Inverclyde council

Report To: Policy and Resources Committee   **Date: 14 August 2012**

Report By: Head of Organisational Development,   **Report No: PR/065/12/AH/AM/LF**
            Human Resources and Communications

Contact Officer: Lynsey Frizell   **Contact No: 2744**

Subject: Employee Survey Results

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1   The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the results from the employee survey carried out in March/April 2012.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1   The Employee Survey was launched on the 5th of March 2012 and every employee within the Council was given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire. Employees who are desk based and have access to a PC were sent a link to enable them to complete the questionnaire online. Employees who are not desk based were sent a hard copy of the questionnaire to their home address.

2.2   Employees were originally given three weeks to take part before the survey closed on the 23rd of March. However, the response rate was initially disappointing and at the 23rd of March stood at 18%.

2.3   The closing date was extended to allow a number of measures to be taken to increase the response rate. The survey officially closed on the 11th of May and the final response rate was 32%. Response rates for Council wide employee surveys range from 25 to 40%. Our response rate of 32% is right in the middle and provides us with a good robust number of responses.   It is also an increase from the response rate of 25% achieved by the last employee survey carried out in 2009.

2.4   The online questionnaire achieved a significantly higher response rate. Out of all those employees who completed a questionnaire, 74% were completed online by desk based employees and 26% were hard copies completed by employees who are not desk based.

2.5   A number of very positive results have emerged from the survey. For example:

- Employees have a clear understanding of their job and duties. 96% of respondents said they clearly understand their job and 92% their duties.

- A high percentage of employees (89%) understand how their performance affects the Council's performance and awareness of how the work of employees contributes to the Council's aims was also high (83%).

- Overall job satisfaction was high (79%) and the majority of respondents said that their work gives them personal achievement (81%).

- Communication between employees and their line manager is good. 77% of respondents said they have good communication with their line manager.

- A high percentage of respondents (75%) believe that the Council is committed to training and developing staff.

- Satisfaction with ICON and e-mail messages from Corporate Communications was high. 82% find ICON easy to navigate and 84% find the information helpful and relevant. 71% find e-mail messages from Corporate Communications helpful.

2.6 The survey also highlighted a number of areas that could be improved. For example:

- Listening to Employees – 42% of respondents don't have a say in decisions that affect their work and 35% don't get an opportunity to make suggestions to improve the service or to make it more efficient.

- Feedback / Praise – 51% of respondents told us they don't get any praise for doing good work and 38% don't get feedback on the work they do.

- Training – 40% of respondents said that their line manager doesn't discuss training needs with them and 35% haven't had a chance to learn or develop in the last 12 months. 67% of respondents are aware of the Council's training programme E-learning but only 28% have used it.

- Human Resources – Only 39% of respondents said they had received a performance appraisal and of them 50% said they did not find it useful in helping them with their job. 72% said they would like to receive more HR and Organisational Development news.

- Communication –the mains issues to arise from the survey were poor communication between teams, 62% of respondents said they learn first from gossip about what is happening in the Council and 44% said they are not kept informed about what is happening in the Council by their line managers. 46% said management decisions are not effectively communicated.

- Senior management - the main issue to arise to from the survey in relation to senior management was the limited contact employees have with senior managers and directors and limited communication.

2.7 The last employee survey carried out by the Council in 2009 contained a set of questions that were repeated in the 2012 survey in order to provide trend information. A total of 11 questions were asked in both surveys and a comparison of the results can be found in Appendix 1. There was a significant improvement in the results in 2012.

2.8 The next step is to develop an action plan to address the areas where improvement is required. Appendix 2 contains some initial proposals that have been developed. The proposals require further development and will be taken back to the CMT for approval. A report will be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee to provide an update on progress made in the development and implementation of the proposals contained within Appendix 2.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree:

a. The proposals detailed in Appendix 2.

b. To carry out the next employee survey in 2014.

c. A further report is submitted to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on the outcome of the proposals detailed in Appendix 2.

Head of Organisational Development, Human Resources & Communications

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 At its meeting on 12 January 2012, the CMT agreed to carry out a survey of all employees in March 2012. The CMT also approved the methodology that would be used and the questionnaire.

4.2 A tendering exercise was carried out to appoint a market research company to assist the Council in carrying out the survey. Lowland Market Research was awarded the contract and their role was to send out all hard copies of the questionnaire and to analyse the results and produce a final report. In addition, all completed questionnaires were returned to Lowland Market Research to ensure confidentiality and to encourage employees to take part.

