

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Hertsmere Borough Council

*"A place where people can express their views – you feel you
are being listened to"*

Key Information

Assessment Type	Assessment
Investors in People Specialist Name	Simon Baylis
Visit Date	29th July 2014 - 11th August 2014
Assessment Enquiry Number	ENQ – 92367 – 8PQ1QK

Conclusion

Having conducted the assessment in accordance with United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and EMB Excellence Limited's guidelines, the findings indicate that Hertsmere Borough Council is continuing to meet the evidence requirements of the National Investors in People Standard.

I would like to extend my thanks to all those who took part in the assessment process for their open and honest feedback in respect of their experience within Hertsmere Borough Council. It was a pleasant and enjoyable process.

Milestone Dates

Review of Continuous Improvement Plan	11th February 2016
Date of Next Full Assessment	20th April 2017

Simon Baylis

Investors in People Specialist

CONTENTS

Section	Page Number
Executive Summary	4
Future development	4
Quotations from Interviewees	6
Strengths and opportunities to improve (set against client objectives)	7
Appendix 1 – Continuous Improvement Plan	24
Appendix 2 – The Evidence Requirements	27
Appendix 3 - Aligning Hertsmere's vision and values in an enterprise culture	28
Appendix 4 - What people need to do a good job	29
Appendix 5 - Balance of leadership and management	30
Appendix 6 - Hertsmere's Staff Questionnaire	31
Appendix 7 - Coaching and mentoring definitions	33

Executive Summary

The assessment was undertaken against eight key objectives based upon the strategic plans of the council:

- We have a clear vision supported by core values, strategy and plans.
- Communication is inclusive and knowledge is shared.
- A positive climate supports inclusive decision making and continuous improvement.
- People are valued, good performance is recognised and rewarded.
- Development is strategic and talent is well managed.
- Learning takes place effectively.
- Leadership and management is effective.
- Our people processes are measured, evaluated and continue to improve.

There were significant strengths against these objectives and people were able to describe many positive aspects about the way that they are managed and developed.

In particular, the council has a notably supportive and open culture distinguished by a strong focus on residents and an awareness of providing value for money. These aspects of the council's values were present throughout all the teams.

In addition, people at all levels are valued and encouraged to both learn and progress.

A total of 106 of the additional evidence requirements from the extended framework were met - see Appendix 2. This is sufficient for the council to achieve a Silver award.

Details of the many strengths found and the opportunities for improvement are set out in the 'Strengths and opportunities to improve' section below. However, the following opportunities for improvement are seen as key:

- Further work to develop clear statements of the behaviours that will deliver the already well established values will make the culture better understood. In particular, this should help to develop the enterprise element of the culture whilst maintaining excellence in public service. Delivering excellence in both will be challenging and Hertsmere will want to role model best practice to its increasing range of partners.
- The council should address management development more vigorously to ensure that best practice is in place at all levels. Clear management behaviours coming from the values and behaviours outlined above will support this.
- The current complexity of documentation, especially in plans, reviews and policies, presents a challenge for those wishing to get an overview. A useful project, perhaps overseen by the Innovation Panel, could address how to simplify documentation and add clear summaries.

Future Development

The assessment included 108 additional evidence requirements from the extended framework and as indicated above, 106 of these additional evidence requirements were met. These will count towards further recognition if Hertsmere wishes to 'top up' to achieve a Gold award in the next twelve months.

In view of the findings from this assessment, Hertsmere is well placed to move forward to achieve its enterprise agenda and the senior team should now address the opportunities to improve as set out in the Continuous Improvement Plan (Appendix 1).

Other Improvements

It is recommended that there is a further meeting with the Specialist Assessor to discuss how the findings and suggested actions will be taken forward. At this time the potential for further support from the centre can be discussed in more detail.

Quotations from interviewees evidencing strengths

- *"They always keep us informed"*
- *"Objectives in people's appraisals are closely work related"*
- *"They work out the best and most efficient way of doing it"* (manager on people's input to plans)
- *"We have input into pretty much everything"* (staff representative)
- *"Absolutely – credit to all the individuals"* (on the role of representative groups in developing strategy and plans)
- *"The values here are to be lived and modelled by the managers"*
- *"Very much so – it is the way we do things – the customer comes first"* (manager on the influence of the core values)
- *"We try to help the public all the time"*
- *"Investing in our employees is one of our values"*
- *"We are all kept in the loop, frequent briefings, weekly 'what's going on' email and The Hub"*
- *"If managers feel the Chief Executive's briefing content is likely to be particularly relevant they will make sure we go"*
- *"We're always keen to improve on our targets"* (on KPI's)
- *"There are almost daily changes to plans according to workload"* (people's involvement in agreeing objectives)
- *"We are encouraging people to become multi-skilled because the landscape is changing"*
- *"We have the Innovation Panel to support the council in doing things differently"*
- *"We also have a trading board which has been newly created"*
- *"There is a constant learning cycle – officers deliver internal training and we use people's specific strengths to mentor colleagues"*
- *"Teaching others is the best way of learning yourself"*
- *"Learning and development is discussed all through the year"*
- *"Diversity is high on the agenda"*
- *"Very good on work life balance"*
- *"More than helpful and there is flexible working"* (work life balance)
- *"We are all encouraged to take our breaks and use our holidays"*
- *"My manager is all ears"* (on encouragement of ideas)
- *"We do have the 'Bright Ideas' scheme and we are certainly encouraged to put forward ideas"*
- *"Especially in team meetings – it's easy to speak up"*
- *"Definitely – via discussion and in the team"* (on ideas)
- *"We often have discussions on how things should be done"*
- *"The manager mentored me into my role"*
- *"I had a mentor on my return from maternity leave"*
- *"There is plenty of support and freedom as well"*
- *"We are encouraged to learn"*
- *"They do try novel things and we can put our hands up to something wrong"*
- *"We are all learning as we go"*
- *"We can speak freely"* (on giving constructive feedback to a manager)
- *"Training is on the agenda at team meetings"*
- *"We do talk about team training needs and we bounce problems around"*
- *"We might say we need this or that for the team"* (on team learning activities)
- *"They consult us on everything"* (staff committee member)

