

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REPORT



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On behalf of Investors in People South of England

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Introduction

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBB) is recognised as an Investor in People and has used the Standard as a methodology for achieving its aims. These are to build community capacity through the provision of leadership of place externally and of leadership of people internally.

LBBB has been assessed against the core Standard and additional evidence requirements from the Wider Framework.

In order to embed the Standard, and to reduce the disruption caused by assessment, it was decided to stage the process.

Consequently, the review took place in three phases based on the plan, do, and review cycle which is intrinsic to the Standard (see model right).

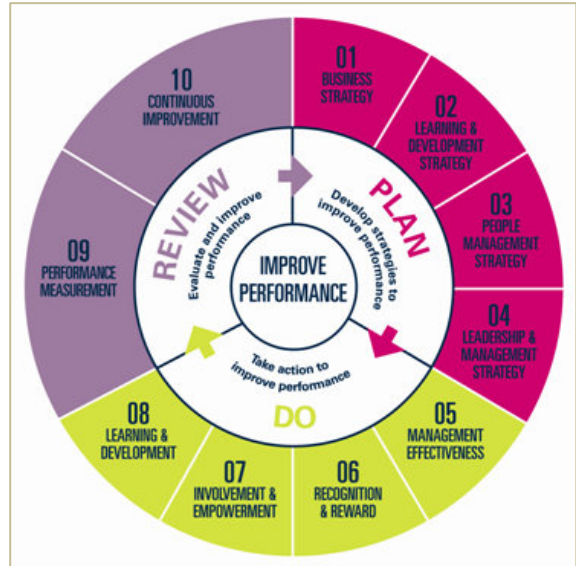


Figure 1: The Core IIP Framework

I visited the organisation on three separate occasions and interviewed more than 200 people who contribute to its success. These included Council Members, Employees and Volunteers.

I am grateful to all of them for taking the time to come and see me and for discussing their views and experiences frankly. I would also like to thank Gail Clark, Claire Coleman, Josie Okafor and all the IIP Champions who set up the schedule and made sure that everything ran smoothly for me.

My findings are set out in this report. It has been developed and updated after each of my visits.

I have used some quotations and I should warn that these may not be absolutely verbatim. This is either because of limitations in my ability to take notes or because I have made slight changes for the purposes of clarity or anonymity.

Executive Summary

LBBB has established clearer political aims and renewed its vision and values.

I found that a significant number of people were able to explain to me how they provide leadership to the community. The Council has a really good platform on which to build further.

A wide range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is in place.

I found that the level of consultation at LBBB is improving and that there is much more consistency about completing appraisals.

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The Council does have a learning and development strategy. A blended learning approach is used to address the needs identified. Senior managers recognise that the way they deliver learning should reflect the current times.

They have created a culture which encourages continuous learning.

Across the Council as a whole the investment in learning and development has not been reduced in line with the 30% cuts which have taken place. An annual review of the learning and development strategy is undertaken to assess the return on expectation and investment.

Learning and development is also planned for services, teams and individuals. People at LBBD are increasingly taking on responsibility for managing their individual learning.

One of the Council's objectives is to be a well-run organisation and it does have a people strategy. It also has a well-established equality and diversity strategy.

Despite the budget cuts, people did consistently agree that the Council provides ample opportunities for everyone to develop competence in their current role. Many felt that they are also given opportunities to develop their careers.

Most people do believe that their work-life balance is valued and is a part of the culture in the Council. One issue which did cause concern was about different practices in relation to lone working.

Managers told me that they have had training to make sure that recruitment and selection is fair, efficient and effective.

LBBD has a long established 13 point checklist which sets out what is expected of managers. The expectations generally are discussed at management conferences.

A new approach to leadership and management training and development is included in the learning strategy. In addition to the internal programmes a number of people mentioned taking part in the Leaders for London programme or exploring the option of taking external management qualifications.

The consistency of how managers at LBBD lead and develop their people has long been an issue for the Authority. They have now started to measure it through taking 'temperature check' surveys.

121 meetings, appraisal and team meetings all happen more regularly now than in the past. People get useful and constructive feedback from their manager and many have noticed that the Council has become less hierarchical.

LBBD has done work on looking at the employee value proposition and produced a Staff Charter.

Despite the Council's efforts in regard to consultation people still persistently said that they are asked for their views but they do not know how they get taken into account.

People are strongly committed to the success of the Council for a variety of reasons.

Learning and development continues to take place at LBBD. Managers support people in their personal development as well as in developing their technical competence.



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Good examples were provided of the impact which learning has had on performance levels.

Participation in the staff survey has increased but the overall engagement level has not risen.

The task now is for LBBD to get real traction from all the people strategies, policies and procedures which it has put into place.

The total number of evidence requirements met from the core Standard is 39. All of the core requirements from the IIP Standard are met. In addition, LBBD met 28 of the 34 wider framework requirements which I also assessed. I have therefore accredited the Council at the Bronze level.

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What is currently done very well ...

- ✓ There is clarity about the aspirations of the Council and the communication of them.
- ✓ Many people can already see how they provide leadership regardless of their place in the Council’s hierarchy.
- ✓ A good variety of learning opportunities is provided for people at all levels to access.
- ✓ People have opportunities to question the Chief Executive face to face.
- ✓ Some services are particularly good at arranging visits to see how their counterparts operate and gather ideas.
- ✓ Managers are increasingly encouraging people to access the employee welfare line.
- ✓ Support is provided to people who are being redeployed.
- ✓ Work has taken place on the employee value proposition and this resulted in the development of a Staff Charter which makes the psychological contract very clear.
- ✓ Further investment in the development of leadership capability is planned to support the Council’s aspirations.
- ✓ The Employee Assistance Programme has been extended to include counselling and the families of employees.
- ✓ The Council was the first local authority to guarantee all its lowest paid employees will be paid a minimum wage of £9 an hour. It still has one of the highest minimum wages of any council in the country and this exceeds the London Living Wage.
- ✓ There is good support for the personal development of individuals and the Council still has active Union Learner Reps.



Bright Ideas where there could be some improvement ...

- ⇒ Senior managers could clarify to people the separate purposes of the vision and values, the reasons for having them and embed them further.
- ⇒ Explicitly develop leadership skills, attitudes and behaviours at all levels in the organisation.
- ⇒ Remember that achieving goals is a major motivator of people and provide them with regular feedback about their individual and team progress in an accessible way.
- ⇒ CMT could take more ownership of using learning to drive risk management, compliance and innovation across the whole organisation more explicitly.
- ⇒ It could also consider formally adopting the 70:20:10 framework.
- ⇒ A more consistent approach to lone working across the Council could be developed and implemented.
- ⇒ More needs to be done to communicate with ‘hard to reach’ employees (who are not online) upwards as well as downwards.
- ⇒ There is still scope for streamlining the expectations of leaders and managers and aligning them with processes and development programmes to improve clarity, consistency and reinforcement.
- ⇒ Carrying out surveys in all divisions aligned to the 13 point checklist would help to indicate where additional learning is required and to evaluate the impact.
- ⇒ Encouraging managers to take personal responsibility for putting the Staff Charter into practice would help to embed it.
- ⇒ Some of the positive changes which are happening could be identified and communicated to lift morale.
- ⇒ Making some of the Star Awards explicitly about leadership would help to illustrate how people at all levels in the organisation can be leaders.