4.3 The questionnaire was developed to ensure that it covered a good cross section of key issues for employees of the Council, as well as important areas that the Council would like to receive feedback from employees on. The questionnaire contained the following sections:

- The Council as My employer
- Me and My Job
- My Performance, Development and Recognition
- My Working Environment and Well Being at Work
- Corporate Communication within the Council
- Communication
- Me and My Line Manager
- Senior Managers
- Questions for line managers only to complete.

4.4 The Employee Survey was launched on the 5th of March 2012 and every employee within the Council was given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire. Employees who are desk based and have access to a PC were sent a link to enable them to complete the questionnaire online. Employees who are not desk based were sent a hard copy of the questionnaire to their home address.

4.5 Employees were originally given three weeks to take part before the survey closed on the 23rd of March. However, the response rate was initially very disappointing and at the 23rd of March stood at 18%.

4.6 A number of efforts were made to increase the response rate:

- The closing date for employees completing the online survey was extended twice. The deadline was initially extended until the 30th of March and was then further extended until the 13th of April.

- Post card reminders were posted to the home addresses of all employees who received a hard copy of the questionnaire.

- Additional hard copies were distributed to services with large numbers of non desk based employees during the week beginning the 26th of March. The following services were given extra questionnaires to enable them to ask employees to complete it during work time:

  ➢ Home Support Workers
  ➢ Roads, Transport and Waste
  ➢ Street Scene, Grounds and Registrars

4.7 Extending the closing date of the online survey helped to increase the response rate, as did the post card reminders. However, no completed questionnaires were returned from the

services with non desk based employees.

4.8 The survey officially closed on the 11th of May and the final response rate was 32%. Response rates for Council wide employee surveys range from 25 to 40%. Our response rate of 32% is right in the middle and provides us with a good robust number of responses. It is also an increase from the response rate of 25% achieved by the last employee survey carried out in 2009.

4.9 The table below illustrates the response rate to the online questionnaire and the hard copy.

	Online	Hard Copy	Total
Number of employees eligible	2108	2126	4234
Number of surveys completed	1015	362	1377
% that responded	48%	17%	32%

4.10 The online version questionnaire achieved a significantly higher response rate. Out of all those employees who completed a questionnaire, 74% were completed online by desk based employees and 26% were hard copies completed by employees who are not desk based.

4.11 The last employee survey carried out by the Council in 2009 contained a set of questions that were repeated in the 2012 survey in order to provide trend information. A total of 11 questions were asked on both surveys and a comparison of the results can be found in Appendix 1. There was a significant improvement in the results in 2012.

4.12 The questionnaire was split into a number of sections and the rest of this report highlights the results that were obtained in each section and discusses the next steps.

5.0 SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 The Council as my Employer

5.1.1 The results in this section were on the whole very good and below are some examples:
- 83% said they understood how their work contributes to achieving the Council's aims and objectives. This is a significant increase from the 2009 Employee Survey when 50% of respondents said they understood how their work contributes to the Council's aims.
- 80% agreed that Inverclyde Council takes equal opportunities seriously. Again, this is a major improvement from 2009 when 58% of respondents agreed that the Council takes equal opportunities seriously.
- 78% said they have a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the Council.

5.1.2 The main area in which we could improve is awareness of strategic planning documents. 46% of respondents said that they were not aware of their Directorate Plan, 48% the Corporate Plan and 49% the Single Outcome Agreement. Awareness was lowest in Education and Communities and this can mainly be attributed to responses from teachers.

5.1.3 Employees were given a list of possible new working practices and were asked to indicate which ones they thought they would benefit from. The most popular was condensed hours (63%), followed by mobile/home working (61%) and expansion of part time working (55%). The least popular were shift work (33%), annualised hours (31%) and shared hot desking (28%). The results from this question will be used to inform a pilot of new working practices.

5.2 Me and My Job

5.2.1 As with the previous section, there were some very good results in this section and below are some examples:
- 96% said they have a clear understanding of the purpose of their job
- 92% said they have a clear understanding of their duties
- 81% said their work gives them a sense of personal achievement

- 81% believe their job makes good use of their skills and abilities. The same question was asked in 2009 and 56% agreed their job made full use of their skills and abilities.
- 79% said they were satisfied with their job and this is a significant increase from 69% in 2009.

5.2.2   The areas where improvement is required include:

- **Morale** – 47% said morale isn't good within their team. This result can partly be attributed to concerns that employees would have had over the Clyde Valley Shared Services proposal at the time the employee survey was carried out. While this is still an area of concern, the results have improved since 2009. In the 2009 survey 50% of respondents rated their own personal morale as low and 62% rated morale in the workplace as low.