- *"We all share information – we have a group email – and there is always something new"*
- *"We do a roundup at our team meetings and share knowledge"*
- *"They do ask for our input"*
- *"I can give feedback via the Staff Questionnaire about any issues and my feelings about the council"*
- *"I'm given lots of development and significant projects"*
- *"We work very well as a team"*
- *"A place where people can express their views – you feel you are being listened to"*
- *"Being part of a small team that believes in what they do for customers" (on having a sense of pride)*
- *"We value everyone"*
- *"Being valued and seeing the job done gives me a sense of pride"*
- *"I feel especially valued in our team – a lot of conferring"*
- *"People listen to my advice and recommendations"*
- *"I feel my opinion is valued and asked for"*
- *"We all help each other out – I have had a Star Award" (on recognising the contributions of colleagues)*
- *"Star Award – we've received them"*
- *"I always get a positive response and a pat on the back from my manager – our efforts don't go unnoticed"*
- *"I challenged many parts of the policy"*
- *"Everyone shares their expertise"*
- *"They do highlight people's achievements"*
- *"My induction was effective and straightforward"*
- *"Good training and induction – shadowing for several weeks and mentor"*
- *"A good place to work"*
- *"One of the best jobs I've ever had"*

Quotations from interviewees specifically about the new 'Learning Zone'

- *"I think it will be a very useful tool – I have had a look"*
- *"I quite enjoyed using it – content was mainly self evident"*
- *"The online training looks good"*

Strengths and opportunities to improve (set against client objectives)

Strengths	We have a clear vision supported by core values, strategy and plans	Opportunities for improvement
<p>Hertsmere has a clear vision underpinned by a statement of its principles and values. A detailed Corporate Plan outlines its strategy and this in turn is supported by a range of operating plans.</p> <p>There was an Executive / Management Awayday in March 2014 which produced an impressively large volume of ideas to take forward.</p> <p>People also confirmed agreeing their team and individual objectives, describing having task related SMART objectives in their annual appraisals.</p> <p>The Chief Executive's briefings, the HertsHere eMagazine, the weekly 'What's going on' email, intranet and team meetings all serve to keep people aware of progress and give them opportunities to have an input to both strategy and plans.</p> <p>Progress in all of the main operational areas is measured by a range of Key Performance Indicators which are published in a quarterly Corporate Performance Overview Report.</p>	<p>Organisation has vision/strategy/plan (1.1, 1.2)</p> <p>People are involved in planning (1.4, 1.6)</p> <p>People are involved in strategy development (1.8, 1.14, 1.20)</p> <p>Key Performance Indicators are used (1.9, 1.15, 1.21)</p>	<p>The council is very consultative, but evidence from people about being involved in developing strategy was mixed, with a more positive response around their own service areas than for the council as a whole. This is an area that the senior team might like to reflect upon. Staff, especially if they live in the borough, are an informed group who have a legitimate interest and could therefore have a positive impact upon strategic issues beyond their own areas. People are already listened to but don't always recognise this, making this an issue of communication rather than a gap in the process.</p> <p>If possible a 'dashboard' showing a balanced set of top line KPI's for the whole council would add clarity to people's knowledge of overall progress.</p>

<p>The majority of people interviewed right across the services confirmed that they have knowledge of the KPI's and that these are used to improve performance.</p> <p>The open culture and encouragement to innovate ensures that people feel positive about putting forward ideas. This is supported by a suggestion scheme, discussion in team meetings and more recently by the Innovation Panel which has been set up to support the move towards becoming an 'enterprising council'. This is an excellent initiative set up with a panel of around 7 people meeting briefly each week.</p> <p>In addition to formal union representation, there is also a Local Joint Committee. The senior managers confirmed that there is a constructive relationship with all staff representatives. Similarly, representatives also described being engaged in high level strategic issues and that they felt that relationships were constructive.</p> <p>As described above, Hertsmerre has a clear set of principles and values. In particular, the values include being customer driven and providing value for money. Without exception, all of the staff interviewed were able to confirm these two key values. Most were also aware of partnership working, achieving results, equality, integrity and commitment to developing people. People throughout the council were very positive in their attitude to the local community and always demonstrated respect and commitment for every part of the community.</p>	<p>People are encouraged to contribute ideas (3.1, 3.5)</p> <p>Representative groups are consulted (1.3, 1.5)</p> <p>Clear core values relate to vision and strategy (1.7, 1.11, 1.13, 1.17, 1.19, 1.23, 1.24)</p>	<p>The aim should be that every staff member could see at least one headline measure that they contribute to.</p> <p>With the drive towards a more enterprising approach there is a real opportunity to review the values and to state them in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How residents are treated. • How other stakeholders are treated. • How councillors and staff within the council treat each other. • How leaders manage and develop their people.
---	--	--