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Main Findings

Business Strategy

LBBD has established clearer political aims and it has renewed the vision for the Council and the Borough. The five key priorities are on the website, every committee agenda and displayed on walls. They are the starting point for every single service strategy. I think these are now beginning to become established and work is being done to embed the vision.

“He is very clear about what he is trying to do across the Borough - especially around regeneration. He is like a breath of fresh air and it is very exciting. He has had a very positive effect on some of the people I deal with and this makes our lives easier. I have had a lot of positive feedback.”

Senior managers and Council Leaders are consciously trying to be more visible and do walkabouts visiting every floor in every building. These are good opportunities to talk to people about the vision and the values and to bring them to life.

Many people were involved and consulted about developing the values and I think it is important to continue reminding people that this was the case so that they are truly shared. These are

positive and inspiring messages which can be used to counteract the narrative about ‘the cuts’ which, while critically important, have a demotivating effect rather than a motivational one. People do need to know that the pain will be worthwhile in the long run.

Senior managers recognise that the Council needs to provide leadership of place because no other body will do this across the whole agenda or the whole Borough.

Although this concept is relatively new I found that a significant number of people were able to explain to me how they provide leadership to the community regardless of their position in the Council hierarchy.

Quite a few people saw themselves as ambassadors and representatives of the Council in the community. Others felt that they provide leadership by working with vulnerable people and giving them advice or signposting options.

“I like to think I am providing leadership to the families I work with because they look to you for guidance and support once they have engaged with you. It is empowering them to feel that they can lead as well.”

One person felt that she provides leadership because she brings quite a lot of specialist knowledge to her team. She said she can lead the way by using her knowledge about the facilities for the team’s client group in the Borough. She recognised that, if members of staff have a bit more

“I feel a sense of leadership when I visit tenants and have to advise them on the services available to them. In that sense you are empowered to provide leadership in terms of informing people and helping them. When I go out there I own it all because I am representing the Council.”

knowledge about something than others, they have the opportunity to be a leader.

An officer working in Regeneration felt that they provide leadership through consultation to help people to decide what would be best for their community.

A person working in the school kitchens recognised that she leads children to eat healthy meals. I think that there is scope for developing leadership skills among all staff and including this

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in the Workforce Development Strategy so that a higher proportion of people can provide these sort of examples and take pride in what they do.

However, I do think that the Council already has a really good platform on which to build further.

Senior managers are now able to confirm that the Council has a clear set of core values that supports its purpose and vision. The DRIVE mnemonic device reinforces need for change and transformation to be driven through the Council and the Borough as they move from a paternalistic culture to a more empowered environment where people are supported to change their own lives instead of having things done to them or for them.

Because the vision and values are so new, I found that people at all levels do not yet have enough knowledge of them to be able to explain consistently how they will affect the way in which they manage and work. I think it would be thought provoking if senior leaders and managers make sure that the core values are at the heart of the organisation’s strategy and govern the way it operates by asking people how they apply the values when they meet them if this is done in a way which is not threatening.

“At our level, the Council expects us to be part of forming the values, vision and plan. We are expected to contribute but also to embed them in our people through the way we carry ourselves and way we manage them.”

The examples which senior leaders and managers collect in this way can

“He made an impromptu visit to my service to talk about the values. He talked about how much he values contribution and said that anyone is free to contact him directly. I think it’s a massive change and really recognised by my staff. 1 borough and 1 community – we can’t say that often enough. Anything we can do to bring the barriers down is really welcomed.”

then be passed to others so that they, in turn, can see how they are working in accordance with the values. In this way people will not just ‘learn’ the values but use them in decision making.

It is also helpful if senior people make frequent reference to how the values have explicitly affected situations they face themselves. For example saying ‘We decided this in line with our value of responding in a prompt, positive way’ or ‘We thought this was the thing to do to engage with others.’

The clarity of priorities has helped to reinforce the ‘golden thread’ and the cascade of objectives throughout the organisation. A wide range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is in place and these are generally familiar to people where they are relevant.

The KPIs were updated by Cabinet this year to reflect the new priorities more accurately.

As achieving goals and targets is one of the best motivators of people, I think there is still scope for them to be used more effectively. This can be done by giving people regular and accessible feedback about where they are in relation to targets. This is often best done in visual ways through the use of graphs and trends for example. Success needs to be recognised and celebrated and risks addressed through involving the people on the front line in finding solutions.



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According to Locke and Latham¹, the gurus of goal setting theory, there are five principles that can improve the chances of success. These are:

1. Clarity.
2. Challenge.
3. Commitment.
4. Feedback.
5. Task complexity.

Some, but not all, of the managers at LBBDD are applying the principles very effectively but others do not use KPIs as a motivational tool. I would like to see this done more consistently.

Managers told me that they have referenced the previous values in their plans and in induction, 121 and team meetings. They also underpinned the values by using the competency framework in appraisal meetings. The competency framework may need to be revised to reflect the new values more explicitly.

“I make sure that everyone in my team treats people fairly and respectfully and if I see something different I will tackle it. The values make working life much easier.”

People in turn could tell me what the previous values meant for the way that

“I like to think we always put customers first. As a public servant you can’t get more responsibility than that. We value people’s backgrounds. Working together – we are a good team and have good links with agencies. Achieving excellence – I strive to do my very, very best in my job.”

they were expected to work. They did joint working to achieve better outcomes. They valued customers and colleagues and treated them with empathy and respect. They said they were respectful when they went into people’s homes. They took responsibility for managing risks.

I therefore think that, as the new values become further communicated and embedded, they will be applied to the way people are managed and work and that these evidence requirements within the IIP framework will again be met.

I found that the level of consultation at LBBDD is improving and that there is much more consistency about completing appraisals which, of course, provide people with an opportunity to have a say. I am not sure that they always receive feedback having done so.

The relationship with the recognised trades unions is quite strong and regular meetings are held with them. Union representatives believe they played a major part in getting the Housing Repairs and Maintenance service brought back into the Council. Union Learner Representatives are also active in promoting and providing opportunities to develop key skills such as English, Maths and IT to staff and to the community.

While the union representatives I spoke to felt that the Council itself is a good employer, some felt that there are still poor managers within it. They thought that an induction programme for managers (which is part of the

¹ Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation. *American Psychologist*, 57(9), 705-717.



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People Strategy) would be a good idea to help to ensure consistency. They would also like to see HR challenge managers more on disciplinary cases so that these do not proceed where there is little substance to them.

A demonstration about cuts in the time some Council drivers are paid to prepare their vehicles was held while I was onsite and senior leaders and manager went out to talk to those involved in it.

