



Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee
7 November 2013

Improving Staff Morale and Wellbeing

The purpose of this report is to understand how we can find out how staff are feeling and what everyone can do to improve staff morale. The activities listed in this summary report are being developed as part of our People Strategy 2013 – 2018. The recently refreshed strategy emphasises the ways we are nurturing, supporting and equipping our people to meet the council's vision to deliver great value for Surrey residents.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Employee Morale Definition

The emotions, attitude, optimism, satisfaction and overall outlook of employees - the spirit of an organisation's workforce; it influences how successful an organisation becomes. Belief in self and belief in their organisation are both important factors in positive employee morale.

1.2. Factors that can contribute to positive employee morale include, but are not limited to:

- Supportive and effective leadership and management
- Empowering employees to take responsibility
- Treating employees with respect
- Providing regular employee recognition
- Offering open and regular communication about factors important to employees
- Providing feedback and coaching
- Offering good employee benefits

2. STAFF SURVEY

2.1. How do we know how staff are feeling?

Every two years we survey staff attitudes via a full employee survey. We also carry out regular employee “temperature check” surveys in between.

2.2. What are the top three results from the staff last survey?

- I have a say in how I do my work
- I am treated with fairness and respect
- Communications during change

All of these are higher than the Mori top ten

2.2.1. What did the Peer Review say?

“The general level of staff commitment, enthusiasm, pride and talent in the council is notable. The cultural changes that have been brought about have clearly motivated people and generated an atmosphere of enthusiasm, coupled with significant goodwill. Most of the staff that we met indicated they now feel much more empowered and able to ‘get on and deliver’ and people spoke of having regained a sense of pride about working for the council.”

2.3. What are the areas for improvement from the Staff Survey?

- I feel I can influence change
- I have experienced bullying and harassment

2.3.1. What did the Peer Review Say?

“The financial climate, with the need that it has generated for savings to be made, has inevitably impacted negatively on some individuals in the authority, although the number of compulsory redundancies has been limited to around 150 in recent years”

And

“Whilst major culture change has been delivered and leadership and management of the organisation are strong, the council recognises that elements of the old culture still prevail in some areas”

3. WHAT IS IN PLACE TO HELP IMPROVE STAFF MORALE?

3.1. The People Strategy

3.1.1. The People Strategy is harnessing a passion for public services, developing great leadership throughout the Council and

establishing a “one team” approach with all our people. There are four main areas of focus within the strategy:-

- Living our Values
- Wellbeing and Inclusion
- Nurturing Talent
- Reward and Recognition

3.2. Leadership

3.2.1. The introduction of the Higher Performance Development Programme for all Managers in November 2013. This includes a four day Raising and Sustaining Higher Performance workshop and the 'Team Talks' process which will focus on supporting managers to have difficult conversations and raise staff morale.

3.3. Training & Development

3.3.1. We encourage staff who have attended our in-house coaching programmes to join the coaching pool to increase the number of trained coaches available to support staff.

3.3.2. STARS training courses are more flexible and accessible for all staff. More opportunities for e-Learning, Masterclasses and LiteBites have been introduced to facilitate attendance and relieve workload pressures associated with time out of the office for training.

3.3.3. Career progression help is available through a set of tools and resources to enable staff to plan their careers. Of the five job families we have launched career progression in Business Functions and Personal & Social Well-being.

3.3.4. IT skills assessments are being completed to provide tailored IT support for staff to develop the IT skills they need for their role.

3.4. Engagement

3.4.1. Open and honest relationships with the trade unions and staff engagement groups. We encourage a high level of trust and confidence.

3.4.2. Appraisal system and processes to include our values. The recording process will be easier to complete so we can target support to managers where completion numbers are low.

3.5. Empowerment

- 3.5.1. New policies to support staff in resolving issues. A restorative approach is being introduced to establish an improved method of resolving differences at work.

3.6. Employee Benefits

- 3.6.1. Our purchasing power as a large local authority has been maximised and 6,000 people have signed up to take advantage of the savings and discounts available. These benefits are being extended to include support for staff when purchasing a new property or car.

3.7. Well-being

- 3.7.1. Redundancies have been minimised through a comprehensive redeployment service. The number of redundancies was kept relatively low (approximately 100 per year) during the Public Value Review programme.
- 3.7.2. We are prioritising the health and well-being of our people. For example, the Stay Healthy - Stay Well campaign was launched in August 2013 with the offer of 512 free, on-site, NHS Health Checks at 6 main area office buildings. Over 600 staff have booked appointments or subscribed.
- 3.7.3. Team Conversations - working in partnership with UNISON, the workplace Health Checks are being delivered in Adult Social Care. Also, team Wellbeing Conversations are being delivered. An organisation wide team conversations toolkit is being developed.
- 3.7.4. Stoptober - on-site smoking cessation sessions with a specialist advisor were launched on 30 September 2013.
- 3.7.5. Stress - a self-evaluation questionnaire for all staff is being designed and 24 management master classes on stress and mental health in the workplace are in development.

This report is for information and compliments the priorities in the People Strategy 2013 – 2018. A further update on these initiatives will be provided in 6 months.

Report contact: Carmel Millar, Head of HR&OD, Business Services.

Contact details: 020 8541 9824/carmel.millar@surreycc.gov.uk