Strengths	Communication is inclusive and knowledge is shared	Opportunities for improvement
<p>Evidence from people in all parts of the council team, including staff representatives, strongly demonstrated people's belief that consultation is a key thread in the culture. As well as consultation on specific issues, there is a detailed bi-annual Staff Questionnaire and the Chief Executive's briefings in the council chamber facilitated by the use of the voting system to poll staff where appropriate.</p> <p>Similarly, knowledge and information is shared both within and between functions with people being very proactive in supporting each other to deliver good service.</p>	<p>Effective consultation is part of the culture (7.4, 7.6, 7.7)</p> <p>Knowledge and information are shared (7.5, 7.10)</p>	<p>The strategic plan, service plans and quarterly review documents are all very comprehensive. However, some were also very complex, for example a 65 page service plan was noted. This makes it hard to find details and for people to get an overall picture, not just of plans but also of the evaluation of the previous period. Perhaps these types of document might be reviewed under the KISS (Keep it Simple & Smart) principle. Having a headline summary page would also help people to gain an overview and they could then look in more detail if required. This offers an opportunity for a significant project to address how communications of this type could be reduced to what the council cannot do without rather than what is nice to have.</p> <p>This applies to plans (strategic and service), progress reports, the learning and development strategy and the overall evaluation of progress.</p> <p>The current Staff Questionnaire is very comprehensive and gets a response rate of around 30%. This could almost certainly be increased by reducing the complexity of the form and being more informative on the actions taken, not just the responses. Appendix 6 outlines how this might be done.</p>

Strengths	A positive climate supports inclusive decision making and continuous improvement	Opportunities for improvement
<p>'Trust' is not specifically mentioned in the values but is clearly implied by good governance and openness. Managers are empowering their staff and people throughout felt that they were involved in decision making. They are clearly motivated by the level of trust they are given in allowing them to make their own decisions in their daily tasks.</p> <p>The trust extended to people taking ownership of decisions to improve how things are done. In line with this, people also confirmed feeling able to challenge procedures and there were several examples of people doing so.</p> <p>In most cases people described managers not only as empowering but also supportive with several examples of support described as 'mentoring'.</p> <p>Evidence for there being an open and trusting climate was largely positive with people describing having both trust and respect for their managers.</p>	<p><u>Effective and inclusive decision making</u></p> <p>Ownership and responsibility are encouraged (7.1)</p> <p>People are involved in decision making (7.2, 7.3)</p> <p>People are trusted (and supported) in making decisions (7.9, 7.12, 7.14, 7.15)</p> <p>People can challenge procedures (7.18)</p>	

<p>The open culture and shared value of providing the best service for residents are ensuring that people feel a sense of ownership and pride in what they achieve as part of the council team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Being part of a small team that believes in what they do for customers"</i> • <i>"Feeling I'm making a contribution"</i> <p>They also confirmed feeling positive about working at Hertsmere:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"One of the best jobs I've ever had"</i> <p>The council is clearly very focussed on equality and offers training in this as well as ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures are in place.</p> <p>As described above, there are a number of communications processes in place including newsletters, emails, team meetings and briefings. All of this demonstrates how the senior team are ensuring that people in all departments have every opportunity to be included.</p> <p>Managers were able to describe how they recruit people using a structured and fair process based upon ability.</p>	<p><u>A climate of respect, openness and trust</u></p> <p>Culture of openness and trust (5.20, 5.21, 5.24)</p> <p>People are committed to success (7.16)</p> <p>Sense of ownership and pride (7.19)</p> <p>People believe it is great place to work (10.15)</p> <p><u>Equality of opportunity</u></p> <p>There is equality of opportunity (3.2, 3.3, 3.4)</p> <p>Recruitment is fair, efficient and effective (3.6, 3.14, 3.19, 3.22)</p>	<p>There was some evidence of people giving feedback to their managers but this was not strong. The appraisal form includes a box headed <i>'Employee feedback to the manager'</i> but it seemed that people see this as encouraging general feedback rather than anything specifically about the manager. Perhaps this can be made more clear in the next revision of the appraisal format. The council could consider including some specific management behaviours (see the recommendation above about values and behaviours) that would provide an opportunity for balanced upwards feedback in a comfortable process.</p> <p>Recruitment interviews are normally carried out by a panel of three ensuring that people's views are taken into account. However, many of those interviewed seemed unaware of this, perhaps indicating that this is an area for improvement. Using peer level people (not necessarily from the department being recruited for) can deliver a fresh view and is excellent development for the individuals.</p>
---	---	---

<p>There are job descriptions and competencies in place for all roles to ensure that recruitment and performance management aligns to strategic needs.</p> <p>The workforce is clearly diverse and there were a number of examples of managers supporting and encouraging individuals with talent and aspirations to meet the needs of the council.</p> <p>Everyone described the approach to work life balance in positive terms, covering awareness of family needs as well as opportunities to work flexibly. There is a flexitime scheme in place, working from home is allowed and there is currently a pilot scheme in place to test home working.</p> <p>Managers and staff were largely positive about the range of opportunities for feedback in the council team. The culture is very open and most things can be raised and discussed in one to ones, team meetings, briefings or by email. The Staff Questionnaire also offers opportunities for feedback to managers (although the appraisals form is not seen as effective in this respect - see above).</p> <p>The senior team described a number of opportunities and processes designed to encourage continuous improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer focus • Value for money • The Innovation Panel 	<p>Diverse talented workforce created (3.7, 3.11, 3.12, 3.15, 3.23, 3.28)</p> <p>Work-life strategy meets people's needs (3.8, 3.13, 3.16, 3.21, 3.24, 3.29)</p> <p><u>Learning is continuous</u></p> <p>Constructive feedback is valued (3.9, 3.17, 3.25)</p> <p>Culture of continuous improvement (7.8, 7.11)</p>	
---	--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPI's • Analysis of complaints • ISO9000 accreditation • Benchmarking (internal and external) • Shared services 		
---	--	--