Learning & Development Strategy

The Council does have a learning and development strategy. It contains processes for identifying learning needs at service and individual levels. I think that the process for analysing learning and development needs at the corporate level is still relatively weak and suggest that these are reviewed as part of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) agenda so that the Learning and Development Strategy builds the Council’s capacity to achieve its vision.

Proposals are in place to centralise all the Learning and Development functions which I think will be helpful in contributing to the One Council and One Borough vision.

I do still think that the identification of development needs at all levels could be more robust and based on risk management, innovation, performance, leadership and compliance more clearly although this has improved over the years. The Council has plenty of feedback and management information derived from surveys, audits and inspections and reports on performance. All of these can indicate requirements for learning and development and be used to establish the desired outcomes from it.

A blended learning approach is used to address the needs which are identified and the plans reference: observations; learning from experience; attendance at training events; e-learning; conferences; coaching and

“The budget shrinking so fast means that some services have to work in partnership, be more commercial and work smarter to survive. We have been good at encouraging people to take part in national pilots. We go to conferences and bring information back.”

mentoring; secondments; and formal qualifications.

I was particularly impressed by the flexible and innovative approaches which have been identified and included in the learning and Development Strategy. These include the development of ‘Care City’ to address the shortages of care skills in both the Council and the Borough which is affecting the ability to deliver the care packages which have been agreed.

Yammer is an internal social media system used to circulate and share information and knowledge. The Learning Centre provides access to key skills making good use of government funding available for this purpose and it gives people a chance to obtain qualifications. Some of the Council’s drivers have benefitted from getting their Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) through it for example.

Senior managers could explain how they have created a culture that encourages continuous learning and promote the development of skills and knowledge at every level. They pointed out that LBBB has subscribed to Learning Pool and taken corporate membership of the College of Social Work. Both of these provide learning resources for people to access.

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The Council takes part in an inter-Borough mentoring scheme and has encouraged its staff to become school governors.

Senior managers have also put material on i-Learn and produced a skills profile for people who are being redeployed. They are encouraging people to see that learning is not restricted to traditional training courses. There has been a campaign to make sure that everyone has an appraisal where they are given feedback to learn from and encouraged to produce a personal development plan.

In addition, it might be useful to formally adopt and promote the 70:20:10 framework (see model right) so that managers and people can see how learning is an everyday activity.

This framework is a simple concept that has developed from work carried out by various researchers. It suggests that a one-dimensional focus on structured training and development misses the opportunity to exploit learning and development where most of it happens, which is within the workflow. More information is available at www.702010forum.com

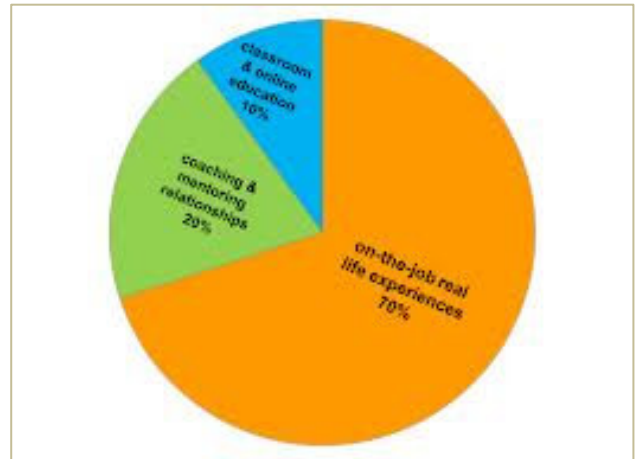


Figure 2: The 70:20:10 Framework

Senior managers recognise that the way they deliver learning and development should reflect the current times and that they can achieve as much value with a reduced budget.

Consequently, the Council has reviewed how learning and development is delivered and whether there is scope for still greater efficiency in how this is done. The investment in the corporate training programme has been reducing as LBBD is increasingly using e-learning.

However, across the Council as a whole the investment in learning and development has not been reduced in line with the 30% cuts which have taken place. The investment in social care training has been sustained. Significant sums are currently held at service level to support mandatory, service and individual learning and development, including support for qualifications.

As mentioned above, consideration is being given to centralising more of these resources.

The current priorities set out in the corporate learning and development plan are to:

- 1) Provide entry level opportunities through apprenticeships, graduate recruitment and internships;
- 2) Enable people to undertake their current roles effectively (including basic skills, safeguarding, customer service, health and safety);
- 3) And develop key professionals, leadership and management skills and introduce succession planning.

In addition, preparations are being made for the implementation of the Care Act.

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Although leadership of people is a priority in the learning and development plan what I cannot see clearly is any emphasis on using learning to drive leadership of place or customer service. There is not an emphasis on developing leadership skills throughout the organisation.

The corporate learning and development plan is due to be updated and I think that there is scope for aligning the learning and development strategy more closely with the people strategy and creating the sort of place that the Council wants to become and wants the Borough to become.

An annual review of the learning and development strategy is undertaken to assess the return on expectation and investment. The review assists in identifying any changes which need to be made to the overall approach and to inform the programme for the following year.

This year the proposed evaluation will comprise:

- ⇒ an annual survey of managers to assess overall impact
- ⇒ the inclusion of relevant questions in the Temperature Check Survey
- ⇒ an evaluation of performance data for the Council e.g. customer satisfaction data, as a means to assess impact.

The evaluation will also monitor a number of KPIs such as delivering 4 days of learning and development activity per person, reducing the number of complaints received, reducing reportable accidents and calls to the IT Help Desk.

The overall performance and delivery of Council staff will also incorporate more qualitative analysis by the Corporate Management Team (CMT), taking on board elected member views of services, particular problems during the year and the reasons for them.

Managers explained that they look for trends and the direction of travel to establish service learning and development needs. Services for children and young people are quite well resourced in this regard.

The Mental Health First Aid training programme has been running and has already trained 700 delegates, across the Council and other partners in the Borough. Outcomes will be recorded and reported to the relevant Boards.

Lots of legislative reform is being introduced in the area of adoption so the team has training planned on the new assessment process and different ideas about how to recruit adopters. Much of the content will be about what social workers are being asked to do – such as avoiding disruptions to placements. Managers will evaluate the impact by monitoring the work the team produces and, in supervision, will test whether their understanding of the new assessment framework is correct. Managers will also see this in the reports produced and eventually will see more children placed with adopters.

“Across the whole team there will be a pretty good service when they are all qualified. I have seen the difference in customer satisfaction because of the way they are dealt with. We measure this via complaints and member enquiries – that is an indication of how dissatisfied the customer might be. Plus we do surveys of different types. The trick is to get from the qualification to living it in practice via teambuilding and 121s.”

Volunteers are going to do a level 2 NVQ so that they can assist with youth work.



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In another directorate, Civil Engineers are going to do the qualifications they need for a street works management course so that they will be able to sign off street works.

Housing services are being made more professional. Officers do not have to have Chartered Institute of Housing qualification but managers decided that they should all do it. Managers said they can see the reduction of their time spent in answering questions. Legal costs have gone down because officers have the confidence to deal with things without referring them.