- **Influencing decisions** – 42% of respondents said that they don't have a say in decision that affect their work.

- **Feedback** – 38% of employees who responded to the questionnaire told us they don't get any feedback on the work they do.

- **Employee suggestions** – 35% of respondents said they're not encouraged to make any suggestions to improve the service or to make it more efficient.

- **Tools and equipment**– 33% told us that they don't have the tools and equipment necessary to do their job. This was a response from employees in all four Directorates. It was highest in Education and Communities (35%), followed by Regeneration and Environment (33%), Organisational Improvement (28%) and the CHCP (27%). This is a concern that we will have to look into in order to find out exactly what the issues are.

- **E-Learning –** 67% of respondents who participated in the survey said they were aware of e-learning, however, only 28% of them have used it. E-learning has only been in place for a year and is still being embedded. It is therefore an area that we will improve on and in the future e-learning will be the tool used to carry out mass training.

5.3   My Performance, Development and Recognition

5.3.1   Below are examples of the positive results from this section:
- 90% of respondents said they have the skills and knowledge to do their job.
- 90% understand clearly what is expected of them in their job
- 75% agreed that the Council is committed to training and developing staff

5.3.2   The areas where improvement is required include:

- **Praise** – 51% of respondents told us they don't get any praise for doing good work. This was also an issue in the 2009 survey when 47% said they didn't receive any praise for good work.

- **Training needs** – 40% said that their line manager doesn't discuss training needs with them and 35% haven't had an opportunity to learn or develop in the last 12 months.

- **Performance appraisal scheme** – 39% of respondents had received a performance appraisal in the last year and 50% of them said it didn't help them with their job.

5.4   My Working Environment and Well Being at Work

5.4.1   Employees are on the whole satisfied with their working environment. 85% are satisfied with

security and health and safety precautions, 82% with noise levels and 80% with lighting.

5.4.2　The areas that employees are dissatisfied with are air conditioning (52%), heating (38%), ventilation (32%) and space (30%). In 2009 employees were dissatisfied with temperature control and air circulation.

5.4.3　24% of employees told us that their workload isn't manageable. This peaked at 28% within Education and Communities, followed by the CHCP (25%), Regeneration and Environment (24%) and Organisational Development and Resources (18%). In 2009, 61% of respondents said that their workload was too heavy.

5.4.4　With regard to personal harassment, 13% of respondents told us that they experience personal harassment in the form of offensive words or behaviour from colleagues/managers and 26% have experienced personal harassment from customers. This has decreased since 2009, when 33% were subject to verbal abuse from the public. 5% of respondents said that they are bullied at work. The percentage is fairly similar across the 4 directorates. The percentage of staff bullied is also similar to other local authorities. The main reasons for bullying are a persons age (11%), religion (9%), gender (8%) and disability (5%). Further work will be carried out to investigate this issue.

5.5　Corporate Communication within the Council

5.5.1　The results in this section were very positive and below are some examples:

- **ICON** – 82% of respondents said they have access to ICON and of them 86% can easily find information they need, 84% find the information helpful and 84% find the information relevant to them.

- **E-mail messages from Corporate Communications** – 78% of respondents said they have access to e-mail messages from Corporate Communications. Of them, 71% find messages helpful and 65% find the messages relevant to them.

5.5.2　The majority of employees would like to receive more HR and Organisational Development news (72%), for a staff newsletter to be introduced (63%) and more social news to be provided (60%).

5.6　Communication

5.6.1　The main positive result to emerge from this section is that 77% of respondents said there is good communication between them and their line manager.

5.6.2　A number of issues arose from the survey regarding internal communications:

- 62% of respondents said they learn from gossip about what is happening within the Council.
- 55% disagreed that there is good communication between teams.
- 47% disagreed that concerns get passed to senior management.
- 46% believe that management decisions are not effectively communicated.
- 44% said they are not kept informed about what is happening in the Council by their line manager.
- 25% disagreed that written communication is of a high standard.

5.6.3　This section of the questionnaire asked a series of questions about team meetings. 69% of respondents have team meetings weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly. This has increased since 2009, when 55% had regular team meetings. 31% of respondents in the 2012 survey either have team meetings less often or never at all. 37% were dissatisfied with the frequency of team meetings and 43% said they would like to have more team meetings than they currently do. This rose to 49% in Regeneration and Environment, 39% in both the CHCP and Education and Communities and 33% in Organisational Development and Resources.