Strengths	People are valued, good performance is recognised and rewarded	Opportunities for improvement
<p>People were very positive about making a difference based upon having clear, measurable objectives for their roles, supported in most instances by Key Performance Indicators.</p> <p>The council has a reward and recognition strategy that links to business strategy and exceeds legal requirements. Elements included are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star Awards (includes the nomination of colleagues) • Long service awards • Awards for attendance • Flexitime • Leisure Centre Membership • Free Parking • Salary Sacrifice • Pension Scheme • Generous Holidays 	<p>People believe they make a difference (6.2)</p> <p>People believe their contribution is valued (6.1, 6.3)</p> <p>Reward strategies link to business strategies (6.4, 6.9)</p> <p>Representative groups are consulted (6.5)</p> <p>Benefits strategy exceeds legal requirements (6.7)</p>	<p>Whilst there is a significant range of benefits and people do feel valued, there was some evidence that the Star Awards are not universally used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I don't think our department has ever been involved in the Star Awards"</i> <p>Perhaps the importance of equality in this respect could be emphasised to managers.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff support line • Season ticket loans (interest free) <p>The Staff Survey includes a consultative element with questions on people's levels of satisfaction with the range of benefits.</p> <p>Managers described understanding people's motivation based upon their shared focus on customer service.</p> <p>All of the people interviewed describe feeling valued, for a variety of reasons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"People listen to my advice and recommendations"</i> • <i>"I feel my opinion is valued and asked for"</i> • <i>"We all help each other out – I have had a Star Award" (on recognising the contributions of colleagues)</i> • <i>"Star Award – we've received them"</i> • <i>"I always get a positive response and a pat on the back from my manager – our efforts don't go unnoticed"</i> 	<p>Motivation is understood (6.10)</p> <p>Success is celebrated (6.11)</p> <p>Colleague's achievements recognised (6.19)</p>	
---	--	--

Strengths	Development is strategic and talent is well managed	Opportunities for improvement
<p>Learning and devolvement is seen and planned for strategically with the majority of learning taking place to meet business objectives. This is increasingly aimed at building future capability with succession planning in place.</p> <p>People confirmed that their learning is focussed on both current and future needs and that they are involved in deciding their learning and given opportunities that suit their learning styles.</p> <p>Hertsmere is good at encouraging people to learn and progress both to meet their aspirations and the council's needs. There were also several excellent examples of managers identifying individuals as having potential and giving them support and opportunities to develop.</p>	<p>Learning priorities clear, Resources available, Impact evaluated (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4)</p> <p>Learning and development strategy builds capability (2.5, 2.8, 2.12, 2.14)</p> <p>Plans take account of learning styles (2.10, 2.15)</p> <p>People help decide their learning (2.9, 2.13, 2.16)</p> <p>The structure makes most of people's talents (3.18, 3.20, 3.26)</p> <p>Personal development is supported (8.12, 8.19)</p>	<p>This too is an area where KISS might add clarity to strategic plans. A clear summary of the Workforce Plan and its progress reports giving an overview linked to key elements of the strategic plan would make the recommendation around evaluation (see below) much easier to achieve. Additional metrics on learning and development issues (where applicable) would also support later evaluation.</p> <p>There could be more focus on identifying people's less obvious talents, perhaps via a skills audit and then seeking opportunities for them to use their talent in a relevant way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"We waste people who have talents that the council doesn't know about"</i>

	<p>Coaching is part of the culture (5.8)</p>	<p>There were a sufficient number of examples of coaching to meet this requirement. Mentoring is also frequently used. However, not all managers shared the same definition of coaching and mentoring. Whilst it does not matter what the activity is called, it is important to use the appropriate process depending on circumstances. This highlights a potential development need to ensure common understanding and good practice. The definitions of mentoring and coaching as given by the Investors in People Standard are shown in Appendix 6.</p>
--	--	---

Strengths	Learning takes place effectively	Opportunities for improvement
<p>There was evidence of training and development at all levels, with everyone undertaking regular learning activity. Managers were always aware of people's activity as well, and as mentioned above, there were examples of managers encouraging, supporting and mentoring people to progress.</p> <p>People throughout confirmed that learning is a valued and frequent activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Learning and development is discussed all through the year"</i> • <i>"Everyone shares their expertise"</i> 	<p>Peoples learning needs are met (8.1, 8.2, 8.3)</p> <p>Learning is everyday activity (8.8, 8.13, 8.15)</p> <p>Learning and development is innovative and flexible (2.6)</p> <p>Innovative and flexible development (8.5)</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"There is a constant learning cycle – officers deliver internal training and we use people's specific strengths to mentor colleagues"</i> <p>There were examples of development being delivered in many ways including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On line courses • The new 'Learning Zone' • External training • Internal delivery • Coaching and mentoring • Sharing <p>People clearly value learning and described awards for achievements and celebrating people's learning successes.</p> <p>Those new to the council also described receiving effective and welcoming inductions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"My induction was effective and straightforward"</i> • <i>"Good training and induction – shadowing for several weeks and a mentor"</i> 	<p>Learning is celebrated and valued (8.6, 8.10, 8.17)</p>	
--	--	--