Individuals I spoke to also consistently told me that they have got training and development planned. Because they have been involved in identifying the needs, I found that they understand the purpose and intended outcomes.

Some people said that they have training planned on case law because that affects their day to day decisions

“I have been empowered to look at online training and book it myself. I have done building resilience because in my role it is highly pressured. My manager says just book it on the calendar and I go to one of the quieter offices. I am doing the violence and aggression one in January so I can deal with people who are violent with confidence.”

and work. Others are going to learn more about the IT systems they use to record information. Some have meetings booked with managers so that they can learn about new cases they are taking on. One person said there are plans for her to qualify as a practice assessor so that she can supervise students. Another is going to do first aid training because he works in a high risk environment.

I found that people at LBBB are increasingly taking on responsibility for managing their individual learning and leading on it. The majority told me that they have a responsibility as well as their manager’s.

A few individuals said that they are deterred by their managers who say that there is no money for training. This does not seem to be the case and I suspect that, in some cases at least time, might be the real issue.

People Management Strategy

One of the Council’s objectives is to be a well- run organisation and it does have a people strategy to deliver this aspiration. The strategy recognises that high levels of engagement are needed to sustain productivity.

The Chief Executive runs regular open forums. People are invited to attend and to put forward their concerns and suggestions. Relatively few of the people I interviewed had attended but those who did were impressed by the accessibility of the Chief Executive and felt that they were getting good information and truthful answers.

People are also encouraged to put forward ideas to improve their services and a number had been on visits to see how their counterparts operate in other Boroughs. The Nurseries, Local Studies and Heritage departments seem to be especially good at doing these trips. I was pleased to note that volunteers are included in the visits.

“He did not get flustered. He was straight talking and not sugar coating anything. There were a lot of angry people there and he put himself in the lion’s den. People questioned the procedures and he asked his assistant to take a note and said he would investigate. A couple of days later he sent an e-mail round so he did follow

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Other services have brainstorming or awayday sessions. Some encourage people to join professional bodies or specialist networks.

“We have come away from other nurseries with fantastic ideas. For example we have introduced home learning bags. They are really popular. We don’t have enough! Also a library where they could take books home. There is lots of partnership with the parents.”

People consistently told me they can discuss their ideas and views at 121, appraisal and team meetings. However, I did find that levels of staff engagement very significantly between departments. In some cases people felt that managers are just too busy to consider how ideas might be implemented.

“I wrote out bullet points of things I think are going wrong and where we are going round in circles because we keep making the same mistakes over and over. I had a meeting with a senior manager. I think he delegates to managers below him who are already snowed under and, as a result, it dies. At least I had the satisfaction of saying what I thought would be an improvement.”

The people strategy looks at skills and ways of working and the ‘deal’ for employees. The Council has developed a Staff Charter as part of its work on the employee value proposition. This document sets out explicitly what people can expect from working for the Council and what the Council expects of them. Unfortunately, I did find that awareness of the Staff Charter is still quite low.

As well as its people strategy, the Council also has a well-established equality and diversity strategy. It definitely tries to provide leadership to the Borough in this regard.

One of the strategies used by senior managers to promote equality and manage diversity in the work place is the single equalities scheme. This sets out how LBBDD will enhance its equality practices.

“Someone overheard a negative comment made about me because I am a lesbian. It was challenged and I was asked if I wanted to take it further. I was supported.”

The Council has established a learning centre at the Frizlands Depot and provided online resources to try and ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to learn and develop. Courses and meetings are held at different times to try and ensure that those who do not work conventional hours can attend. A strategy for working with volunteers is in the process of being developed.

Despite the budget cuts, people did consistently agree that the Council provides ample opportunities for everyone to develop competence in their current role. Many felt that they are also given opportunities to develop their careers. However, several people expressed dissatisfaction in this regard. Generally they agreed that the opportunities are there but said that they may need to spend some time outside their contracted hours to take advantage of them.

“When we have service meetings and training we do not exclude locums because they represent the Council and the service just the same as permanent staff and we need to ensure that their practice is at the same standard.”

Although they are feeling the pressure of increased workloads, most people I spoke to do believe that their work-life balance and well-being are valued and are part of the culture at the Council. Flexible working is now much more the norm where it is consistent with service needs. People talked about sympathetic managers changing their hours to accommodate their travelling time, caring responsibilities or ill health.

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Managers ensure that work-life balance solutions are put into practice in a way which is appropriate. I was given examples of people working on a 'job and knock' basis, working from home or in compressed hours. The

"I used to do compressed hours. Flexible working is there. Quite often I get in a bit early and work a bit late and then if I need a couple of hours at lunchtime I can have them. My manager let me work at home for a couple of hours so I could avoid the rush hour when road works were going on."

Council promoted 'Go Home on Time Day' and offers Time Off in Lieu or flexi-time to its staff below a certain level.

In some cases, people felt that the distribution of work was not fair and this was particularly true in Refuse Collection where some people interviewed thought that rounds have become uneven over time and should be fundamentally reviewed.

I found that there was a lot more awareness of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) following feedback provided during my first visit. Several people said that their manager had strongly encouraged them to use the service if they were aware of difficulties in an individual's personal life. They are also encouraged to take part in healthy initiatives.

One issue which did cause me some concern was about different practices in relation to lone working. This is now much more common than was the case in the past as people now often go into homes to talk to residents rather than bringing them into council premises.

I think that all the services where this happens are conscious of the risks. Some have provided staff with 'TWIG phones'. If people are in trouble they can press a button on them. This goes through to the CCTV control room and they can use a sensitive word.

"Everyone gets times when they need supporting. I gave one staff member a 9 day fortnight to give him time to see to his family. It is about having personal chats in 121s and finding out how they are. Staff wanted time for case work so we provided quiet desks to do it. We have a half day closure on Wednesday morning for team meetings and casework. Also, on the last Friday of the month we open at 11. It is well established now. Since we changed things sickness went down so that meant we have more time."

However, other services rely on people phoning in after meetings or do joint visits where people are known to have a history of violence or aggression.

"When I raised to our manager that we did not have the TWIG phones he was concerned and arranged it straight away."

Obviously this is a risk if the history is not known (e.g. if a family has just moved in to the Borough) or if there is no history but individuals become psychotic.

Senior managers explained that they have various strategies for making sure that recruitment and selection meets the needs of the organisation and is fair, efficient and effective. There are national shortages of some skills (e.g. social work and town planning). The Council has worked in partnership with Barking and Dagenham College to expand places available for level 2 care assistants. It is promoting its regeneration work to make the Borough attractive to those who work in Capital Delivery.

Technology has been incorporated into the recruitment process and applications are made online. Staff who are eligible for redeployment are encouraged to produce skills profiles to help them to transfer to another area of work. Support is also offered to young people through apprenticeship and the graduate training scheme to attract them into careers in the Council.

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Managers told me that they have had training to make sure that recruitment and selection is fair, efficient and effective. The job description and person specification are drafted and sent for evaluation. All posts are advertised to redeployed people first and then internally and then externally.

