

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

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Background Papers:-	Investors in People Report
Financial Implications:-	None
Equalities Implications:-	None
Legal Implications:-	None
Options:	None
Risks:	None

This report is to advise Cabinet Members of the recent success of Braintree District Council in retaining the Investors in People (IiP) standard.

BDC has held the IiP standard for over 15 years, and was one of the first ever organisations to be assessed. The standard requires organisations to be re-assessed every three years, and since BDC was last inspected, the whole IiP Standard has been revised and is generally held to be a tougher test. It is therefore a satisfying achievement that BDC has met the new criteria.

The criteria are:

1. A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood
2. Learning and development is planned to achieve the organisation's objectives
3. Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people
4. The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood
5. Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people
6. People's contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued
7. People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision making
8. People learn and develop effectively
9. Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation
10. Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed

The Executive Summary is attached to this report. The full report is available from iConnect, and the key strengths and areas for development as reported by the assessors are as follows:

Key strengths and areas of good practice

- *Staff loyalty and commitment to do a really good job. This is prevalent across all roles and part of the culture of the organisation. The organisation continues to have a good record of low staff turnover*
- *The way the company recognises and values people's contribution. There is a widely used honorarium scheme. There are, however, some areas where this may not be used so equitably.*
- *Core leadership and management development programme. This is still in its development stage but appears to be having some effect.*
- *The organisation is generally very good at taking ideas from all over the organisation and trying them out where resources permit.*
- *A broad recognition in the service departments of how they need to be working across the organisation in order to serve customers and other departments.*
- *Some really effective support team managers and a no blame culture where people are being encouraged to develop their own ideas.*

Indicators that are met but with areas for development

Indicator 1

The existence and people's understanding of the company's aims and objectives. There is a strong understanding at team level but the overall vision is not so clear.

Indicator 2

The way learning and development activities are planned to help achieve the company's aims and objectives. Here, there is a great deal of training but there is sometimes a mis-match as to how any new skill or learning can immediately be applied. A number of people indicated that they are not fully involved in identifying their own learning needs.

Indicator 3

Managers' effectiveness in supporting the development of people: this was shown in a significant number of respondents feeling that there was not always fair access to the support that they needed in order to progress.

Indicator 5

Managers' effectiveness in supporting the development of people: in particular in respect of regular and constructive feedback. There are pockets where feedback appears to be minimal.

Indicator 7

The way the company encourages people to take ownership and responsibility for decision-making. Although there are a variety of ways of putting forward ideas, a number feel that they are not actively involved in or encouraged to be part of any decision making process.

Indicator 8

The effectiveness of learning and development: a number of people that had undertaken a development activity had subsequently never used those skills or learning.

Indicator 9

People's understanding of the impact that learning and development has on performance: here a number of managers were unable to quantify what effect any development had had on their team or the organisation even though they were generally supportive of enabling their team members to access a range of development activities.

Indicator 10

Making continual improvements in the organisation's approach to developing people: here people found this difficult to quantify even by those that have been employed by the council

for some time.

Next Steps

While the report highlights a number of areas of good practice, there are some significant areas for development and an action plan to meet the development areas is being prepared. The results of this assessment place the Council at level 2 of the full Investors in People profile (Level 1 being the minimum required to be granted iP recognition) and an intention to meet Level 3 has been set by the Chief Executive within the Shaping Up for Excellence programme. The achievement of Level 3 will be managed through the People and Performance theme of the SUFE governance arrangements.

DECISION

That Cabinet notes the successful retention of the Investors in People standard.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20th March 2008

The key findings of the assessment indicated that Braintree District Council has met the evidence requirements of the current version of the National Investors in People Standard. The summary below represents the assessment findings within the context of identified strengths and suggestions for further development.

The council is clearly currently going through another period of change and this is reflected in a number of comments where staff feel unsure of what is happening. The interview data has been supported by questionnaire returns from over 50% of all staff and should provide useful information for the organisation as part of other projects.

Key strengths and areas of good practice	
	Staff loyalty and commitment to do a really good job. This is prevalent across all roles and part of the culture of the organisation. The organisation continues to have a good record of low staff turnover
	The way the company recognises and values people's contribution. There is a widely used honorarium scheme. There are, however, some areas where this may not be used so equitably.
	Core leadership and management development programme. This is still in its development stage but appears to be having some effect.
	The organisation is generally very good at taking ideas from all over the organisation and trying them out where resources permit.
	A broad recognition in the service departments of how they need to be working across the organisation in order to serve customers and other departments.
	Some really effective support team managers and a no blame culture where people are being encouraged to develop their own ideas.

Indicators that are met but with areas for development	
Indicator 1	The existence and people's understanding of the company's aims and objectives. There is a strong understanding at team level but the overall vision is not so clear.
Indicator 2	The way learning and development activities are planned to help achieve the company's aims and objectives. Here, there is a great deal of training but there is sometimes a mis-match as to how any new skill or learning can immediately be applied. A number of people indicated that they are not fully involved in identifying their own learning needs.
Indicator 3	Managers' effectiveness in supporting the development of people. This was shown in a significant number of respondents feeling that there was not always fair access to the support that they needed in order to progress.
Indicator 5	Managers' effectiveness in supporting the development of people. In particular in respect of regular and constructive feedback. There are pockets where feedback appears to be minimal.
Indicator 7	The way the company encourages people to take ownership and responsibility for decision making. Although there are a variety of ways of putting forward ideas, a number feel that they are not actively involved in or encouraged to be part of any decision making process.

Indicator 8	The effectiveness of learning and development. A number of people that had undertaken a development activity had subsequently never used those skills or learning.
Indicator 9	People's understanding of the impact that learning and development has on performance. Here a number of managers were unable to quantify what effect any development had had on their team or the organisation even though they were generally supportive of enabling their team members to access a range of development activities.
Indicator 10	Making continual improvements in the organisation's approach to developing people. Here people found this difficult to quantify even by those that have been employed by the council for some time.

Development areas and opportunities to improve

The following points were raised by interviewees and may be indicative of the various changes taking place and may support some of the results found in the questionnaire;

- There is an impression that senior managers are looking for a good personal assessment and don't deal with anything that's needed unless they have to.
- Morale is very low in some areas.
- There can be strong reactions to customer complaints rather than giving a considered response.
- Talent management is seen as being an issue.

Feedback against client objectives

Feedback against the profile indicators are provided after the level 1 evidence. Focus for the higher levels was at Levels 2 and 3.

The assessors found strong evidence to support the following:

- Effective flexible working and work life balance policies
- Commitment to policies to support corporate and social responsibility

Other comments or findings not related to the Standard

The following were threads that were found throughout most of the organisation. They are mentioned specifically within the main body of the report but are useful to report here given that they do represent good practice or are issues that are of current importance to the organisation.

- Some effective and well received coaching and mentoring evident at all levels
- Corporate Social issues beginning to be part of the culture
- Core values beginning to be used to lead in planning. There is evidence of a role modelled values based culture in some parts of the council
- A movement away from a course based provision to one where line managers identify what they need for their staff.
- Effective change management and establishment of a more flexible culture in some departments.
- The capture of knowledge and its management is still to be developed to meet the needs of the organisation.