5.7 Me and My Line Manager

5.7.1 In general the relationship between members of staff and their line manager appears to be good:

- 82% said their line manager understands what they do.
- 80% said their line manager helps and supports them to do the best job they can.
- 79% said their line manager is available when they need to see him/her.
- 76% agreed that their line manager provides them with the information they need to do their job properly. In 2009, only 47% agreed with this statement.

5.7.2 The statements which respondents disagreed with were:
- My line manager regularly monitors my performance and discusses it with me (48%). In 2009 the figure was 56%.
- My line manager deals with poor performance of employees (42%).

These issues should be addressed once the Performance Appraisal Scheme is embedded.

5.8 Senior Management (Directors and Heads of Service)

5.8.1 It is worth highlighting that when compared with the results obtained by other Scottish local authorities, Inverclyde Council has scored significantly higher with regard to senior management. The percentage of respondents in other Scottish local authorities who agreed with the statements below was approximately 8 to 10% lower. This is particularly significant given that questions about senior management generally score poorly in employee surveys.

5.8.2 The results from the survey highlighted several areas where there is room for improvement with regard to senior management.

- Communication - 38% of respondents said they are kept informed about what's happening in the Council by senior managers and 40% agreed that there is regular communication with senior managers.

- Contact with senior managers - 45% agreed that senior managers take time to meet staff.

- Listening to staff opinion - 47% agreed that senior managers are interested in listening to staff opinion

- Providing a clear vision - 50% agreed that senior managers provide a clear vision for their Directorate.

5.8.3 The CMT have agreed to develop proposals with regard to how they contact and communicate with employees. This should help to increase the percentage of employees who agree with the statements above when the next employee survey is carried out in 2014.

5.9 Line Managers

5.9.1 A set of 5 questions were included in the survey for line managers to complete. The results from this section are very good. For example:

- 98% of respondents who are line managers indicated that they were confident in their skills and abilities to manage their team.

- 91% said they understand their budget responsibilities.

- 86% said they can access professional advice and support.

- 83% said they get support from their line manager.

5.9.2 The only issue that arose from this section was that 64% of respondents who are line managers said their current workload is excessive. It was highest in Education and Communities (79%), followed by the CHCP (61%), Organisational Improvement and Resources (49%) and Regeneration and Environment (40%).

6.0 PROPOSALS

6.1 Improvement Plan

Appendix 2 contains details of improvement areas and action that will be taken to address the issues that emerged from the survey. It is recommended that the Committee approves the Improvement Plan and agrees that a further report is submitted to a future meeting of this Committee to provide an update of progress made in implementing the improvement plan.

6.2 Focus Groups

It is recommended that the Committee agrees that a series of focus groups are carried out. There would be a number of benefits of carrying out some additional research using focus groups.

- It would allow us to target employees that did not take part in the survey, such as non desk based employees, to ensure that we have captured the views of all staff.

- It is good practice to carry out focus groups after a survey as this allows issues that came out of the survey to be explored in more detail. For example, 72% of respondents said they would like to receive more HR information. A focus group would enable us to find out exactly what information employees would like to receive. Focus groups would also help us to find out why only a small percentage has used E-Learning and why 50% of respondents didn't think the Performance Appraisal Scheme helped them with their job.

The groups would consist of 8-10 employees who would be selected to take part and would be facilitated by Lowland Market Research. Focus groups should be facilitated by someone who is independent to ensure that participants feel they can give their honest views.

6.3 Feedback to Employees

It is important that employees are provided with feedback on both the results from the survey and details of what action we're taking to address their concerns. This will help to show employees that it was worthwhile participating in the survey and that we have listened to what they had to say. It will also make employees more likely to participate in the next employee survey we carry out.

It is recommended that we produce two newsletters for employees. The first newsletter could be produced now and would highlight some of the key results from the survey. There are a lot of positive results that could be included in a newsletter, along with a few areas where we need to improve. A second newsletter could be produced after the improvement plan has been fully developed and approved so that we can share with employees some details about what we're going to do to address some of the issues that came out of the survey.

Two methods will be used to distribute the questionnaire. The newsletters will be published on ICON for all employees who are desk based and completed the online survey. Hard copies of the newsletters will also be produced by Corporate Communications and these will be distributed to services that have employees who are desk based.

6.4 2014 Survey

Employee surveys should be carried out approximately every two years. It is recommended that the Committee approves that the next survey is carried out in March/April 2014.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 <u>Finance</u>
Any financial costs associated with carrying out focus groups will be met from the Workforce Development Fund.