A panel used for shortlisting and for interview. There are at least 3 people on the interview panel. Questions are drafted by chair who will share them with the others. Operational managers may be involved in developing the type of questions to be asked.

A template is used to record the questions in relation to different elements of the specification. Afterwards managers sometimes share feedback with the candidates. Feedback is also provided during the probationary period for new recruits.

If the post needs to be filled urgently managers can, exceptionally, get exemption from Data Barring Service requirement and obtain a waiver while the application is being processed. The process for this includes a risk assessment. It has to be seen and signed off by the relevant Director.

There is then a full induction process and training for new recruits to go on. This may include health and safety or child protection. I did find that a significant number of people who have joined in the last year had not attended the corporate induction and this is something which could, perhaps, be checked.

Support is also provided to people who are being redeployed to help them to present themselves to their best effect bearing in mind that it may be a number of years since they last prepared a CV or had a job interview.

Leadership & Management Strategy

Given the importance of leadership to the Council and the Borough, the definition of what it means in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours is quite clearly critical.

“I think there has been a big emphasis over a long period about trying to create leaders of people rather than service managers. There are internal and external leadership courses. The managers I manage are motivated people who take a pride in their service areas and want their teams to do well. I lead by example. I am rarely off sick. I give praise and I set expectations. We need to be creative about mentoring and shadowing. I had some coaching through Leaders for London. There was 360° feedback. I think that is a really useful tool and I think it should be a part of our appraisal process.”

LBBB has a long established 13 point checklist which sets out what is expected of managers. This is published throughout the Council. In addition, the expectations of leaders and managers are set out in the competency framework and job descriptions.

Again, the idea of leadership is not yet fully integrated into the competency framework although work is being done in this regard. I think it would be useful to relate this to the new values.

Managers are regularly reviewed against the competencies in appraisal meetings and expected to provide evidence in relation to them. However, several managers said that to



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do this properly feels like a chore. They felt that the capabilities do not fit very well with the appraisal template and that they did not get regularly reviewed against them.

The expectations set out in the Staff Charter generally are discussed at management conferences. Again, there is scope for managers to feel that they have a personal responsibility for ensuring that the expectations are delivered and met.

I think there is still scope for streamlining the expectations, values and competencies to improve clarity and consistency and for integrating them into processes and development programmes. Regular repetition will help to reinforce them.

“The competencies use lots of words and phrases which are generic and meaningless but they also expect specific things of you that do not relate back to the job I am doing. We do look for examples based in my day to day work. Then we look for training where I am lacking. There are lots of things that repeat and repeat and there is nothing very inspiring.”

A new approach to leadership and management training and development is included in the learning strategy and plans referred to above. As well as task based training modules (such as managing recruitment and appraisals) there are new elements being introduced which are more forward focused.

These include maximising productivity, having courageous conversations, encouraging innovation, partnership and collaboration.

In addition to the internal programmes a number of people mentioned taking part in the Leaders for London programme or exploring the option of taking external management qualifications. All of this should help to develop LBBDD’s capacity to deliver leadership of place and leadership of people.

Management Effectiveness

The consistency of how managers at LBBDD lead and develop their people has long been an issue for the Authority. They have now started to measure it through taking ‘temperature check’ surveys. The one in

“I think it is about understanding front line workers and the challenges they face. I like leading a team rather than being authoritarian. I think you need to show you are able to do what they are doing and willing to do what they are doing. Decisions I make will be taken in consultation with the team to help me see what needs to be done. And I let them see that because transparency is very important. Selling the vision to them and motivating them. Taking responsibility and being willing to challenge on their behalf. For example, our workload is currently quite high and I have said these concerns will be shared with senior management so the team knows I am feeding information up and down.”

Children’s Services was specifically aligned to the 13 point checklist. There are plans for other Directorates to do the same which is something I would encourage as it reinforces the capabilities required.

I found that practices also varied with regard to reviewing managers individually against the people elements of the competency framework and providing them with feedback. Some senior managers do this diligently while others will only have a general conversation about the team.

One, quite senior manager I interviewed informed me that the 121 system was designed for social workers and not appropriate for use with his team. As he did not see the point he had unilaterally decided not to

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use the system. This manager was quite surprised when I said that it was a Council requirement.

I think that the diversity of management styles and practices generally stems largely from the diversity of services and the people employed by the Council to deliver them. Some of them are highly articulate and professionally qualified while others do more physical work and may have literacy challenges.

However, there are common factors which drive all employees. Everyone wants to be treated fairly, to have their views listened to and respected. We all want to have explanations and to have the contribution we make to be recognised. Failure to lead people in line with these basic needs can cause them to become demotivated or uncooperative.

Managers at LBBD have certainly become more consistent about using the processes such as 121 meetings, appraisal and team meetings. All of these happen more regularly now than in the past. Many managers now sit with their teams and this has opened up more informal communications. Many of those I spoke to emphasised that people do not need to wait for a formal meeting before raising issues. The majority of managers who are still in offices have an open door policy.

"I have managed for quite a long time. My style has changed over the years. The way I manage now is more informal. I sit with m team so people can talk to me at any time. They don't have to save it up for their 121. I hope I try to develop people and spot talent and explore skills. I try and manage so people can play to their key strengths but at the same time work on under developed areas. They still have to do that end of the job. I do lead from the front. I do not send people out to do something I would not do myself. I take the lead when we have difficult situations. Hopefully my team learns from that."

It is now much more common, though still not universal, for managers to make changes in consultation with the team and to recognise that the time spent doing this leads to much higher levels of acceptance of the changes being made.

"Sometimes it is quite hard when you put the leader's hat on. I am a great believer in having time for people because, long term, there are benefits. In the current climate it is quite hard to inspire and motivate people. Recently there has been too much dialogue about cuts. That is not inspiring if it happens every meeting. In ASC we are having interesting discussions about adult and community care. That is inspiring – to have conversations about new ways of doing things."

People within teams tend to have the most respect for managers who have risen up 'from the tools.' The perception is that they have the best understanding of the difficulties and problems encountered by front line staff. However, I noted that no one claimed that they have the best solutions.

Many managers spoke to me about the importance of leadership vision. They said that talking constantly about the financial cuts is demoralising.

They said that providing a clear vision of the future of their service and talking about innovations and improvements for the users of it is much more inspiring to people. Many consciously try to do this.

I also found that many managers have become braver about giving people feedback and having difficult conversations. I heard some very positive comments about the 'Courageous Conversations' workshop.



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Managers are now more robust about tackling sickness absence which has an increasing impact as staffing numbers are diminished.

Some managers are aware of the Staff Charter and have already integrated this into the leadership of their teams. However, the Charter is relatively new and it is still the exception rather than the norm for managers to take personal responsibility for putting it into practice. This is something that still requires further reinforcement.

Most of the people I spoke to said that their managers are providing effective leadership and support. A small minority stated that their manager simply did not know how to talk to people. A few said that their appraisal and 121 meetings were quite cursory and ineffective. For example, some were confined merely to a discussion of cases. Some have raised these issues but a number have not because they have to continue working with the manager concerned.

