employee development.

Essex County Council recognises that development is 70% on the job, 20% coaching and 10% off the job training. Managers are therefore skilled coaches, fully inducted and developed into their management roles. High performance, the level of reward, and retention rates are closely linked; under-performing employees receive regular, open feedback and a structured improvement programme. Absence levels are below 3%.

A total reward package gives core employees choice, and benefits supplement our pension and flexible working arrangements. Rewards, not entitlement, drive performance; the flatter structure affords development opportunities and lateral moves.

Our key milestones for 2011/12

- Carry out performance management training for all managers by 2011/12**

HR has developed 3 new workshops aimed at Senior Manager and Line Managers across ECC to help improve performance management skills. The course were:

i. Setting up for Success - designed to help managers at all levels develop robust and measurable performance contracts with their staff ensuring a 'golden thread' between individual performance contracts and the Corporate Plan/Vision.

Over 1040 line managers and 329 senior managers attended the training. 96% of line managers and 91% of senior managers agreed or strongly agreed that the course achieved its aims. 85% of line managers and 87% of senior mangers left the course with clear ideas on how they would use the new skills and knowledge they had developed on the course.

ii. The Power of Review -over 855 line managers and 277 senior managers attended the training. 97% of line managers and senior managers agreed or strongly agreed that the course achieved its aims. 92% of line managers and 96% of senior mangers left the course with clear ideas on how they would use the new skills and knowledge they had developed on the course

iii. Assess, Fair and Square - planned for launch November through to January

- Continue to review terms and conditions, allowances and pay structures to support transformation and equal pay actions arising from the equal pay audit
- Continue to assess rewards benchmarking to retain best in class status

On Pay, in September 2010 PLT/CLT agreed a Forward Reward Strategy. We now keep this Strategy in mind when constructing pay approaches so not only do we consider

inflation, market pay awards etc. but we keep the National negotiations firmly in the picture as well.

Working within tight financial constraints, CLT consider the pay approach annually. As a result, we have adopted slightly different performance pay approaches year on year, including base pay freezes, bonus freezes, segmentation of employee groups (i.e. pay freeze applied to Band 8+ but not to other groups).

For 2012/13, PLT/CLT have agreed that base pay increases and bonus payments can be made from a 2% “pay pot”, and CLT will consider the actual approach to be followed in November.

While the Equal Pay audit concluded in late 2009 did not identify any pay equality issues, and there have been no equal pay claims, Services have identified an issue in respect of pay differentiation between longer serving employees and newer recruits. Suggestions to address this issue are being included within the performance pay approach for 2012/13.

In respect of Employee Benefits, while we undertake no formal benchmarking we do keep a close eye on what nearby local authorities provide and seek gaps in our suite of benefits. As a result, voluntary benefits (EssexExtras) were introduced using a third party provider in May 2010 and in the near future a Dental Health Plan (through National Dental Plan) will be made available to employees. Our suite of employee benefits, including lease cars, private medical health insurance, voluntary benefits, flexible working arrangements, sick pay, annual leave etc. remain comprehensive.

While many local authorities have been ceasing certain benefits (lease cars and Private Medical Health Insurance are prime examples), Essex has not yet reduced its suite of benefits and continues to look for gaps.

This year we successfully engaged with staff and the unions to conduct a wholesale review of terms and conditions.

ECC was fully prepared for the introduction of the Agency Worker Regulations on 1 October 2011. These regulations ensure equal treatment for agency workers when compared to permanent staff in terms of pay and working conditions – approach to agency worker pay and the processes for recruitment and renewal have been reviewed with services and revised accordingly. This includes the introduction of temp worker rate cards; these drive consistency in rates, help services manage spend on temporary workers, and also ensure ECC is maintaining its competitive edge in the market to attract the best talent.

- Identify competencies and capability model for future working across ECC**

Corporate L&D developed a system called Your Capability. This is an online tool that is currently used by line managers and their staff to complete a (behavioural) assessment that is linked directly to the role profile. The role profile is mapped to the ECC Capability

Framework and loaded on to the capability tool. There is also a facility to complete self assessments against any other mapped role profiles (supporting career development).