Strengths	Leadership and management is effective	Opportunities for improvement
<p>A number of managers confirmed that they have attended leadership and management training (both internally and externally delivered).</p> <p>People were wholly positive about the support, recognition, feedback and communication provided by their managers. This is a key aspect of the open culture.</p> <p>People confirmed that managers were effective, inspirational role models of the values and knowledge sharing.</p>	<p>Managers are clear about the capabilities needed to lead (4.1, 4.2)</p> <p>People know what effective managers should be doing (4.3)</p> <p>L&M capabilities are defined, for now and future (4.4, 4.9)</p> <p>Managers are helped to acquire L&M capabilities (4.5, 4.6, 4.10, 4.11)</p> <p>Managers are role models (5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.9, 5.10, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15, 5.16, 5.17, 5.22, 5.23)</p> <p>Managers are effective (5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4)</p>	<p>There are comprehensive management competencies in place within the appraisal form, but people always referred to their own views of effective management behaviours. These were made clear by role modelling and were seen as consistent.</p> <p>There will be benefits in making the requirements for managers more clear as described above in the section on values and behaviours. Future management capability needs to reflect the enterprise agenda and better defined capabilities will provide a much improved basis for developing managers.</p> <p>The importance of the manager's contribution to delivering a good job is shown in Appendix 4, together with the responses that people typically give when asked about effective leadership. Appendix 5 illustrates the need to get the right balance between transformational and transactional leadership.</p> <p>People throughout the council teams confirmed receiving constructive feedback via regular appraisals, one-to-ones and in probationary reviews.</p>

		<p>However, the appraisal form is complex (this is already recognised) and in some instances this is discouraging managers from undertaking interim reviews with their people.</p> <p>This suggests that the appraisal is a further example of complexity that might be simplified under the KISS principle described above. This would be an ideal opportunity to set the appraisal format up to include the behaviours coming from the values (see above).</p> <p>The inclusion of a simple description of the required management behaviours in the appraisal form would facilitate the provision of upwards feedback to managers from their people.</p>
--	--	---

Strengths	Our people processes are measured, evaluated and continue to improve	Opportunities for improvement
<p>Managers were able to describe a number of examples of improvements in the council's strategy for developing it's people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary sacrifice scheme • The Learning Zone • Revised Star Awards • The Hub (intranet) • Innovation Panel • Revised sickness scheme <p>People also confirmed improvements to how they are managed and developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased focus on health and wellbeing • Sickness scheme • The Hub • Improved communications between the "exec group" and staff • Better appraisals (but room for improvement) • The Learning Zone <p>The council uses a regular Staff Survey to get feedback and this also allows internal benchmarking - the senior team evidenced this in interviews.</p>	<p>Investment in learning can be quantified (9.1)</p> <p>Evaluation results in improvements (10.1, 10.2, 10.3)</p> <p>Impact can be demonstrated (9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5)</p> <p>Self and external reviews used (10.4, 10.5)</p>	<p>The senior team were able to describe the resources that go into learning and development and gave examples of the impact. However, as described above, the complexity of the reviews, reports and plans made this harder to do.</p> <p>There is a real need to have a strategic summary that crosses service boundaries describing the impact of the council's investment in its people. Doing this will help to focus scarce resources where they are most needed and ensure that business critical development does take place.</p> <p>The strategic summary should be based upon a robust process of evaluating the impact of development. Such a process might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Was the activity appropriate, relevant and effective? 2. Were the initial learning needs met? 3. Is the required knowledge or skill being used in the job? 4. Has the new knowledge improved performance? 5. Has this impacted upon organisational objectives? 6. Was the activity as effective as it could have been – how can it be improved?

<p>There are also a number of external review processes and Standards (e.g. ISO 9001 and Investors in People) which provide additional feedback.</p> <p>People confirmed that Hertsmere is a good place to work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"One of the best jobs I've ever had"</i> • <i>"A good place to work"</i> 	<p>Feedback used to understand people's views (10.6)</p> <p>Peoples views on management improve (10.9)</p>	<p>7. What impact, if any, does this have on future development strategy?</p> <p>8. Who should the knowledge be shared with?</p>
---	--	--

Appendix 1 – Continuous Improvement Plan

Business Issue	Recommended Actions	Potential Benefits	Priority	Solutions and Support Available
We have a clear vision supported by values, strategy and plans.	<p>Review how we give staff the opportunity to input to overall strategy.</p> <p>Review our core values in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How residents are treated. • How other stakeholders are treated. • How councillors and staff within the council treat each other. • How leaders manage and develop their people. <p>Develop clear behavioural statements to describe the values in a way that defines our culture.</p> <p>Use the behaviours in performance management, recruitment and for the development of managers.</p> <p>Ensure an appropriate balance of knowledge, skills and attitude between enterprise and public service so that we plan and manage effectively without conflicts of interest impacting upon progress.</p>	Our culture develops to support excellence in both public service and enterprise.	<p>Medium</p> <p>High</p>	The specialist can support the process of developing the values and behaviours
Our communication is effective, inclusive and knowledge is shared.	<p>Review our key planning and review documentation to reduce complexity and aid understanding.</p> <p>Include summary pages to give an overview.</p>	Our plans, policies and review processes support understanding in all areas and drive continuous improvement.	High	