“In a perverse way I enjoy the pressure because there is more variety. I really enjoy taking on new roles. Because of the cutbacks and restructuring I have had to take on new things. So that is something positive to take from all the changes.”

However, on a more positive note, people did consistently say that they appreciated being told the truth about the implications of the budget rather than having a rosy picture painted.

“Our service is trialling lots of ideas to keep it going. We have lost a lot of libraries – we understand why. I don’t think it would be right to shut an old people’s home to keep a library open. But the service we give is very good. Our managers remind us that we may not be top of the list but we do have a part to play and the Borough does need libraries as well as everything else.”

Some of the people I spoke to even said that the changes have not been all bad. For example, some have got more interesting or varied jobs because of them. Some feel that service users are more empowered and able to do things for themselves. These ‘good news’ stories were in a minority but, clearly, different people are at different places on the change curve. I think it would be very motivating if some of the positive consequences of change could be identified and communicated.

The majority of people said that they get useful and constructive feedback from their manager and many had noticed that the Council has become less hierarchical in its culture as well as in structure. If their immediate manager is not available they can now take urgent issues further up the line. Senior managers are more approachable and people said that they would not be questioned if they referred a difficult case or sought advice about a problem.

As well as being given feedback more regularly, most people are now asked to provide it. This is done through the surveys which now happen regularly, through exercises which are done at the staff briefing and through focus groups and working parties which are established. The task and finish group set up to review the values was one example of this feedback process.

“A lot of the people higher up don’t know that we exist or what we actually do. People higher up should come and spend a week or a couple of days with us and then they would not even think about cutting the service. I would like them to see how we cope and how we handle the situation.”

Although senior leaders and managers are working hard to be more visible, a number of people I spoke to still feel that they are invisible to top managers. In some cases they do not know who they have met.

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Part of the difficulty is that the sheer number of services makes it impractical for top managers to visit all of them regularly for substantial periods of time. I think it would be helpful for senior people to continue visiting services, make sure that they always introduced and that they stress how important it is for people to come to them and to the staff briefings as well.

Recognition & Reward

Managers in the Council are limited in how they can use public money to reward and celebrate individual and team achievements. Organisationally, LBBDD has done work on looking at the employee value proposition and the state of the deal that people think they receive. A survey specifically on this issue was carried out. Traditional elements of the psychological contract (e.g. job security) have been undermined.

The Staff Charter emerged from the work on the employee value proposition. It includes a commitment from the Council to do everything it can to make pay stretch further. For instance, it changed from one discount provider to the 'Wider Wallet' because this offered a better deal to staff.

The provider of the EAP was also changed. The new one offers counselling sessions and extends the service to the partners and family members of employees.

The Borough has one of the highest minimum wages of any council in the country. It is above the London Living Wage. Senior managers are currently reviewing health benefits, which is beneficial in terms of cost and wellbeing on the work-life balance agenda.

"We support work-life balance and different lifestyles because of the benefit it gives us in productivity and in attracting a diverse workforce."

Other strategies which top managers have put in place to support people in balancing their lives while still maintaining service delivery include a range of flexible working patterns. Senior managers aim to develop an agile workforce and are planning around developing flexible skills and being able to move people between different priorities.

"In the public sector we can not celebrate with bonuses so it is important that the line manager is aware. If people on other teams do good things to support us I make time to ring their line manager and say they need to pass my thanks on. I try and make sure that people get some nice things to do. For example, when we have events or an opening. There is nothing like that to make people see this is what we do it for."

Some staff work on part time or annualised hours. Some in Environmental Services complete the job and then leave. This encourages crews to work without a break and it may be worth asking whether any crews want to form and agree that they will take a break rather than assuming that they all want to work through.

Flexible leave is available to support people at different times in their lives. The policies are applied by managers depending on the circumstances they face. However, if a worker feels that there is greater opportunity for flexibility, there is an appeal process and LBBDD has regular discussions with Trade Union representatives about how flexible policies can best be applied. This is to ensure fairness and equity across the organisation.

The Council's technical resources are set up so that people can, theoretically, log on to the phone and IT systems from anywhere including their home. I did find quite a high

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level of complaints about the technology and a number of people felt that shortcomings in it hinder flexible working. This was particularly the case in Children’s Services where Chrome Books were being trialled but towards the end of the assessment process I found far more acceptance of them.

Concerns about data security mean that getting access to systems can be a slow and cumbersome process which people find frustrating as it affects their productivity.

I was pleased to note that senior managers have recognised problems with IT and are working in partnership with Elevate to address them.

To recognise and reward successes the Council introduced ‘Star Awards’ two years ago. This year there were over 160 entries. Managers and Trade Union representatives are on the decision making panel as well as councillors. Making some of these awards explicitly about leadership would help to illustrate how people at all levels in the organisation can be leaders.

“My line manager has really acknowledged every little thing I have done. It made me feel really valued.”

Awards to recognise long service are being introduced again.

One enterprising manager went to the Pound Shop and bought some little trophies. These are given to the employee of the month in the service. This can be anyone who goes above and beyond. Other managers will buy lunch or chocolate biscuits for their team to celebrate success. Some have entered their team or service in national awards.

Managers consistently told me that achievements are brought up in team meetings or project updates. Those in Adult and Community Services keep a note of good news stories and send them to the Director for inclusion in the bulletin. Managers also pass on results and feedback from clients.

“We are appreciated - more so now due to the level of staffing. The respect is more for the staff now and we are in demand more than ever before. In the past, when we had lots of staff, some were given jobs depending on what they could do. But now, because of the training, everyone is treated equally. We are all multi skilled now which is a good thing. If you phone another colleague you know he can carry out the task. It makes the job more interesting too. We get more respect from the public because they see you doing different things. They can see you are professionals.”

Most people do feel that they are valued and appreciated for their contribution within their teams. Many are not sure if they are valued beyond that. Some feel that they are now operating within very tight parameters which make it more difficult than in the past to use their discretion and to go out of their way to help people.

Many people said they get more satisfaction when appreciation is expressed by users of their service than by managers but this is, of course, outside the Council’s control other than by passing on compliments when they are given.

I noticed that there was very little mention by people of feeling appreciated when they hit targets or achieved excellent and outstanding ratings on inspections. This leads me to believe that there is substantially more scope for celebrating these achievements and crediting the people concerned.



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Involvement & Empowerment

Giving people autonomy to provide leadership of the place and the organisation is a key part of the Council’s approach to its people. Managers involve people in decision making by consulting them about service plans, restructures and systems or processes.

They take part in Joint Consultative Committees with union representatives.

A major consultation exercise on whether the values of the organisation should be changed was held. All staff were encouraged to attend a briefing on this and to participate in exercises. About 1,000 did so. The output was then given to a ‘task and finish’ group to complete.

In 2012/13 people were also involved in the Budget Challenge.