The assessment is currently used for development purposes but helps to identify any behavioural strengths and areas of development. The results of the assessments are directly linked to the appropriate corporate learning opportunities.

The tool also has a reporting functionality (to be released in November) that enables managers to report on the strengths and skills gaps within their areas, supporting talent management across the organisation.

360 degree feedback functionality will also be released over the coming months, enabling individuals to gather feedback from their peers.

The tool can be developed further to accommodate assessments for performance management and recruitment purposes and has the ability to hold information on multiple frameworks/assessments.

Areas of the business that have mapped to role profiles and have gone live (so have access to capability tool and development opportunities) are detailed below:

- FPS (Bands 5-10) first to go live in February
- MP&I – Infrastructure Delivery
- AHCW - Commercial Team (excluding senior managers)
- IS Management Team
- Libraries Management Team (up to Band 5) (September)
- All other non management Library Staff (not subject to future transformation- October)
- Pensions Department (excluding Investment team)
- FPS (Bands 1-4)

Mapping underway or complete but individuals do not yet have access to capability tool

- Facilities retained roles Bands 6-10
 - Contact Essex
 - SCF Travel Training Team
 - IS - all non management role profiles (awaiting announcement of CLT paper)
 - IS roles - (transferred from SCF-as above)
 - AHCW QM team and ASC Delivery
 - Draft mapping for new Business Support profiles (subject to change during consultation)
 - Internal Audit (mapped but on hold due to restructure)
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- **Steer new managers into appropriate modules of the Development Programme**

The curriculum has been revised and development is now split between Personal Skills, Management of others and Leadership. This enables much easier signposting for new managers.

- **Deliver 10% of development through e-learning**

The current schedule of courses for this financial year will see us achieving approximately 40% of courses being delivered via e-learning. There has been a significant increase due to Corporate Governance e-learning which is mandatory for all staff and requires completion by 31st March.

- **Achieve a team of 20 trained coaches**

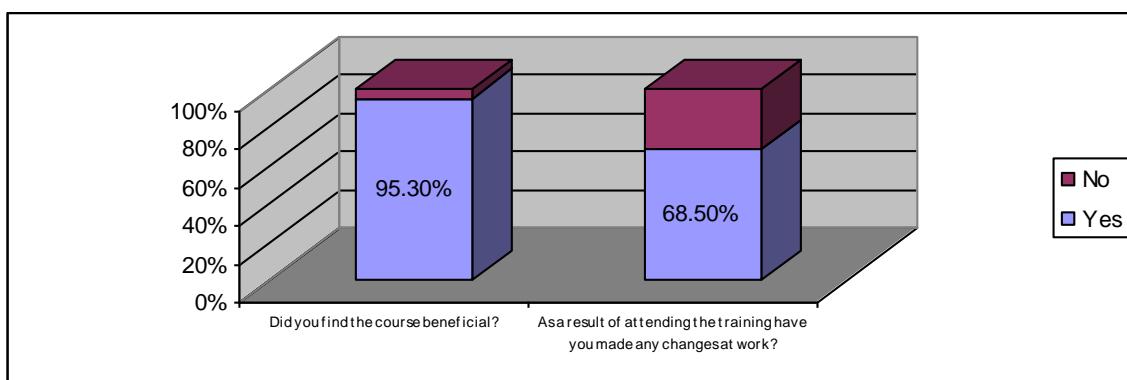
We currently have 42 trained coaches across ECC

- **Publish full range of development opportunities, providing an average of 0.8 corporately arranged learning and development days per employee**

August YTD the Corporate Learning and Development Team had delivered 0.35 days per training per employee, annualised this would achieve 0.84 days which exceeds the 0.8 days target