	<p>Review how we can provide a KPI 'dashboard' to keep all staff up to speed on overall progress.</p> <p>Review the Staff Questionnaire and reduce the number of questions - raise the response rate, aiming for 60% plus. Ensure we feed back on action taken, not just people's responses.</p>	<p>Our people see that they have a voice and can influence change.</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	
<p>A positive climate supports inclusive decision making and drives continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Review how we use people in interview panels - can we be more inclusive and get benefits from their input?</p>	<p>Our people develop further and recruitment improves.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	
<p>Our people are valued, good performance is recognised and rewarded.</p>	<p>Review the frequency of Star Awards scheme and ensure that all managers are promoting its use.</p>	<p>People feel increasingly valued.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	
<p>Development is strategic and talent is well managed.</p>	<p>Review Workforce Plan and its progress reports to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a better overall view of learning and development at a strategic level. • Support an annual evaluation of outcomes. <p>Carry out a skills audit to identify people's less obvious talents and seek opportunities for them to use their talent in a relevant way.</p>	<p>Our investment in people is carefully planned and strategically focussed.</p> <p>We make the best use of people's talents and potential, lifting motivation and increasing staff retention.</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Medium</p>	

	<p>Define coaching and mentoring and make the differences clear.</p> <p>Deliver appropriate training in their delivery as required.</p>	<p>Coaching and mentoring effectively support people's development to reach their full potential.</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	
<p>Leadership and management is effective.</p>	<p>Use the management behaviours (see above) as the basis for specifying current and future management capability (in consultation with managers).</p> <p>Identify and deliver any emerging leadership and management development needs - especially focussing on the enterprise agenda.</p> <p>Review and revise the appraisal form in line with values and behaviours.</p> <p>Include the specific management behaviours (a 'management charter) in the appraisal form to facilitate balanced upwards feedback in a comfortable process.</p>	<p>Our managers develop and role model excellent behaviours.</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>The specialist can support the process of developing the appraisal process.</p>
<p>Our people processes are measured, evaluated and continue to improve.</p>	<p>Review how our investment in our people (including learning and development) is evaluated.</p> <p>Develop a summary reporting process of the outcomes that members and officers can use to inform future overall council plans.</p>	<p>We understand the impact of our investment in people and use the information to inform future plans.</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	

Appendix 2 – Assessment results summary

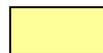
The Investors in People Framework

The Evidence Requirements

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		
The Indicators	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		X	✓	✓																			
	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			X	✓	✓	✓	✓						
	6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									✓										
	7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓											
	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																									
	10				✓	✓	✓			✓						✓															

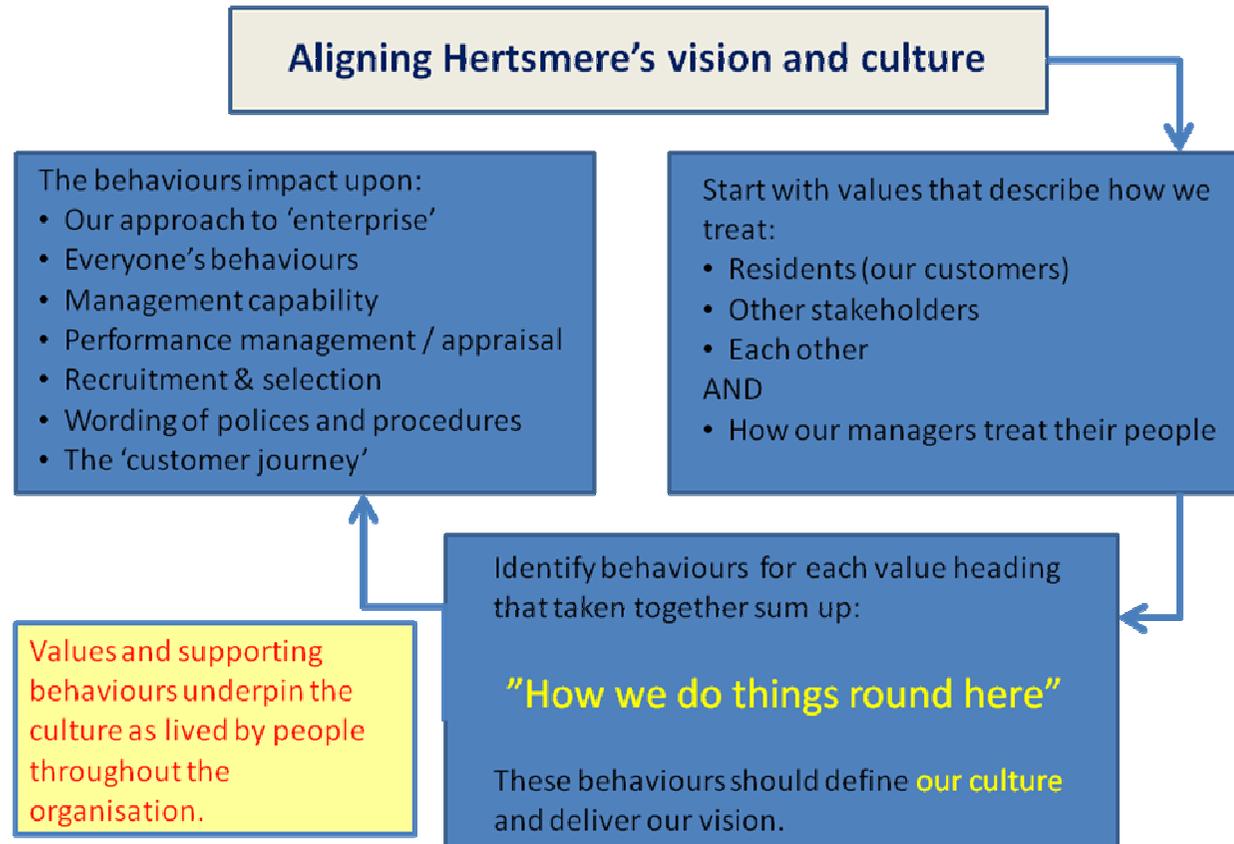
The number of evidence requirements met is **145** (39 from core and 106 from the extended framework)