“They definitely want to hear our views. I don’t know if our views make a difference. In the centres they rely on front line staff and ask about their plans. Our feedback is asked for often by the Council in regard to different aspects ... We have personal alarms when we go on visits. I know that was from staff feedback about how we feel being out on visits. It makes me feel a lot safer. All staff are fully trained on the taqs. It was really well done.”

Despite the Council’s efforts in regard to consultation people still persistently said that they are asked for their views but they do not know how they get taken into account.

‘You said ... We did’ responses are made but these are not always getting through to people.

Communication takes place through the intranet and email. The Corporate Management Team produces a regular update and the Chief Executive writes a blog. There is, in addition, a Managers Update and a Legal Update.

A Yammer Group has also been established. This is a private social network that helps employees to collaborate across departments and locations. It is still in its infancy at LBBD and I know that other organisations have found having a designated community manager helpful

Not everyone has access to electronic communication so newsletters, posters and notice boards are also used to

“I want the Council to progress and do well. A) I still want a job in 20 years’ time and B) my family still lives in the Borough and I don’t want it to end up derelict. I want my grandchildren to be proud to live in Dagenham.”

communicate with people. There are regular team briefings which should be delivered by managers and some of the Directors hold coffee mornings.

I found that people are strongly and committed to the success of the Council. In some cases this is due to personal factors such as their job security. But, LBBD has a high proportion of people working for it who either live in the Borough themselves or who have family members living locally.

This is a major driver for many people in wanting the Council to do well. However, people are also very driven by genuinely wanting to do a good job, to provide good services and to take pride in their work.



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In the staff survey, 71% of respondents agreed that they did feel proud to work for the Council. Many of the people I spoke to said that this is because they are able to make a difference to lives.

Managers are becoming increasingly accomplished and confident at managing people through the outcomes they achieve rather than their inputs.

Targets and timescales are set and monitored in appraisal and 121 meetings. Managers give people opportunities to work independently. For instance, one manager gives her team a report writing day so they have them time to do care plans with worrying about phone calls coming in.

"I am proud to work for LBBDD. Most of the time I am here I am helping people with their problems. By the end of every day you manage to help at least one person or situation. So, when you go home, you have achieved something. I am proud because I live in the borough so I am helping my borough."

"I trust my team. I set out their targets in the 121. I am not hounding them. I trust them to get the work done and so far they have not let me down. When they come to me for guidance I try not to give them solutions but let them come up with ideas. I never undermine their authority."

However, people are still getting used to being empowered. Managers said that in some cases people are reluctant to use the authority which is given to them. Some of the people I spoke to felt that, because their team is not based in a specific building, they are self-managing a lot of the time and said they would like more support.

In Environmental Services tachographs are used to ensure compliance with driving standards although

they are not a legal requirement. Other services use file audits, databases and supervision to ensure that people are adhering to process.

"Taking aside the formal hierarchy of delegated authority, how you empower people is interesting. I have had to say to people I am giving you the power to make decisions. If you get it wrong – don't worry because I run the service and I am accountable. If you get it right it is down to you. Even then I find it hard to get people to take decisions."

People said that teams meet to discuss priorities. They get the information they need to do their jobs. They deliver projects and manage cases. Most people I spoke to do feel that they own their work and use their knowledge and expertise to make decisions but can refer to their manager when necessary.

"If I run something past my line manager he will generally say what do you think – you know the cases better than me?"

Learning & Development

I found good evidence that learning and development continues to take place at LBBDD. Induction programmes run regularly and people find the effective when they join the Council or, as is happening more frequently, when they change their role. I did find that there is better induction into the role than into the Council when people join the organisation as mentioned above.

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The idea that learning does not necessarily involve attending training courses is permeating throughout the organisation and people increasingly recognise that they learn from taking on new tasks or cases, from their manager and other colleagues and from reading or research.

“They showed me quite a few courses. Most of them are around personal development because the actual training for the job itself – we have done that.”

Managers support people in their personal development as well as in developing their technical competence. One reminds people that they stood up and did a clear and confident presentation on a training course and that they can do so in other circumstances. She also lets a less senior manager

practice what she wants to say to a challenging team member using key words she learned on the Courageous Conversations workshop.

Managers in Environmental Services encourage people to use the Learning Centre to acquire key skills and people are also encouraged to use the Learning Catalogue and i-Learn site.

Some staff are encouraged to do first aid qualifications. Where there jobs are at risk people are offered training in interview skills and CV writing.

I was able to establish how people use their learning and put it into practice.

For example, one person explained that they get a lot of ‘no recourse to public funds’ cases and have had relevant training to deal with them. The team uses what was learned to interview the families and make decisions about whether the Council needs to provide support. If the clients are not happy they can go to their solicitors and there is a judicial review.

None of this person’s cases have gone to judicial review and they believe that the training worked. As well as having the course, a solicitor coming in to brief the team and colleagues who are experienced in this area run surgeries. There are management instructions and supervision and case consultations. Once the team member has interviewed families they have to feed back to their manager through these mechanisms. The assessments are signed off by the Group Manager who has to oversee them.

A social worker explained that their qualification helps their knowledge base and understanding of the world from a theoretical point of view and that they put some of it into practice. In supervision they and their manager might look at 1 or 2 children who are particularly vulnerable and at what was learned on sexual exploitation.

They do reflective practice in supervision and team meetings. They talk about cases and practice such as over identifying with foster carers. So the team makes a point of making sure the child is seen on their own. This has become a more conscious part of their practice.

A Food Assistant also explained that their training is useful. Everything that they learn is applied in the kitchen and, without the training, things would be dangerous. The team all read the manuals covering how the oven works, fire safety etc. Then the Cook makes the team apply everything. She wants members of it to be ‘hands on’ so they can do all the tasks if others are off sick. Certain things which have been learned are applied at home.

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Performance Management

The amount of time and money invested in learning and development is reported to the Corporate Management Team annually. This is broken down by Directorate. Senior managers recognise that there are additional costs such as professional memberships and specialists within the HR Department.

Managers at all levels have become more adept at identifying the impact which learning has on performance and outcomes and I was given a number of good examples:

