

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder Meeting
23 January 2007

AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive / HR Coordinator

RESULTS OF THE 2006 STAFF SURVEY

Purpose

1. To inform the Portfolio Holder of the results of the 2006 staff survey.

Executive Summary

2. Portfolio Holder to:
 - (a) Note the survey was an interim survey concentrating on communication.
 - (b) Note the responses to the survey showed there have been improvements but that there are still some areas for concern.
 - (c) Note that Senior Management Team welcomed and endorsed the actions proposed by the volunteer staff group to address issues raised in the results of the survey.

Background

3. A survey of all staff at SCDC has taken place biennially since 2002. This particular survey, concentrating on communication, was intended as an interim survey in 2005 following the 2004 survey. It was delayed because of 'capping' and staff shortages within the HR-Payroll team. It is intended to run the full survey in 2007.
 - (i) To form this 'interim survey' 14 questions were extracted from the 2004 survey which included the section 'Internal Communication' and other questions relating to managers and Management Team. Added to these were 3 new questions from the communications team concerning preferred way to receive information and use of Insite.
 - (ii) The survey was run 'In house' by HR supported by ICT. Paper questionnaires were circulated with payslips as with previous surveys. The questions could also be answered 'on line'.
 - (iii) HR collated the results.
 - (iv) The response was 42%.
 - (v) A staff group of volunteers from across SCDC looked at the results and produced points for action.
 - (vi) Twelve 'quick wins' for internal communication were presented to Senior management team for consideration at their meeting on 18 December 2006.

Considerations

4. The results from the 14 previously asked questions were compared with 2004 results and norm reference information where available. This shows improvement in most areas when compared with 2004. Results from the questions from the communications team had no previous comparative data.
 - **Internal Communication** = all 6 questions have increased percentages:

- up by 6% for both questions **communication in my section is good** and **communication between my section and others is good**;
- up by 4% for **I get the information I need to do my job well** and **I feel well informed about what is happening in the Council**; and
- SCDC is performing above norm reference figures in these areas.

The remaining two questions continue to show steady improvement:

- up by 5% to 47% for **I know what is going on in the Council without relying on rumour** and is nearly in line with the norm reference of 49%; and
- Up by 2% to 47% for **I am told about Council-wide changes before they occur**.
- **Management style** = both questions have percentages in the high 70s indicating good two-way communication at team level.
- **Management Team** = mixed results
- Strong improvement from 41% to 62% for - **MT works hard to keep in contact with staff**
- Improvement from 36% to 37% for - **I have confidence in the decisions made by MT**
- Held at 39% for - **I have confidence in the leadership provided by MT**
- Drop from 47% to 43% for - **MT has communicated a clear vision for the Council's future**
- Drop from 47% to 42% for - **MT is genuinely concerned for the well being of staff**
- Drop from 39% to 34% for - **I feel MT values what I do for the Council**
- **Internal Communication Systems**
- In summary, use of Insite is regular - either daily (57%) or 1-2 week (36%). All key areas of Insite are accessed, with no one area being more popular than another.
- Staff selected the full range of preferred methods of receiving 'internal' information, but selections were in the following order of popularity:
 - 49% Department team briefing - however, it was repeatedly stressed in the feedback that this should be a properly organised 'cascade system'.
 - 18.5% All SCDC emails
 - 17% Insite
 - 13.5% Director briefings
 - 2% South Cambs magazine

Options

5. To do nothing or to try to address issues raised.

Implications

6.	Financial	
	Legal	
	Staffing	The point of a survey is to get a picture of how staff are feeling and make improvements where possible and so improve staff morale, loyalty and commitment to SCDC.
	Risk Management	
	Equal Opportunities	

Consultations

7. A 'Staff group' of volunteers from across SCD met on 21 November 2007. After discussing the results the following suggestions were presented to Senior management team:

Briefing note

"The following '12 quick wins' are as a direct result of the staff survey 2006 and the staff group meeting on 21 November 2006.

All of these ideas will feed directly into SCDC's internal communications strategy, currently being drafted by the communications team. The focus of the strategy is how to use internal communications to manage change, recognising SCDCs unique culture and encouraging a shift in ethos.

- (i) **Large notice board** on the ground floor opposite the lifts, managed by the communications team. Sections marked out for SCDC information on a variety of topics e.g. new starters, weekly CEX communication, top-level structure charts, member information, wellbeing initiatives/classes etc. This is a first phase action. Other phases will include a review of board use across the authority and provision made to improve/update use across Cambourne HQ and Waterbeach.
- (ii) **Floor maps** that are easy to use for Cambourne and Waterbeach. Designed for easy orientation and including a 'you are here' indicator.
- (iii) **Structure charts** with photographs of top three tiers on display – to be made available on notice boards and on Insite.
- (iv) **Promote a vision for SCDC.** What is the final goal/desired outcome of the transformation project? What are we all working towards?
- (v) **Show staff are valued** by regular internal publicity of customer compliments and thank you's. To review approach to thanking staff by senior management and members to ensure it is genuine and fair.
- (vi) **Meet the senior management team.** Set up a regular one hour 'meet Greg and Steve' slot open to all, but with limited, bookable places. Could include a short talk and then questions from the floor – the focus will be on honest and open chatting and encouraging opinions. The communications team could attend to note questions and answers (or help find out answers) for a regularly updated FAQ publication.
- (vii) **FAQs** publicised on Insite to help staff through the transformation project process – answering questions that concern staff on the ground.
- (viii) **Senior management team meet staff.** Greg and Steve to be more visible 'on the floor' and aim to talk to different staff, know people and what they do.
- (ix) **Keep the CEX weekly message fresh.** Ensure the style of communication is:
 - personal and friendly
 - avoids corporate spin and sugar coated messages
 - sincere
 - brief and to the point

- (x) **Develop and support managers.** To ensure managers become excellent leaders:
 - target training
 - set up short and informal networking meetings for different tiers with speaker/focus subjects
 - provide an online 'manager resource' with bite size chunks of communication top tips, access to change management information, team meeting and appraisal support etc.
- (xi) **Develop team meetings.** Rethink the current adhoc team briefing system.
 - change title 'team briefings' to 'team meetings' to shift emphasis onto input from everyone
 - draw up simple guidance on how they should be conducted, emphasising two way flow of information and team response
- (xii) **Join up thinking.** Actively support Waterbeach to participate in Cambourne HQ led activities ie. raffles, cake sales, fundraising events."

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

8.	Affordable Homes	
	Customer Service	Standards for internal customer service should be at least as good as standards for external clients.
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	How staff are feeling and/or any problems with internal communication can affect work output.
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Recommendations

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Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

1. 2006 staff survey Communication at all levels;
2. Basic analysis of results for circulation;
3. Briefing note: '12 quick wins for internal communication';
4. Minutes of Senior Management Team, 18 December 2007.

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