
REPORT TO: CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING: 10 SEPTEMBER 2001
REPORT FROM: PERSONNEL & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
MEMBERS'
CONTACT POINT: J WILLOUGHBY EXT. 5729
SUBJECT: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT –
BEST VALUE REVIEW

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1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline to members progress made to-date in undertaking the Human Resource Management Best Value Review.

2.0 Resources

2.1 An officer review team was established in May 2001 which comprises of: -

- Personnel & Development Manager (Review Team Leader)
- Employee Development Officer
- Personnel Officer
- Council Tax Team Leader
- Environmental Protection Manager (Health & Safety and Best Value Working Group representative)
- Personnel Admin Asst. (Note taker / Administrative support)
- An officer from the Learning Skills Council
- GMB trade union representative
- UNISON representative

2.2 Councillors were allocated to the review team in August 2001, they are:

- Councillor J Carroll
- Councillor M Lauro
- Councillor R Walton

2.3 The group meets on average every 3-4 weeks, and has had 5 meetings to-date. They also have the option to co-opt other team members and indeed outside advisors as required, and may use other external contacts as 'critical friends'.

3.0 Progress of the review

3.1 Members approved for this review to be conducted during Year 2. The Best Value Performance Plan identified this review as being justified in terms of improving performance, and providing high quality, value for money services. The BVPP identified that both Personnel and Development Service areas would be reviewed. It also indicated that effective policies and systems were required

to support Performance management and the management of change throughout the Authority.

- 3.2 **Terms of reference and the scope of the review** - were therefore already clearly identified. This will be a review of the whole service to ensure effective and efficient delivery of quality Personnel & Development Services to the authority that also provides value for money. This will include a review of the policies and systems that support performance management and the management of change throughout the Authority.
- 3.3 **Project Plan** - A project plan along with the terms of reference, and scope of the review and were reported to the Finance & Management Committee on 19 July 2001, and approved as outlined above. (See annexe 1 – Approved Project Plan). They were reported to that committee on the recommendation of the Best Value Working Group, prior to Scrutiny Committee meetings being arranged. The project plan will need some adjustment however; to now reflect the reporting required to this committee.
- 3.4 **Baseline Assessment** – Considerable work has been undertaken in collating a range of data by the Personnel & Development staff over recent months to assist in assessing the Quantitative Assessment of the baseline. This will help identify where we are now, in terms of performance. This PI data and supporting financial information is now collated and is currently being assessed by SARATOGA. They are a private sector organisation who work in partnership with SOCPO (Society of Chief Personnel Officers).
- 3.5 SOCPO have established a range of key PI's (wider than the BVPI's) at the request of the Audit Commission. They have then worked in partnership with SARATOGA to agree the formulae for calculating them. These PI's aim to measure the performance of Personnel and Development services. SARATOGA hold a database of information from other organisations, and will compare our data with like authorities, the Private Sector where possible, and the national averages. They will also provide their assessment of the key issues/challenges, which arise from this data. They will be presenting their feedback to the review team later this month.
- 3.6 **Qualitative Assessment** – The review team have identified who our stakeholders are. A questionnaire has been distributed to 40 staff, across all tiers and departments of the organisation; along with distribution to Divisional Managers, CMT, and Trade Union representatives. This is to consult on their views of the value and effectiveness of our current service provision. Agreement has also been reached to conduct a similar survey of members, using a telephone questionnaire. The results of this work are to be collated and summarised by mid-October.
- 3.7 Work has also been undertaken in collating information about the service, it's structure, corporate objectives, statutory requirements placed upon it, areas of service provision, corporate policies and the skills and expertise of the staff etc. Work is currently being undertaken to clarify the areas of service that overlap with other internal services. This will all form part of the baseline assessment.

- 3.8 Over the next 2 months some significant efforts will be required to compile the baseline assessment document, bringing together and analysing all these areas of information.
- 4.0 Joint Working** – A contact has been identified at East Staffs BC, who has offered the possibility of some joint working during and after the review. East Staffs BC have conducted a survey of a number of authorities, in relation to areas of service provided by Personnel & Development Divisions, and structures etc., they have agreed to share the results of this survey with us.
- 4.1 Knowledge is also being improved through inter-authority meetings, professional association meetings and network contacts; to assist in the progression of the review.
- 5.0 Local Factors** – The review team consider the impact of the financial crisis in 1999 is likely to have affected the organisation's PI's in a number of areas such as retention, redundancies, VER's, and absence levels. These are the some of the main PI's Personnel & Development are monitored against, and may affect the findings of the Best Value Inspectors in terms of current performance.
- 5.1 Additionally concern was raised as to the level of impact this would have had on staff morale and their perception of Personnel & Development generally. One other factor is the loss of administration support in departments that used to undertake many Personnel related administration functions. It is considered the future changes in terms of Refocusing and Reprioritisation could also impact in the forthcoming year to these issues in a similar way.
- 6.0 Staff Involvement/Consultation**
- 6.1 The review has been a standing item on the Personnel & Development Staff meetings since last year. Additionally, the division uses a shared confidential file that only Personnel staff can view, where all documents, reports etc. relating to the review are stored. The staff have also been extensively involved in collating the PI data required for the Baseline Assessment.

7.0 Summary

- 7.1 The review team is now fully established.
- 7.2 The Terms of Reference, Scope and Project Plan have been approved by Finance & Management Committee in July 2001.
- 7.3 Considerable work has been undertaken to gather data for Quantitative Assessment of performance, and this is now being analysed by SARATOGA. Their findings are to be reported back to the group later this month. Additionally information about the division and the range of services that it provides has also been collated. Work is currently being undertaken to clarify the areas of service that overlap with other internal services.
- 7.4 Our Stakeholders have been identified. Questionnaires have been issued to a range of staff, and telephone questionnaires are to be conducted with members, to assess their views of current performance of the service.
- 7.5 Over the next 2 months some significant efforts will be required to compile the baseline assessment document, bringing together and analysing all these areas of information.
- 7.6 A contact at East Staffs BC will be pursued to identify the level of Joint Working that is available and this will be reported back to the review team later this month.
- 7.7 There has been extensive consultation and involvement of staff to-date on the review.