

# Innovation

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At first I had reservations concerning the Committee's decision to establish the working group and undertake a detailed scrutiny of the findings [...]

I am pleased to say that in practice, the approach adopted by the working group was constructive and helpful. [...]

The interest shown by the scrutiny function in the views and welfare of staff has helped to foster improved officer-member relations within the council.

**Fiona Marshall,**  
Chief Executive

## Winner

### Maldon District Council

#### Scrutiny of Staff Survey 2011 results

After negative results from its survey in 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny committee of Maldon District Council took the initiative of conducting a full review into the staff survey process, to highlight areas where improvement in the survey could be made, but also in tracking how survey responses were leading to council action. This was to test the approach taken by management, and to make sure that councillors were engaging with staff concerns.

**Judges** thought that this review provided an example of a council doing something different with performance management, and scrutiny helping with building relationships between officers and members.

#### Impact:

- The Staff Survey was conducted again in February 2013. It reported that the overall results showed a significant improvement in staff morale across the board (eg from 28% to 72% saying that "there is a positive culture within the council")
- A more consistent approach by the council and its members to working closely with staff to tackle issues, arising in part from Member representation on the council's Staff Forum, which provides Members with a direct link to frontline staff
- Agreement about the future conduct of staff surveys, and how management and staff can learn lessons effectively from the experience to bring about improvements.