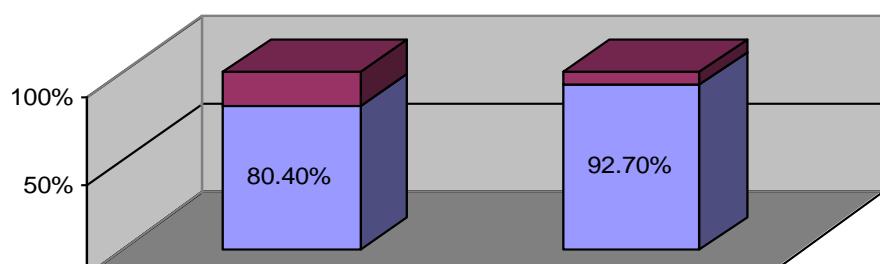
- **Evaluate the Development Programmes for impact, seeing improved retention rates and performance resulting from attendance**

All training offered by corporate L&D is measured to assess the transfer of learning from the trainer to the learner. The table below highlights the success of this



In addition we also measure the application of the learning in the workplace (in this case by line manager observation)

Level 3 (Line Manager) feedback



From the 2011 Your Voice Survey results, 65% of employees said that their performance had improved as a result of the skills and knowledge they had developed over the last year. This result is up 19 percentage points on prior year and is 8 percentage points above Best in Class.

Staff turnover in August 2011 is much lower than the prior year at just 6.6% compared to 8% in 2010.

- **Embed the Development Programmes into ‘my performance’ for managers**

My development is already part of the my performance programme

- **Provide development to support transformation and change**

Corp L&D have developed a range of toolkits and courses to help equip employees and managers on how to deal with change. A transition toolkit has been developed which signposts managers and employees to the range of interventions designed to assist them through transformation.

Managing Others Through Change - this course provides Managers with a greater understanding of how people react differently to change and how to support themselves and others during this time. It also identifies strategies to support Managers to successfully work through periods of change.

Link to the course: <http://www.learningpool.com/essex/course/view.php?id=187>

Working Through Change - this course provides an opportunity for all employees to explore how change impacts themselves and others and provides some top tips on how to react positively during this time, including information on the various sources of support across ECC.

Link to the course: <http://www.learningpool.com/essex/course/view.php?id=188>

Theme 3: Engagement

Our vision for 2012/13

We have consistently high levels of engagement across the organisation, with employees who are committed and proud to work for ECC and keen to go the extra mile. Employees understand the importance of improving customer service, while commissioning outcomes to deliver the best quality of life in Britain.

Our employees understand our values and vision, and are actively taking responsibility for their achievement. Our approach to reward and recognition ensures employees feel valued for their efforts. We pro-actively seek and listen to our employees' views and act on them where possible.

We work in a climate of increasing autonomy and trust. Employees feel a sense of personal accomplishment, taking ownership of their own performance management and skills development and for engaging with the organisation's direction of travel. Line managers and leaders feel supported to take responsibility for their team's level of engagement and understand the links to high performance and effective communications.

We are recognised nationally as experts in employee engagement. We embrace diversity and inclusiveness.

Our key milestones for 2011/2012

- **Embed an objective on engagement in line manager 'my performance' contracts**

Achieved, incorporated in my performance 2011/12 cycle within mandatory line manager objective, supplemented with guidance on measures

- **Support 'people change' aspects of transformation projects**

EC&E Communication BPs support all people change strategy resulting from transformation programmes and projects in our remit.

Strategic communications and engagement plans are in place for all internal stakeholder groups.

Current support is underway in Highways Strategic Transformation, IS Modernisation programme, Business Support project, Corporate Services project, Customer Services project, Performance Management project and Property and Facilities Management.

Communication BPs support and promote wider 'people change' activity including consultation, organisation change, learning and development and leadership through change

- **Embed employee engagement in development programmes, such as induction, and publish an on-line toolkit for managers**

The Engaging Manager on-line tool kit was developed and launched.

Intranet pages continue to evolve and are updated with information & guidance to support line managers in their role as engaging managers.

New intervention, Engage Space, is being developed in conjunction with L&D colleagues – a two will pilot in November and form part of the Leadership Bitesize Programme.

- **Use Employee Panels and Our Voice forum to track attitudes to change.**

EC&E has a robust measurement process in place which takes monthly temperature checks on attitudes resulting from transformation programme.

2011 Employee Panel tested/refined questions (April 2011) to feed into an engagement heatmap, which gives a picture of engagement throughout the organisation over time.

