

CASSI Select Committee Staff Discussion Group

13 July 2009

Q 11.12 Employees are encouraged to make suggestions to improve the way things are done around here?

What works well

Staff suggestion schemes, with suggestions fed back at team meetings and line manager following through the agreed actions

Weekly team meetings with open agendas

Open door policy so able to feed back suggestions and ask questions

Annual staff away days when staff can influence and shape the programme for the following year

What does not work so well

When suggestion boxes do not get used or suggestions are not acted upon

There is no mechanism to feed back/make suggestion regarding KYIT or issues in general

It is not clear how to make suggestions for other service areas

The routes for making suggestions seem to be focussed on those relating to Customer First/improving communication with the public rather than communication within or between departments

Possible Improvement

KYIT should be circulated electronically

Cultural change needed, staff need to be encouraged to make suggestions

Q11.13 Communication between departments is good in this organisation

What works well

Resources team have good contact with BSF

At senior level there is the Setting the Standards events, and the actions and issues from this gets cascaded down to other staff

Resources hold staff forums twice a year to introduce teams to each other. This would be a useful exercise Council wide

What does not work well

No established process

There is a need to understand how the work of different services/departments impacts on each other

When officers have a query or issue with another department, they tend to contact an officer in that department who they know, rather the correct officer to deal with the issue.

Have to search for structure charts

Officers often don't know where to go for information on other departments

Some officers work in isolation and do not recognise the importance of sharing information between departments

Some officers are unfamiliar with how to put information on the intranet

Corporate Induction was not considered very useful

Officers not generally aware of Councillor Roles

Possible Improvements

There should be an appointed contact person in each department for queries from other departments are sent to in cases where the officer is unsure who to contact

Structure charts for all services should be in one place on the intranet

A central email address that everybody can check would be a useful way to share information

New staff should be introduced to staff in other departments that they would work with regularly.

Q 11.25 I am kept informed about matters that affect me

Q 11.27 The organisation keeps employees informed

What works well

KYIT and Postmaster keep staff informed

Like being copied into emails that are circulated between staff in own department, as this keeps people informed about developments

Items on team meeting agenda to receive CMT/ SGMT minutes

When Xentrall was being formed, there were a lot of rumours circulating, however management were able to quash rumours by keeping staff informed

Newsletter for Stockton Renaissance/partnerships summarising key developments is useful

Possible Improvements

Quarterly achievements could be introduced to KYIT to gain an insight into other departments. Alternatively a separate newsletter could be circulated highlighting achievements

More news on the Chief Executive and Leader's work should be included in KYIT

Could be a Chief Executive's blog

Should be topic alert emails for information uploaded onto internet and intranet

Should be more links between democratic services and Stockton Renaissance/partnership, with the same system for meetings agenda/minutes used to ensure consistency

Q11.26 I receive regular feedback on satisfaction levels from users of our services

What works well

BSF have a shared inbox, and officers/public are invited and encouraged to email questions and suggestions

Some departments carry out satisfaction surveys and the results are raised at team meeting.

Commendations and complaints system widely used, and some raise these at team meetings.

Employee of the month/year scheme is in operation in some departments. Individual staff nominate a colleague and vote is carried out. Managers contribute to prize – usually voucher

Customer Services have their own internal audits to check that issues and complaints are dealt with and subsequent actions taken are implemented

What does not work well

Less emphasis on internal satisfaction surveys

Possible Improvements

An easy guide is needed to show how to conduct satisfaction surveys and feed back to staff

More attention should be given to complaints that are received and any patterns

Need a group to come together regularly to look at satisfaction levels – this may already happen at a higher level.

Need to be careful about length of surveys

Need to be mindful when to carry out surveys i.e. sometime tagging on a survey to the end of a telephone call is not always convenient
Mystery shopping is a good way to survey communication with other departments and the public

Recording telephone calls and replaying them to staff is a good way to evaluate how good staff are at communication

Q 11.51 The reason for change are well communicated to me

What works well

When line managers are informed of urgent issues immediately and this is cascaded to the teams, so don't have to wait until team meeting to find out information

Staff have been well informed of the current preferred option of transferring council housing stock to an RSL.

What does not work well

Communication of big changes is generally handled well, but smaller changes which may affect a person's individual job are not always communicated so well.

The possible temporary closure of Stockton Central Library has been under proposal for some time, but only recently received the information. This is an example of not communicating effectively.

Officers sometimes do not have time to check the intranet

Possible Improvements

Email box should be set up so that any team or department can email information regarding changes

Head of Services have meetings and information should be cascaded down on all issues, not just those issues in the Head of Service own area.

When given information, we need to be informed whether this is in the public domain.

Overall

KYIT should not be circulated as a hard copy, but electronically. This would also allow for it to be circulated more regularly/more issues. Staff could be emailed a link similar to the Workplace Health Newsletter.