

# Bolton Council

**Report to:** The Cabinet

**Date:** 18 August 2014

**Report of:** The Chief Executive

**Report No:**

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**Report Title:** **Investor in people Re-accreditation 2014**

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**Non Confidential: )**

**Purpose:**

This report sets out the key conclusions from the Council's recent liP re-assessment, together with a continuous improvement action plan

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that liP re-accreditation is noted and the action plan endorsed for implementation

**Decision:**

**Background Papers**

*(for use on Exec Rep)*

**Signed:**

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Leader / Executive Member

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Monitoring Officer

**Date:**

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## **Investors in People re-accreditation 2014**

### **Introduction**

Bolton Council has recently been re-accredited with Investors in People (IIP) status. This is a national standard which tests the engagement and development of our staff to meet organisational objectives.

This report provides an overview of the key findings from the Council's recent re-assessment. The full report is appended. Also attached is a continuous improvement plan in order that the council may consolidate the strengths identified through the assessment and make further improvements in areas where further action is recommended.

### **Analysis**

The Council has held IIP status across each department for many years. This is, however, the first time that we have approach re-accreditation as a single organisation, which has involved direct consultation with a statistically valid sample of over 240 staff (c5% of the workforce) across all services, together with senior Members and Officers.

The strength of feedback secured from staff across the council absolutely endorses the council's strategy for leading and managing the workforce in the present context. It confirms that the majority of our staff understand the Council's vision and priorities and what their role is in delivering them. Overall, people feel well communicated with; developed and supported to achieve their objectives. The council's refreshed OD strategy has been well received, particularly the tighter co-ordination of mandatory training.

The assessment findings are particularly encouraging given the challenging operating context. The Council has worked hard to continue to engage and motivate staff throughout a very challenging budget period, which has involved significant reductions across many parts of the workforce. It is an excellent result that staff report service reviews to be well structured and managed; that people recognise the additional training available to help them adjust to their new responsibilities and some staff went as far as to say the changes have resulted in their roles becoming more interesting, challenging and productive.

A number of further improvement actions have been highlighted which are welcomed, particularly to help us manage the very difficult few years ahead. It is anticipated that the 2015-18 budget will demand some extensive changes which will impact significantly on staff; the continual refinement of the Council's OD strategy will be a key lever to ensure this is delivered constructively. The recommendations to help deliver this include a review and reinforcement of the management competency framework and application of the PDR process; further communication and expansion of the recognition strategy and a review of the staff suggestion scheme to ensure that every member of staff has the opportunity to contribute and engage with improvement, particularly the savings agenda.

More detailed findings and next steps are set out overleaf.

## Key Findings

The assessment process highlighted a number of areas of strength within the council with regards leading and managing people, including:

- a clear vision and underpinning strategy. Many managers believed that the vision and priorities were clearer than they had ever been; most staff had a sense of how they contribute to strategic objectives and the assessors found a good level of engagement of staff in the service and strategic planning process
- many examples were described of how people are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility. Effective delegation, managers encouraging certain individuals to take on additional projects, the setting up of specific teams (e.g. Task and Finish Teams) to address specific service improvements were all highlighted as good practice. Many staff indicated they prefer to be managed this way rather than through “micro management” and the approach represents best utilisation of the Council’s resources
- Learning and development needs in the majority of instances continue to be prioritised and regularly reviewed, planned and actioned at all levels. Appropriate provision was found and the increasing and effective use of in house expertise and skills through the refreshed OD strategy was recognised, particularly as this was something that was identified as an opportunity for improvement at the time of the Council’s last Review and which has been acted upon
- A series of good practice arrangements for managing new staff were identified, including the transition and induction of the Public health team and the management of the apprenticeship scheme. People accessing secondments also feel well supported in their new roles and consider these to be an effective form of personal development.
- Service Reviews also appear to have a clear structure to them and were considered by the majority of staff to have been led and managed effectively. Interestingly some staff felt that some of the changes that have been made have resulted in them having more interesting/challenging roles than was previously the case and a few teams described how the need to make efficiency savings has resulted in them working more effectively now and being able to achieve more as a result.

The re-assessment process also highlighted some areas for further improvement:

- there would appear to be scope to strengthen how the Council encourages staff to identify more innovative, creative and cost effective ways of working, particularly given the savings that still need to be made over the coming years
- The Bolton’s Best Awards were commended but staff feedback is that not everyone is aware of the awards and this form of recognition does not appeal to all staff. Therefore the council’s staff recognition arrangements to be reviewed and expanded, with involvement from staff, to ensure there is something of appeal for everyone
- A series of management and leadership challenges were highlighted, particularly in the current environment. These include:

- it should be acknowledged that some staff are finding it difficult to come to terms with the changes that need to be made, particularly during the review process itself
  - thought could also be given to how the organisation can best manage the required knowledge transfer, given the large numbers of staff leaving the organisation as a result of the savings agenda, to ensure the future sustainability of the organisation
  - it is important to confirm that all line managers are fulfilling their management responsibilities appropriately, in particular by ensuring that all staff receive a PDR and have access to the development process and discussions that result
- It would be helpful to formalise the council's approach to managing the health and wellbeing of staff, through a document which is linked to the business strategy. This is a particular priority in the context of staff absence levels increasing.

### Improvement Plan

Each of these issues was highlighted into an liP improvement plan, which has been developed into a set of proposals overleaf, for implementation by January 2015.

liP Recommendation for Council to Consider .....	Proposed approach
<p>1. Identifying more effective ways through which people can feed in their ideas to make cost savings/work differently.</p> <p>Ensure that this also captures people that are not able to access IT communication mechanisms easily if suggestions are required to be emailed in.</p>	<p>Review of current "Staff Suggestion Scheme" format and profile, including accessibility to staff from all groups, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● manager's directed to seek the view of their staff; debated at "Senior-Senior Manager's session"</li> <li>● staff views canvassed through the planned staff survey, autumn 2014</li> <li>● development of proposals corporately, in consultation with the TU</li> </ul>
<p>Encouraging managers to seek feedback from staff as to what they would like to see in place locally that would further recognise their contributions as appropriate.</p> <p>Identify how the Council can ensure that all people are aware of the staff recognition scheme, Bolton's Best.</p>	<p>Review to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● manager's directed to seek the view of their staff; debated at "Senior-Senior Manager's session"</li> <li>● staff views canvassed through the current staff survey</li> <li>● development of proposals corporately, in consultation with the TU</li> </ul>

liP Recommendation for Council to Consider .....	Proposed approach
<p>Revisiting how the Leadership and Management Competency Framework is utilised for maximum impact.</p> <p>Reintroduce as part of managers'/team leaders PDR</p>	<p>Review led by OD team, in consultation with senior-senior managers; Chief Officers &amp; Trade Unions</p> <p>Update / refresher work autumn 2014</p> <p>Reintroduction as part of 2015 PDR process</p>
<p>Developing a Council Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</p>	<p>Research into organisational requirements and best practice, including liP guidance, led by Occupational health Service in consultation with Public Health and HR</p> <p>Options developed</p> <p>Strategy rolled out from January 2015</p>

### **Recommendation**

The Cabinet is asked to note the Council's re-accreditation of the liP standard and endorse the proposed continuous improvement plan.