The measurement provides data on employee awareness, understanding and opinion and provides invaluable insight to inform communication and engagement strategy plans.

A regular 'engagement heatmap' section is included at corporate employee forums which feeds into overall tracking.

- **Support action plan development within three months of employee survey closing**

Each Your Voice 2011 survey report was circulated with a covering email outlining support available and 'next steps' in terms of action planning.

Each Your Voice 2011 survey report contained a link to a new guidance document called 'Getting the most from your survey results'. This document, developed through consultation with various stakeholders including line managers directly, contains information on preparing for action planning, a PowerPoint template to help managers disseminate survey data from the main report for their team members, setting realistic expectations from action planning, tips on how to get started, how to run an action planning meeting/team event, and how to tackle tricky or unusual problems (eg teams that find it difficult to get together, or teams that have seen a big drop in their engagement levels).

An action planning template has been provided for teams to use if they so wish - but with recognition that not all teams would want to use a template - teams are encouraged to take a creative approach to action planning rather than approach it in a mechanistic way. Up to date advice and guidance on the Working Here survey pages - tips for action planning, ideas for action, FAQs and case studies.

Use of Yammer to encourage employees and managers to continue the conversation post survey results.

Delivery of Your Voice Engagement Day (YVED) on 21 September sent out a strong message that the organisation takes responding to employee feedback via the survey very seriously and will have helped to increase awareness & buy-in to action planning at a local level.

Building on the survey results, YVED has provided further consultation with our employees and enabled us to identify the themes for the Corporate Action Plan.

- **Work with CLT to regularly monitor progress**

YVED timeline recommends onward CLT sponsorship of CAP themes and regular CLT agenda item for review of progress November onwards

- **Directorates identify and complete action plans within eight months of survey closing**

Commissioned ORC to deliver an additional 'understanding your survey data' session for HRBPs to help HRBPs support DLTs with understanding survey data and moving onto action planning.

Direktorate reports circulated with a covering email setting out deadline for directorate action plans to be published (end of October).

PowerPoint template provided to HRBPs for onward dissemination of survey results, including a slide on 'Timescales' - setting out need for action plan to be developed by October.

Survey statistical data supplemented with circulation of freetext comments summary – sent to each CLT member for their directorate plus HR and Communication BPs.

In addition to the updates for the above specific milestones, in relation to the Vision statement: We are recognised nationally as experts in employee engagement, I think it is important to highlight the national recognition that our work has received via a wide range of professional awards in 2011 so far:-

Institute of Internal Communication - Communications Awards 2011

- Award of Excellence, Employee Communication "Engaging Essex"
- Award of Excellence, In-house Team of the Year
- Award of Excellence, Communication strategy: Essex Works
- Certificate of Merit, Success on a Shoestring: "Money Can't Buy Love but TLC drives Essex Engagement"

Melcrum Strategic Communications Management Awards 2011

- Winner of Team of the Year (public and private sector)

CorpComms Awards 2011

- Shortlisted - Best Employee engagement programme, Money can't buy love but TLC drives Essex engagement!

Institute of Internal Communications (IOIC) South Region Awards 2011

- Shortlisted - Team of the Year

HR Excellence Awards 2011

- Shortlisted finalist for HR Team of the Year

Theme 4: Change

Our vision for 2012/13

This theme focuses on the distinctive contribution of effective people management as a component of successful change management,

Employees across the organisation acknowledge that projects implemented through our Essex Works: Customer First programme have been well managed and that they have been appropriately supported through change.

Leaders and managers are confident in fulfilling their accountability for effective change management and acknowledge that they have ready access to change management tools, complimented with consistent advice and support.

Flatter management structures, enhanced capability, effective performance management and personal accountability have combined to enable a rapid reconfiguration of organisation structure as “business as usual” with much less reliance on formal restructuring.

We have learned from partnership working with consultants and partner organisations to enhance our approach to complex multi agency change.

Essex is acknowledged by employees through the Your Voice survey as effective in transformational change management.

Our key milestones for 2011/2012

- Change plans including the people elements of change are in place and on target for all major projects.**

Change plans have been implemented for all the major projects including the people elements. All are on target. A separate room has been allocated to record all the people change plans and electronic recording systems have been set up to monitor and record people outcomes.

