



Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee
4 December 2013

Improving Staff Morale and Wellbeing

The purpose of this report is to share the feedback from the informal staff discussions held following the last meeting of the Committee, and to agree the next steps for the review of staff morale and wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

- At its last meeting, the Committee received a report on the activities being developed as part of the Council's People Strategy 2013-2018. The Strategy identifies the ways the Council is supporting, nurturing and equipping its staff to meet the Council's vision and deliver value for residents.
- Following the Committee meeting, three informal group discussions were held with staff from a range of services to receive feedback on the issues affecting their morale and wellbeing. The issues raised in those discussions are summarised in **Annexe 1**.
- The latest Quarterly Business Report (Quarter 2: July-September 2013) contains a number of indicators relating to staff. A copy of the report is attached to item 6 of this agenda.

FEEDBACK FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS

- The three feedback sessions held at Epsom Town Hall on 7 November 2013 involved 16 members of staff. Key issues arising from the feedback are as follows:

Positive Impacts on Morale and Wellbeing

- In the main staff were positive or very positive about their jobs and about working for the County Council.
- There was a strong public service ethos.
- Managers were supportive of staff, making effective use of 1:1 discussions, team meetings and using a coaching approach.

- The support in place, such as the Employee Assistance Scheme, was valued.
- Employee benefits were good.
- Good training opportunities were available and were having a positive impact.
- Praise and recognition was given when due.
- Staff were empowered to work beyond their role.
- Staff were treated with respect.
- Team working and support was highly valued, and team (rather than individual) performance awards were preferred.

Areas for Improvement in Relation to Morale and Wellbeing

- Staff were facing increasing pressures (see below) which led some to warn of the potential for the de-motivation of staff:
 - additional workload
 - increasing working hours
 - increasing public expectations
 - sickness cover.
- Delays in the provision of equipment required for the role and the resolution of problems for existing users by IMT.
- Delays in the provision of training for skills essential to the role.
- Lack of feedback/action in relation to suggestions made by staff.
- Pay constraint – cost of living impacts, as well as the lack of progression within grades meaning that staff were often doing the same job as colleagues for lower pay.
- Short-term additional responsibility is not recognised financially.
- Uncertainty and anxiety due to reorganisations.
- Too few workstations for staff at some locations.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee reviews the feedback from the staff discussion sessions and the results of the quarterly monitoring report, and considers any further work and/or recommendations it wishes to make in relation to staff morale and wellbeing.

Report contact: Bryan Searle, Senior Manager (Scrutiny & Appeals).
Contact details: 020 8541 9019/bryans@surreycc.gov.uk