- ⇒ The Council has spent a lot of time and effort improving the sickness management tool kit available to managers and training them in the 'firm but fair approach.' This has had an impact on sickness absence and the level of it has come down. LBBB was in the bottom quartile of London councils on this indicator and introduced a 'Firm but Fair' approach. The Council achieved its target of 8 days average sickness absence in June 2014. New targets have now been set.
- ⇒ The CPC training delivered by the Learning Centre has saved the cost of recruiting people qualified to drive vehicles. They also train on the use of dangerous equipment and very low levels of accidents are reported. The number of slips and trips has reduced.
- ⇒ The Ofsted inspectors commented that court training provided to social workers was excellent and leading to better timeliness.
- ⇒ In School Catering, there is a system where cooks are released to train cooks in other settings and a chef has been brought in to work with them. Nearly all the schools use the Council's service. It has won a Silver food catering award and been sold to 2 Academies outside the borough.
- ⇒ School attainment at every stage is now all at national levels except for Key Stage 2 in reading. Senior managers attribute this to data training and analysis done for governing bodies and the training for School Improvement Team which has now taken on the role of supporting leadership in schools.
- ⇒ LBBB has the highest level of 'good' and 'outstanding' children centres in the country and is one of 50 boroughs able to go through to the next phase of Payment By Results because of its success.
- ⇒ Recruitment of people to the Housing Advice Service had been based in housing law when what was needed were management and customer service skills. Managers and Team Leaders now have those skills and are being mentored in housing law. There has been a huge shift. They work collaboratively and involve team members in managing cases and reception. Performance management is transparent. Team targets are seen now so that everyone can see where they are and that there is a fair distribution of work. All the data is put up on a wall for everyone to see. 121s are structured around both case work and professional development. Two years ago, the Borough had 116 families in Bed & Breakfasts for more than 6 weeks and most of those cases had not been decided. Now all cases are decided and LBBB is in single figures for families in over 6 weeks. This is purely due to the supply of property and not to incomplete case work.
- ⇒ The Adult College has also done lots of Continuing Professional Development to meet Ofsted requirements. There was a big push on e-learning to improve prospects for residents and value for

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money. The College has been upskilling staff with maths and English which is another high government priority. It retained Grade 2 in its Ofsted inspection a year ago and the report commented on how much work goes into supporting and training staff. Recruitment has gone up this year and success went up last year. The College had extremely high success rates. In the apprentice programme, results went from 58% to 90% overall in 9 months.

I was also given some good evidence that senior managers refine their strategies in the light of their evaluation. For example, the Adult College changed its approach to the apprentice programme.

Recording was identified as an area of improvement in an Ofsted social care inspection which identified that improvement was required. This finding was accepted and a template and guidance on recording has now been developed. Social workers have to give child's views so there is an understanding of their voice.

"I was in a different area and just moved to this one. In my previous area I was not hitting my targets. In this area there have been different cases and the training is helping me deal with the cases... Most months I am hitting over 90% which is very difficult to do."

Team members could also explain how learning and development has benefitted the organisation, the team and themselves. Learning is reviewed in 121 and appraisal meetings.

People said it has led to greater productivity, flexibility and efficiency. They said that their training gives them confidence in dealing with challenging situations, protects their health and safety and helps them to comply with processes and legal requirements. It enables them to take on new roles or

responsibilities which increase their job security and their future prospects.

Continuous Improvement

Senior leaders and managers are driving continuous improvement in terms of both organisational effectiveness (i.e. doing the right things) and organisational efficiency (i.e. doing things right). This is monitored in part through a set of people KPIs which are monitored regularly.

Good use is made of internal and external reviews which include the staff survey, IIP temperature checks and pulse surveys plus the previous IIP assessments to drive continuous improvement. In addition, the Council has used benchmarking, Ofsted inspections and a peer review commissioned from the Local Government Association to identify what is done well and where there is scope for improvement.

Strategic changes to the way in which people are managed, led and developed include the introduction of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) Briefing and the work done on the values. The decision of the Council to revert to having a full time Chief Executive was influenced by the comments made during the peer review.

The response to previous IIP assessments has included more focus on management development, better evaluation of the impact of learning and greater promotion of the EAP. The actions taken by senior leaders and managers to improve their visibility are a consequence of the staff survey feedback.

The various staff surveys are followed up by focus groups which are used to shed more light in the issues they have identified.



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Managers could explain how they personally have improved in terms of their people practices. For example, one said that their course made them look at the duty of care for their staff and they now do it much more openly. This was not something they had previously practiced regularly in the team. Consequently, this manager will deal with things for other managers if they are absent.

Another manager said they are much more understanding towards staff now and that following the Council sickness procedures has brought absence levels right down in the team.

A third manager has learned that they need to be clear on why they make certain decisions and that they need to be reliable and accessible.

Most people could see how there have been improvements to the way in which they are managed and developed such as the introduction of i-Learn, flexible working and new communication channels. However, for some people these do not compensate them for negative changes and reductions in staff numbers and service levels where they have taken place.

"It has always been known that the Council are the best people to work for. People always say get a job in the Council – they are best paid, have the best pension and better work conditions. Even now our conditions are definitely a lot better than the private sector... There is a lot more variety of training to go on... Also we are working along with other professionals now and that is a very good thing ... They want us to do our observations on iPads ... It will cut down the paperwork time."

Because of this, top managers are not able to demonstrate that an improvement in people's view of how they are managed and developed has taken place across the organisation. The overall staff engagement score has not increased between surveys although the level of participation is considerably improved.

While this is not especially surprising in the current climate I think the task now is for LBBB to get real traction from all the people strategies, policies and procedures which it has put into place.

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Recommendation and Next Steps

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided for Investors in People Specialists by Investors in People – United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills, the Investors in People Specialist is totally satisfied that **Barking & Dagenham Council** meets the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard at the Bronze level.

Investors in People accreditation is granted indefinitely, with a proviso that an interaction is undertaken within 18 months of accreditation and a full assessment takes place no greater than 3 years apart. Assessments can be undertaken at any time and more frequent assessments are recommended to maintain levels of good practice and continuous improvement.

The organisation should discuss the timing of the next assessment with their Investors in People Specialist, using the Improvement Planning Meeting to agree the best strategy for future use of the Investors in People framework.

Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire

Both the Investors in People Specialist and Investors in People South of England would welcome your feedback on this assessment and you will shortly be supplied with a Client Satisfaction Questionnaire from Investors in People to complete. Particular importance is placed on the feedback given by client organisations on Specialists, therefore we would very much appreciate it if you would complete the questionnaire.

Promoting Continuous Improvement

We support organisations at every stage of the Investors in People journey, helping them to realise the power of their people, optimise their performance and achieve their full potential. We see Investors in People as the People Partner for sustainable people solutions.

Please contact your Account Manager, David Dennett, on 020 7728 3088 or email david.dennett@iipsouth.investorsinpeople.co.uk to find out more about Investors in People and how we can help your organisation.

Details of the support available to you can be accessed by contacting Investors in People South of England via: -

T: 020 7728 3456

E: enquiries@IIPsouth.investorsinpeople.co.uk

W: <http://IIPsouth.investorsinpeople.co.uk>



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Outcomes Table - evidence requirements framework matrix

Core Standard										
Total number of core evidence requirements assessed = 39										
Total number of core evidence requirements met = 39										
	Indicators									
ERs	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	
5	✓		✓						✓	
6	✓									

Wider Framework										
Total number of additional evidence requirements assessed = 34										
Total number of additional evidence requirements met = 28										
	Indicators									
ERs	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
4	Core	Core	Core		Core		✓		Core	✓
5	Core	x	Core	✓			✓	✓	Core	✓
6	Core	✓	✓							✓
7	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
8			✓							
9	✓									x
10				x						
11	x					✓				
12								✓		
13	x		✓							
14			✓							
15	✓									
16		✓	✓				✓			
17										
18										
19	x						✓	✓		
20										
21										
22										
23										
24			✓							
25										
26										
27										
28										
29			✓							