Effective working systems have been set up between the Transformation team (project leaders), HR Business Partners (strategic Directorate HR leaders), Directorate operational owners, Corporate HR (strategic people oversight and central Union dialogue point), the Operational HR support team (HR Advice & Support) and the Employee Communication & Engagement team to deliver the change successfully.

- Communicate a clear overarching message to all employees about the likely impact of change on their area of work and current role.**

EC&E Communication BPs support all people change strategy resulting from transformation programmes and projects. Strategic communications and engagement plans are in place for all internal stakeholder groups. This includes current support underway in Highways Strategic Transformation, IS Modernisation programme, Business Support project, Corporate Services project, Customer Services project, Performance Management project and Property and Facilities Management.

Communication BPs support and promote wider ‘people change’ activity including consultation, organisation change, learning and development and leadership through change.

Detailed communications around the consultation, new team structures and selection process during the people restructuring phase of projects are managed using templated information packs that are legally compliant and have been agreed with the unions. His process has been managed by the HR Business Partner and HR Advice & Support teams from an HR perspective.

- Change management toolkit in place, promoted and deployed.**

Change management tool kits to support employees through change, have been developed and implemented. They are regularly advertised, available on the intranet, and also more specifically communicated to individual teams as they go through their change phase. The tool kits developed are:-

- Change management toolkit: best practice tools from across the business
- Engagement toolkit: tools to engage teams while going through change

- Organisational change toolkit: ensuring that restructures and redundancies are approached fairly and consistently
- Transitional support toolkit: A range of development and support courses
- Your capabilities toolkit: assessment of capabilities for new roles and development needs in post-transformation structure
- **Employees have access to learning and development, wellbeing and management support through change.**

Similar to the above comment, a wide range of tool kits have been made available for employees. The wellbeing service is also specifically communicated to employees when they are going through change to support their journey.

A redeployment process has been set up giving un-appointed employees first opportunity at applying for new vacancies. Learning & development courses are also made available to un-appointed employees on interviewing and CV writing skills to support them in gaining employment.

- **Clear change management performance measures are in place and relevant MI is being produced.**

A range of performance measures relating to people change are published and reviewed both operationally and by HR. These include from an organisational design perspective, management spans and layers, as well other measures such as sickness absence, employee turnover, high performers leaving, tribunals, HR advice & support call volumes and types,

Theme 5: Resourcing

Our vision for 2012/13

Having been classed as 'One to Watch' in the Sunday Times Best places to work in the public and charity sectors in 2011, Essex County Council have returned to the Top 100 listing.

Projection of a strong employer brand allows us to compete well against other public and private sector organisations in attracting and retaining high calibre people. Despite increased competition from a recovering economy, we have been successful in recruiting across all directorates, with nationally recognised leaders joining the organisation and driving our reputation and brand development - over 60% of our successful applicants come from our talent pools, with a further 30% applying directly to the organisation. This is in spite of negative publicity around the public sector, and our requirements for increasingly private sector skill sets.

Use of emerging technologies in the re-development of our careers portal as well as our attraction techniques has given us a strong presence in social networking, driving the high level of direct applicants. This improved engagement throughout the recruitment lifecycle means that we are now able to attract from a much broader market of candidates than ever before. Our corporate standard for assessment has ensured that with the increased level of applicants, we are only appointing those with the appropriate skills and behaviours to successfully deliver in their roles.

The successful implementation of eBulk in the Disclosures unit has also led to a reduction in offer to start times, reducing from the average of 49 days in 10/11 to 35 working days. This has also enabled us to increase our levels of external business by over 10% based on 2010/11.

Essex County Council has proven itself to be at the forefront of local authorities in many areas, our success requiring a Resourcing function that is best in class for both the public and private sectors alike.