7.2 <u>Personnel</u>
None

7.3 <u>Legal</u>
None

7.4 <u>Equality and Diversity</u>
None

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 All employees were given the opportunity to take part in the employee survey.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/A

Appendix 1: Comparison Between 2009 and 2012 Employee Surveys

QUESTION	2009	2012	Trend	
Response rate	25%	32%	+7%	↑
Overall job satisfaction	69%	79%	+10%	↑
% not aware of the SOA	51%	47%	-4%	↑
% that understand how their work contributes to Council's aims	50%	83%	+33%	↑
% that agree the Council takes equal opportunities seriously	58%	80%	+22%	↑
% that agree their job makes full use of their skills and abilities	56%	81%	+25%	↑
% that receive praise for good work	47%	51%	+4%	↑
% subject to verbal abuse from the public	33%	26%	-7%	↑
% that have regular team meetings	55%	69%	+14%	↑
% that receive information needed to do job properly	47%	76%	+29%	↑
% that agreed their line manager regularly monitors performance	38%	48%	+10%	↑
% that disagreed their workload is manageable	60%	24%	-36%	↑

Appendix 2 – Proposed Improvement Plan

Improvement Area		Potential Improvements How will we get there?	Lead Officer Who is involved?	Timescales to Develop Proposals When will we get there?
What do we need to improve?	**Where do we want to be?**			
Communications	Provide employees with opportunities to make suggestions to improve service delivery.	• An area on ICON already exists to enable employees to make suggestions and work will be undertaken to promote it.	Corporate Communications Manager	February 2012
	Develop how we could provide employees with more social and HR news, generally communicate better and improve communication between teams.	Carry out focus groups to find out what type of social news employees would like. Possible outcomes include: • News briefs • Staff newsletters for each Directorate subject to budget implications. • Team Talk (briefings for line managers to facilitate team meetings)	Lowland Market Research assisted by: Corporate Communications Manager HR Manager, Organisational Development	December 2012
People Management	Improve feedback provided to employees on their work and ensure praise is provided when appropriate. Provide employees with an opportunity to have a say in decisions that affect their work. Manage employees who are performing poorly.	• Review Management Training Programme. • Promote e-learning courses for line managers. • Improve number of performance appraisals being carried out	HR Manager, Organisational Development	March 2013 Ongoing Ongoing

Improvement Area		Potential Improvements How will we get there?	Lead Officer Who is involved?	Timescales to Develop proposals When will we get there?
What do we need to improve?	Where do we want to be?			
Strategic Planning	Raise awareness of strategic planning, particularly Directorate Plans and the SOA.	• Each Corporate Director to consider how to launch their Directorate Plan. • Hold training sessions on the new SPPMF. • Develop quizzes for ICON. • Discuss at head teacher meetings.	Corporate Policy and Partnership Manager	December 2012 Sept 2012 December 2012 Sept 2012
	Promote awareness of strategic planning in all Directorates.			
Senior Management	Increase the contact employees have with senior managers.	• Develop proposals of how senior managers contact and communicate with employees.	CMT	March 2013
	Improve communication by senior management.			
Human Resources	Look into implementing condensed hours / home working and expansion of part time working and raise awareness of the benefits of hot desking.	• A Steering Group is already in place and they will develop these options.	Head of OD, HR and Communications.	Ongoing
	Look at how we can reduce the 13% of employees that suffer personal harassment and the 5% that are bullied.	• Promote Council policies. • Communicate outcomes to managers.	HR Manager, OD	Ongoing
	Develop e-learning usage and increase the range of courses provided.	• Promote e-learning in all services via ICON etc. • Launch new courses.	HR Manager, OD	Ongoing
	Roll out performance appraisals to all employees and use this to ensure that training needs are discussed with employees.	• Monitor the number of performance appraisals that are carried out.	HR Manager, OD	Ongoing

Improvement Area What do we need to improve?	Where do we want to be?	Potential Improvements How will we get there?	Lead Officer Who is involved?	Timescales to Develop Proposals When will we get there?
Focus Groups	Increase participation in the employee survey amongst employees that are not desk based.	• Carry out a focus group for each of the three Directorates.	Lowland Market Research	October 2012
	Obtain more information about some of the results from the employee survey.			
Feedback on Employee Survey	Provide employees with feedback on the results from the employee survey and what action we're taking.	• Draft a newsletter on the results from the survey which will be published on ICON and distributed to services.	Corporate Policy and partnership Manager / Corporate Communications Manager	September 2012
		• Draft a second newsletter on what action will be taken to address the issues that came out of the survey.		December 2012