

Staff Consultation - What you said and what we plan to do about it

In the summer of 2003 BMG Research carried out a survey to find out what staff thought about working for Cambridge City Council. You can see the findings from this survey on the Council's website:

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/strategy-and-partnerships/policy-officer/city-council-staff-survey-2003.en>

or on the intranet:

<http://intranet.ccc.local/Guidelines/Staff-Survey-Report-22Aug2003.DOC>

In October 2004 BMG ran a series of focus groups with staff from across the Council to explore some of the issues that had come out of the survey. You can see the findings from the focus groups on the intranet:

<http://intranet.ccc.local/Guidelines/Focus-Groups-2004.doc>

BMG also ran some additional focus groups with staff from City Services. You can see the findings from the City Services' focus groups on the intranet:

<http://intranet.ccc.local/Guidelines/FocusGroups-CityServices-2004.doc>

If you would like to see a copy of the reports but you do not have access to the intranet, please contact Amanda Cator on extension 7060 and she will arrange for a paper copy to be sent to you.

This newsletter gives a quick overview of the key messages coming from the focus groups and lets you know what Corporate Management Team (CMT) intend to do in response to the issues raised by staff.

First, the positive messages....

- ☺ On the whole, staff are satisfied with Cambridge City Council as their employer and they feel that the Council has a good reputation.
- ☺ Staff feel that the Council is a relatively good place to work, especially in terms of providing the job security, training and favourable benefit packages typical in local government.
- ☺ Regardless of grade, department or position, most people seem to enjoy their work and find it fulfilling.
- ☺ There is a general acknowledgement that the benefits, such as pensions, training opportunities and flexitime (for some staff) go some way to compensating for the perception that salaries are lower in the public sector.
- ☺ With some exceptions, staff feel that morale is fairly high and most members of staff would recommend a career with the Council to their friends and family.
- ☺ Staff from most departments say that the City Council is good at communication with them and they generally find the different methods used to communicate (such as team meetings, manager's briefings, letters, staff magazines, newsletters and e-mails) useful.
- ☺ Staff in City Services are very positive about the leadership in their department.

And now the not so positive messages and what Corporate Management Team will do about them...

- ☹️ Staff generally feel that senior management are uninspiring and that neither councillors nor senior management communicate a clear vision or clear priorities.
- ❖ CMT will review how the Council's Vision Statement and Medium Term Objectives are communicated to staff.
- ❖ CMT will try holding open sessions for staff to inform staff about big issues facing the Council and to give staff a chance to ask questions, make suggestions, or raise issues with the Chief Executive and Directors.
- ❖ CMT will also rotate the venue of their meetings so that they are more visible in the organisation.
- ❖ Directors will hold open door sessions for their staff and offer to attend team meetings within their departments so that staff can ask questions, make suggestions, or raise issues.
- ❖ CMT will agree standard objectives for Directors and Heads of Service to help communicate a consistent and corporate message to staff.
- ☹️ Staff said that there needs to be better prioritisation of work and resources. Some staff feel that they are asked to do more and more additional work without stopping any existing work to compensate.
- ❖ Priorities for every Council service are set at the beginning of each year by Executive Councillors. These priorities are published in Service Plans. Staff then have performance reviews where individuals discuss objectives and priorities with their manager. During the coming year CMT will be working with councillors to look at how work is prioritised at all levels within the Council to see if our processes can be improved.
- ❖ The Head of Human Resources will be producing a new Organisational Development Strategy for the Council. This will include work to ensure that managers involve staff in agreeing work programmes and priorities. The strategy will encourage managers to look at new ways of doing things to make better use of resources.

- ☹️ Some staff feel that councillors do not always support officers and do not fully understand what officers do.
- ❖ Councillors set Council policy and it is not their role to get involved in the detail of Council services. We will do some work with councillors and managers to clearly define the different roles and responsibilities and we will make this available to staff.
- ☹️ There is a perception amongst some staff that there is inequality between departments. Some departments stick to corporate rules and regulations and some don't. Staff feel that there needs to be more consistency across the organisation.
- ❖ Later in 2005 the Head of Human Resources will produce guidelines for managers which will include how often team meetings should be held, how and when to hold staff supervision meetings and how messages from CMT should be cascaded through the organisation to all staff.
- ❖ The Chief Executive and Directors will check for consistency in Council policies and processes.
- ☹️ There is a perception amongst staff that change is not always managed well within the Council.
- ❖ CMT agreed that the messages from the staff consultation should be taken on board during any future change management processes.
- ☹️ Some staff complained about poor office accommodation. In particular, old and cramped offices and a shortage of rest room and kitchen facilities.
- ❖ There have been recent improvements for some staff (particularly the move from Downing Street to Lion House).
- ❖ In the next few weeks the Director of Central Services will be presenting a paper to CMT about office accommodation so that Directors can decide what can realistically be done to try and improve matters.

If you have any questions about staff consultation, please contact Vicki Davidson on extn 8108, Trevor Woollams on extn 7061 or Janet Wilson (for City Services) on extn 8297