Key:

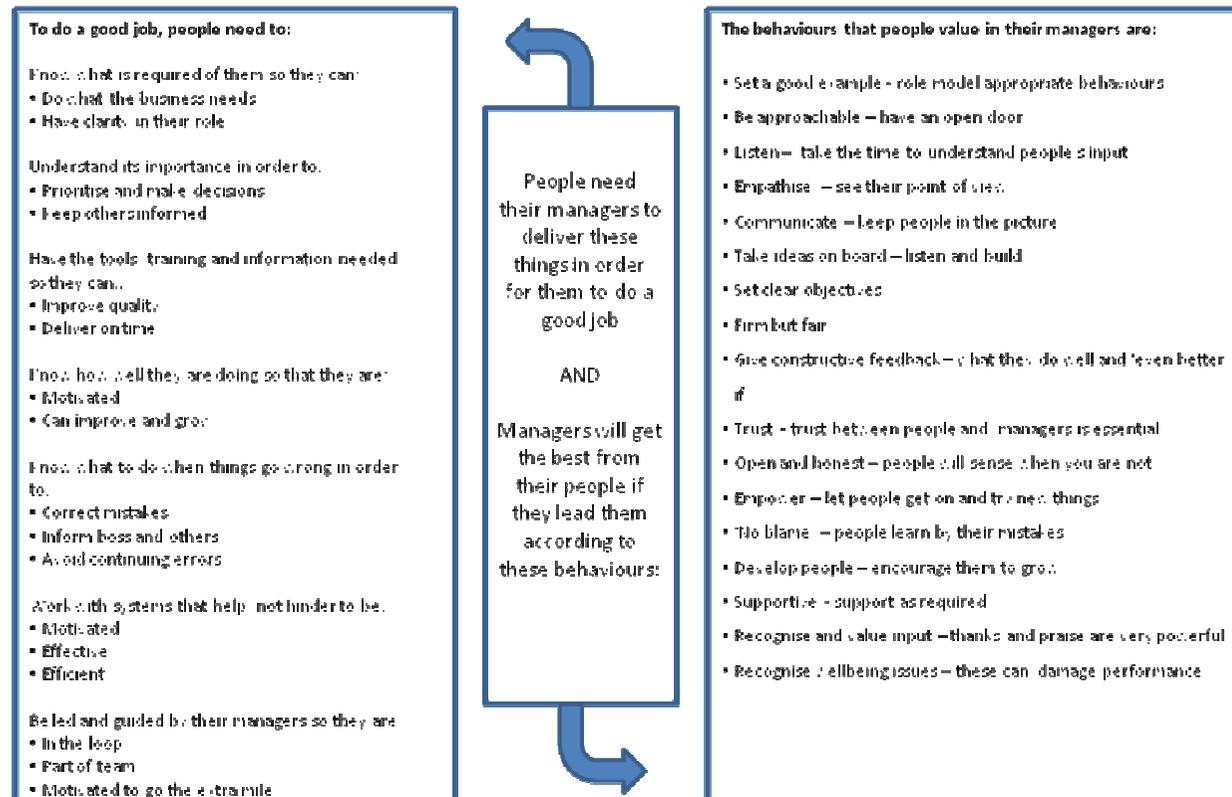
-  The Core Investors in People Standard
-  Your Choice from the Investors in People Framework
-  Not part of the Investors in People Framework
-  Met, but with opportunities to improve

