



Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee
11 September 2014

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.

FEEDBACK FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS

- The three feedback sessions held at Epsom, Kingston and Leatherhead in November 2013, March and June 2014 involved 43 members of staff. Key issues arising from the feedback are as follows:

Positive Impacts on Morale and Wellbeing

- Staff reported that they enjoy working for SCC and are proud of their work
- There was a strong public sector ethos
- Employee Assistance Programme was mentioned frequently as a key area of support
- Staff felt they were treated with respect and valued for their efforts
- Benefits were considered excellent and wide-ranging, particularly health checks, gym subsidies and childcare discounts
- Flexi-working and opportunity to work from home was very popular
- Managers generally were supportive and provided helpful supervision
- Training on offer was viewed as good, specialised and extensive
- Annual appraisals and weekly 1:1s were generally useful
- Staff felt empowered to work beyond their role
- Appreciated David McNulty visiting teams

Areas for Improvement in Relation to Morale and Wellbeing

- **Communication**
 - Suggestion that staff communication should be multi channel and not simply rely on email and S-Net
 - Communication could improve between different departments, particularly the sharing of information
- **Technology**
 - IT equipment needed vast improvement and investment – Lotus Notes, internet explorer and BT Cloud
 - Concern about lengthy delays in fixing equipment
- **Office space**
 - Many offices needed better climate control and air conditioning as this affects productivity
 - Lack of hot desks
 - Some offices were overcrowded which was placing pressure on desks, toilets, photocopiers etc
- **Work pressure**
 - Members of the public could be very demanding
 - Workload could fluctuate dramatically, very high workload in certain areas such as Highways and social care
 - Some departments had a culture of very long working hours
- **Pay**
 - Desire for more competitive pay rates and unfreezing of pay (although aware of public sector limitations)
 - No progression within grades meant some colleagues doing the same work received different rates of pay
- **General**
 - Some delays in the provision of essential training
 - Reviews and appraisals were not always carried out properly
 - Reorganisation and cuts created concern about the future and fear of job instability
 - Suggestion that staff awards could be introduced to increase morale, such as 'team of the week'
 - Team days away seem to have lost funding and support

RECOMMENDATION

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

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