Our key milestones for 2011/2012

- **Development and implementation of a resourcing strategy**

Strategy developed. Now moved to Head of Workforce Development

- **Establish a resourcing partner to take us beyond 2013**

Contract negotiations with Capita Resourcing are complete following approval from the Contract Review Board. New terms on the contract are expected to realise savings of £1.4 million over the course of the extension, with 40% of Capita's management fee now dependant on delivering SLAs

- **Further development partner involvement in the framework, with minimum of 3 new partners signing up during the year**

Discussions taking place with Herts CC and Cambridge City Council

- **Encourage behaviours from our resourcing partner in line with our people strategy through re-modelling of the contract**

As a part of the contract negotiations, Capita are putting £120k of their annual management fee at risk. This amount will only be payable on the delivery of a number of key SLAs across both their permanent and contract delivery. In addition, punitive clauses have been included where Capita fail on key safeguarding deliverables.

- Management information and market intelligence reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure best practice across all elements of the recruitment lifecycle – to include attraction, assessment, induction and on-boarding**

The management information ECC now receives from Capita has been re-modelled following consultation with services. This now includes measures across each stage of the recruitment process, and is reviewed monthly at a service and corporate level.

- Recruit to 60% of both permanent and temporary roles with applicants from talent pools, direct fills for temporary workers to exceed 60%**

This is now being achieved, with direct fills being above 70% consistently since June

- Time to hire (offer to start) to be less than 40 days for safeguarded posts**

Significant improvements have been made in this area, with Offer to Start times being below 40 days since April, with further improvements in August and September where this has been reduced to 28 days. These times are now directly comparable with the times for non-safeguarded posts, and is a reflection on both improvements to the processes in WfE and the implementation of eBulk.

- Electronic CRB process in place to drive a 10% increase in external business from Disclosures**

eBulk is now in place, and active marketing of the service has started. Due to changes in legislation, external revenues have fallen prior to the eBulk go live by 20%. This combined with increased competition and a stalling economy means that a 10% increase year on year will almost certainly not be realised

- Recruitment across resourcing/Capita and Shared Services reviewed and combined to drive efficiency**

SLAs are now in place between the three teams that link for recruitment – Working for Essex, Safeguarding (Resourcing) and ESS (contracts/payroll). These SLAs have been achieved every month since their inception in March 2011.

- All applicants, starters and hiring managers surveyed on a monthly basis to drive performance review**

This is now in place. After initial success, the numbers of respondents has decreased considerably, possibly as a result of ‘survey fatigue’. A new process has been implemented in October where the emailed surveys are followed with direct contact from WfE to increase the number of respondents.

- All legal and statutory obligations met throughout the year**

The implementation of processes to accommodate AWR is under way and on target. An audit by the Risk team on Capita's process gave them an outcome of Considerable Assurance in July. Subsequent Ofsted inspections have identified several areas for improvement – an improvement plan is in place.

- **Priority application scheme implemented and managed to ensure support of employees throughout transformation**

This process is undergoing further revision to ensure it is sufficiently robust for the numbers expected following completion of the Transformation consultations

Theme 6: HR Functions

Our vision for 2012/13

Through partnering with the business, the small, highly skilled and strategic HR function understands each client group and the Council's overall people requirements. Known for delivering solutions and anticipating needs, HR is a valued partner contributing to all aspects of business planning.

The HR service offer is fully understood by line managers and they have contributed to the development of the service. HR commissions some work through shared services, with minimal hand offs, to agreed service levels. The internet and shared services become increasingly the first point of contact for managers for low complexity solutions.

The capabilities within the function are predominantly to graduate level, professionally qualified and with a balance of both private and public sector backgrounds. There is a focus on continuing professional development, clear career paths and regular movement between HR services. Our employees are regularly approached with external job offers, but most stay due to job satisfaction and opportunities.

We enable our line management population, through the provision of best practice people management and expertise in all strategic HR disciplines. Line management capability has been equipped through assessment, development, and management tools, including self-service. There is clarity about what is expected of an excellent ECC line manager and those better suited to other roles have changed jobs.

Nationally recognised for best practice, we achieve upper quartile people performance against clear indicators, and our HR branding effectively communicates our professionalism to customers. Our customers are a critical part of our continuous improvement, and are regularly asked for their views through regular customer surveys and other engagement methods.