X = not met

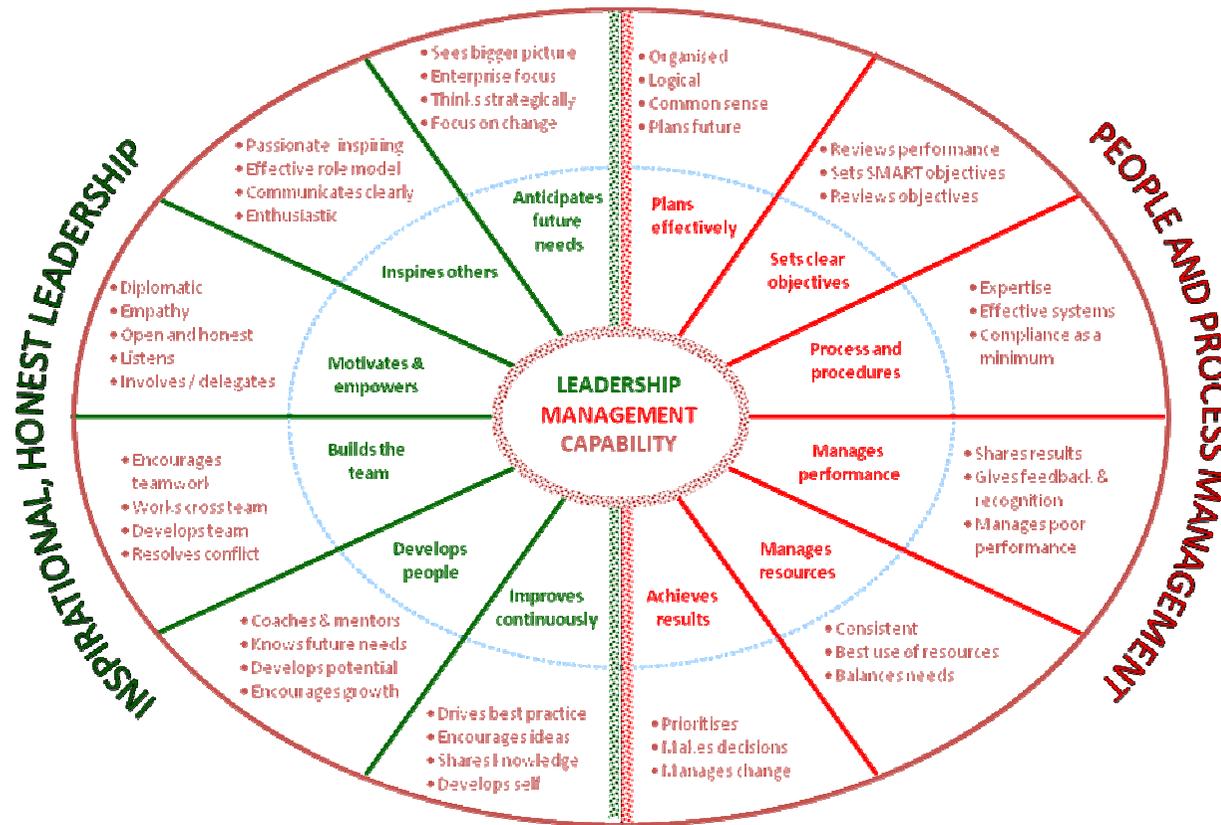
Appendix 3 – Aligning Hertsmere's vision and values in an enterprise culture



Appendix 4 – What people need to do a good job



Appendix 5 – Balance of leadership and management



© Simon Bowles Associates Ltd 2013

Appendix 6 – Hertsmere's Staff Questionnaire

Response rates vary and while the Hertsmere level of around 50% is within the average range that many organisations experience, there is room for improvement. Generally, less than 65% suggests there are opportunities for improvement and more than 75% is good. Low response rates reflect badly on the process and impact upon perceptions of the validity of the data.

The suggestions below should help to lift responses to the 80% to 90% range, depending on the level of trust and the culture in the council team.

Keep it brief - without doubt the brevity or otherwise of surveys impacts upon response rates; longer surveys have lower response rates. Therefore keep it as short as possible, include information you cannot do without, not all that you'd like. Areas such as diversity (14 questions in the first section of the questionnaire) can be the subject of separate surveys if they are really required. What is the validity of factual data on ethnicity if only 30% of staff complete the survey?

Emphasise anonymity - the best way to do this is to employ a third party to collect the data and generate the reports. Although likely to cost more, employees will feel more comfortable and respond more openly when they know their responses are being handled by an outside organisation. The quality of response as well as the overall rate is likely to rise. Outside providers also have expertise on the wording and range of questions to ask. Larger ones may be able to supply benchmarking data.

Explain the benefits - clearly communicate how staff and the council will benefit from the survey. Providing a reason for completing the questionnaire will improve response rates and encourage honesty.

Get senior people to endorse the process - the request to complete the survey should come from the Chief Executive and / or Leader of the Council. They should explain the purpose and benefits from the process.

Share the results - communicate clearly how you will share the information you gather from the survey - it is poor practice not to share results, and this should be done quickly. At the same time tell people what you are going to do as a result of their feedback. Look for any 'quick wins' and take action, telling people what you are doing - 'You said - we did' is a powerful indicator that people have a voice.

Use appropriate opportunities, e.g. the Chief Executive's briefings, to remind people about the results and subsequent actions. The PowerPoint presentation 'Staff Survey 2012' gave key headlines (a lot of information) on responses, but listed no action as a result.

Benchmarking - it will be useful to include questions that are shared by other, similar, organisations and local partners as this will give an opportunity for external benchmarking. Where results differ, you can compare practices and assess the impact of different approaches to issues.

Appendix 7 – Coaching and mentoring definitions

The Investors in People Standard offers the following definitions:

Coaching - a formal or informal process that aims to improve the performance, learning and development an individual through effective questioning and feedback. It is about helping people thorough issues for themselves, rather than telling or instructing someone.

Mentoring - advice and guidance offered by a more experienced person to develop an individual's potential. Mentoring tends to focus on long-term career goals rather than immediate performance issues, and may be carried out by people from within the organisation or outside it, but not usually by an individual's line manager.

Not all would agree with these definitions, but key is that coaching encourages people to explore all the options and think them through before coming to a decision that they own.