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**To:** Personnel Committee **Date:** 17 September 2012

**Subject:** Employee Retention - Exit Surveys

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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### **Summary**

To inform Personnel Committee on activities being undertaken to ensure we retain talent within KCC by understanding the reasons why employees decide to leave the organisation and taking appropriate action.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Retaining key staff during the tough times that KCC is going through is a challenge. Even though the workforce needs to contract as a consequence of Change to Keep Succeeding and KCC's continued transformation, there is a risk of losing employees that the organisation would like to retain.
- 1.2 Therefore since December 2011 Kent County Council has taken proactive steps to understand what prompts employees to leave the organisation. TalentDrain, an employee engagement and retention specialist, has been commissioned to provide an exit survey service for voluntary leavers. TalentDrain has been undertaking similar work in Kent schools. The survey is online although arrangements are made for employees who do not have access to a computer to complete a paper version.

## **2. Organisation Development and People Plan**

- 2.1 Skills retention forms part of the County Council's Organisation Development and People Plan which sets out how our people will deliver our strategic priorities.

## **3. Context**

- 3.1 KCC continues to transform and change the way it delivers services through innovation, efficiencies and increased commissioning. Since March 2011 the workforce has reduced by 1088 full time equivalents (FTE). The total FTE non schools workforce as at July 2012 is 8973. Turnover is currently running at 16.2% (excluding casuals).

3.2 During the period 16 December 2011 until 31 August 2012 a total of 540 employees voluntarily left KCC (i.e. excluding compulsory redundancies, dismissals etc). From these a total of 192 have completed the survey representing a 36% return rate, which is a positive response and a significant data set from which to interpret the key messages.

#### **4. Key Messages**

4.1 A presentation will be made at Personnel Committee that will highlight the key messages. The following is a summary based on exit surveys completed by former employees across all directorates:

4.2 Employees are asked for their views on 12 organisational and employment areas. They are Organisational Confidence; Cooperation; Career Progression; Salary & Rewards; Well Being; Vertical Relationships; Loyalty and Trust; Personal Growth; Job Satisfaction; Independence; Ethical Standards and Working Conditions.

4.3 Across every one of the above categories the majority of leavers were satisfied, most areas scored in excess of 70% with leavers stating that those elements were not a reason for leaving. Highest scoring areas include ethical standards 82%; Independence 79%; loyalty and trust 75%; job satisfaction 75%; vertical relationships 74% and; personal growth 70%.

4.4 Lowest scoring areas were Organisational Confidence 54%; Cooperation 60% and Career Progression 65%.

4.5 Approximately two thirds would work for KCC again and a similar number would recommend KCC as a place to work

4.6 Further details including Directorate level results, will be provided in the presentation at Personnel Committee.

#### **5. Measures to Address**

5.1 We know a motivated and committed workforce results in improved services to our customers. KCC is taking steps to increase levels of motivation through our Engagement Strategy (previously presented to Personnel Committee) and this in turn will support the retention of talent. While the headline messages are positive, particularly at a time of huge change, and notwithstanding the fact that the organisation needs to contract to achieve efficiencies and savings, there are a number of underlying areas that need to be improved. Through the Engagement Strategy and related activities KCC will continue to take actions to retain and develop a high performing workforce that will deliver services to our customers and Bold Steps for Kent. Key elements of the strategy include:

- Introduction of the Kent Manager standard (with training to support)
- Coaching - supporting performance and staff development
- Kent competencies, values and behaviours that were developed by staff

- Kmail and Kmag
  - Total Contribution Pay – we are continuing to strengthen the link between performance and pay
- 5.2 We have also undertaken the Employee Value Proposition survey through which we asked staff for their views on working for KCC. The results of this survey are informing further actions planned in direct response to what staff said.
- 5.3 A Rewards and Benefits survey is currently being undertaken to seek staff views on the employment package – this will inform how we will target resources in future.
- 5.4 The ‘Because of You’ communication and engagement campaign will be launched in the autumn that will focus on valuing and recognising work undertaken by individuals and teams to deliver services and Bold Steps.
- 5.5 KCC’s approach to workforce planning, talent management and succession planning are being further developed to maximise our ability to retain and deploy talent
- 5.6 Production of a management checklist reminding managers of their people management responsibilities including having regular team meetings and 1-1s, sharing information openly, recognising good performance.
- 6. Recommendations**
- 6.1 Personnel Committee is asked to note the key messages from employees who have left KCC and the measures being taken to ensure we maximise KCC’s ability to retain talent at the same time as the organisation is contracting and during a period of unprecedented change.

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