Our key milestones for 2011/2012

- Network locally / nationally to grow our brand and attract interest from other HR professionals
- Communicate People Strategy and key HR initiatives across ECC to raise our profile
- Achieve recognition internally and externally for our strategic business impact
- Increase partnership working, adding value, sourcing funding or gaining income
- Seek and act on customer feedback through bi-annual surveys and feedback
- Continue to roll out transformation, delivering the management review, organisational change and supporting new ways of working
- Review HR capability and support HR qualifications to meet business needs.

Improved capability: (not yet inc L&D)

We have a significant number of employees with private sector experience, providing a balance of experience across the function, contributing to the development of innovative solutions. We have pooled our training budget to focus on supporting achievement of professional qualifications

66% have private sector experience

64% have a relevant professional qualification (post graduate)

41% are Graduates

68% of the training budget is spent on supporting employees through professional qualifications

Improved HR ratios: (need to extract chart from ratios tool)

From 2008, we started to look at external measures of the function, such as HR ratios (HR staff: ECC employees). The public sector upper quartile measure is 1:86 and private sector upper quartile measure is 1:135. Our stretch target for 2012 is 1:120, and progress has been year on year improvement and is on track to achieve the target:

2008: 1:56

2009: 1:78

2010: 1:97

2011: 1:105

2012: 1:112 target

Customer Surveys

Since 2008/09 we have carried out six monthly surveys, setting stretching targets to improve our results. We focus on the results at both our 6 monthly face to face events and also in team discussion, ensuring we take action in our teams and as a function to improve. The results of the surveys have consistently improved, the most recent staff survey showed 65% of managers either agreed or strongly agreed to the question 'HR is a supportive and enabling function'.

Engagement

The function has spent considerable effort on improving engagement and dedicates time to having quality conversations and producing meaningful actions. The engagement scores for the function show year on year improvement achieving an engagement index score of 71% that was above both the Directorate and ECC overall scores.

Key initiatives

We have focussed on delivering initiatives to support the business in achieving their objectives and further the development of the organisation as a whole, through: Some additional examples include not mentioned earlier include:

Employee Terms & Conditions changed, Consistent tookits produced to support line managers e.g Change, TUPE, Leadership Development through partnership with Judge, Cambridge (Harvard Review article), Senior Induction improved, Creation of insight led decisions through monthly suite of management information shared with the business

Focus for the next 6 months has been prioritised to support 5 projects:

1. Developing HR SLAs
2. Improving organisation wide Commercial Capability
3. Leadership Development
4. Designing and delivering outputs from Corporate Services phase 2 projects
5. Improving and supporting employees through change.

Summary:

Progress and achievement of the function has been recognised externally and ECC has achieved recognition for the work achieved through publications in both Harvard Business Review (Talent and Leadership) and People Management (HR and Transformation). Also high performance through external benchmarking and recognition has been evidenced by

- CIPD national winner of **SME HR BUSINESS INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR Award** for 'VineHR' (formerly the Essex Strategic HR Partnership). The judges said: "This was a great example of true innovation in HR where collaboration is clearly evident in creating an exciting future".

- Team of the Year in the Melcrum Strategic Communications Management Awards 2011 won against both private and public sector organisations nationally
- Joint conference presentation, with Coca Cola, on successful employee engagement at the CIPD annual conference.

Appendix 2

Your Voice Employee Engagement Survey 2011: Corporate Action Plan 2011

Priority	Action Summary	CLT Sponsor
1. Personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and reformat the 'my performance' process to ensure that it 	Margaret Lee

	<p>focuses on personal development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at how we offer secondment opportunities to enable employees to post their skills and experience online • Seek and create development opportunities through job shadowing/secondments 	
2. Role of the manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the Council to define clearly what it expects of its managers, at every level, to create consistent, inspirational and excellent line management across the organisation 	Robert Overall
3. Face-to-face communications (linked to the role of the manager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage leaders and managers to increase their visibility, approachability and accessibility • Increasing face-to-face interactions - talking - rather than relying on email • Ensure managers have the tools and guidance to support them 	Keir Lynch
4. Managing change - getting you involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek ways to actively involve and empower employees in the transformation of the Council 	Dave Hill