

Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee

Review of the Employee Commission and Co-operative Values

Recommendations

For SMT

1. To maintain staff morale SMT should continue to work to the Co-operative Values during future restructures in terms of openness and honesty in communicating and consulting staff, and ensure all staff are aware of the support available to them.

Of course, the co-operative values continue to form the basis of the way that the organisation is led and we are pleased at the level of awareness and understanding found by the committee.

Specifically in respect of future re-structures we will continue to use a similar process as that used for previous re-structures which continues to have the support of the unions as a fair and transparent process.

We have reviewed our restructuring process where only minor change is proposed. This process still adheres to the Co-operative Council principles and values and still ensures that proposed change is clear, communicated and consulted upon and is influenced by those affected.

2. Consider how the Co-operative Values are embedded into corporate policies such as induction, PPDDs and other corporate Council policies.

The values already form an important part of induction briefings for new staff and will continue to do so.

Our schedule of council employment policies to be reviewed this year takes account of Co-operative Council values. The schedule has been shared and influenced by discussions with employee representatives.

3. As far as possible within the constraints of service delivery, Managers should support and encourage staff involvement in the Employee Voice or volunteering and recognise the contribution these staff are making to the overall development of the organisation or to the local community or in enriching skills within the organisation.

An employee volunteering policy is in place and employees are encouraged to volunteer through a number of avenues including specific projects for which additional time off is given. Volunteer awards each year recognise employees who have participated in voluntary activity.

4. The review of Team Briefs should take account of the good practice highlighted in this report. As a minimum:
 - All teams should have regular briefings. Service areas should review regularly to ensure it meets the needs of the service and staff. There should be guidelines and training for Managers delivering team briefs to ensure consistency and good practice across all areas.
 - Briefings should include corporate information and promoting co-operative approaches (e.g. Council-wide updates, sharing good practice and examples of co-operative working, feedback on the Employee Voice, Values refreshers, ensuring staff are aware of where they can find information).
 - Managers should e-mail feedback afterwards so staff who cannot attend know what happened and ensure there is a system for cascading this to staff without computers.
 - They should be 2-way so staff can raise issues and get a response which is shared with the team unless it is an individual issue.
 - Managers should take account of individual staff needs (e.g. visual impairment)
 - ADs should engage as far as possible with team briefs particularly on restructures. (Members are aware that ADs carry a huge workload and there are significant time constraints, but were convinced by evidence of the positive impact of senior leadership.)

The guidance on team briefs will be reviewed to pick up the issues identified by scrutiny and will be included as a regular item at Manager Engagement Forums. The impact of team briefs will be measured periodically to ascertain whether they are taking place and working

5. The effectiveness of the various methods/channels of communication should be reviewed so that resources are focussed on what staff use.

There is a communication and engagement matrix that incorporates methods and channels of communication. This will be reviewed with the communications team

Make sure one person in each team without a computer has access and can print information to share with colleagues.

Managers have explicit responsibility to ensure that this happens. Those roles without computer access are now well established and processes in place.

6. Consider the points and suggestions raised in this report.

For Scrutiny

7. Scrutiny members should as a matter of routine consider talking to staff delivering services as part of a scrutiny review where appropriate and in consultation with SMT.

Noted, this should be subject to the same provisions as below about liaising with SMT to minimise service disruption

8. Incorporate Scrutiny into staff induction programme (Scrutiny Chair to attend) and into Online “Council Decision Making Process” training and any other relevant information.

Induction is continually updated – we will work with a representative from scrutiny to include an overview of scrutiny into the induction programme and any other programmes where appropriate

For Cabinet/Members

9. All Cabinet members should continue walkabouts in the service areas relevant to their Cabinet responsibilities, and in other areas when possible, to build a firmer direct relationship with staff and to learn from their experience. (Members should liaise with SMT to minimise service disruption.)

The Leader is aware of this recommendation and walkabouts are undertaken by all members of cabinet regularly.

For Employees

Information is a dual responsibility. Just as managers are responsible for providing information, staff need to take responsibility for keeping themselves informed. This could be making time to read e-mails or attend engagement sessions, pro-actively seeking information on the intranet or other available media, or asking for it.

Employees will be reminded of this through Staff News.