

## **PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP AN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

### **DEFINITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

The concept of “employee engagement” has received growing interest recently, with a range of research into what engagement is and its effects on organisational performance and increasing emphasis from government in this area. However, there are varying interpretations of employee engagement and it is useful to begin by considering what is meant by the term within the council:

*Employee engagement is the discretionary commitment and enthusiasm people give to the Council, their services and their colleagues, which means we can provide better more effective services and that it matters to employees that the Council does well.*

*In developing an employee engagement programme, the Council wants to enable people to be the best they can be at work. Positive employee engagement is the difference between people coming to work and doing an adequate job, and people coming to work and really giving of their best, displaying creativity and using their initiative.*

### **CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR CHANGE**

It is now well established through research that an engaged workforce contributes to the success of the organisation. As organisations strive to improve performance and deliver best practice, employees working willingly at their optimum provides an advantage in achieving efficient, high quality services. The challenge for the employer is to set a clear context for employees; to help them recognise the significant difference they are making on a daily basis and in return, to acknowledge that contribution and ensure employees know they are valued through the way they are managed. Key to success is ensuring that corporate priorities become embedded in the organisational culture, and that staff across all services and at all levels have opportunities to contribute to the delivery of successful outcomes.

The Council’s 2011 Employee Survey Results show that the vast majority of employees enjoy their job and 85% are happy to go that extra mile when needed. Over 8 in 10 also believe that they can make a difference in their day to day work. The survey shows that the Council’s workforce has a strong public service ethos and our overall engagement index from the survey results is 72%, higher than others in the public sector benchmark. However, there are less positive results in relation to views of the council as a whole with less than half being aware of what the Council is trying to achieve. Leadership, council culture, management of change and cross service communication are all areas where the employee survey shows lower

percentages of positive feedback . There is also wide variation in the results across services. This suggests inconsistency of management practice and that there is a degree of disconnect between the “corporate” council and its employees. These are issues that could be addressed through a strongly led and consistent employee engagement programme.

## PURPOSE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

### WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

#### New Culture

##### *Listen / Engage / React*

- |  |    |  |
|--|----|--|
| • Lack of Direction  | to | Clear direction, leadership, and shared values |
| • Poor Public Image  | to | Confident and successful reputation            |
| • Change is negative                                       | to | Change is positive                             |
| • Inconsistent Management practice                         | to | Effective management practice                  |
| • Low trust organisation with perception of hidden agendas | to | High trust with open and honest communications |
| • Focus on capacity  | to | Focus on empowerment                           |

#### Clear Effective Leadership

Leadership is vital - we need to share the vision, set direction, acknowledge progress and provide a clear narrative to help employees understand where they fit. This requires:

- Effective leadership – clear sense of context in which we are leading
- Leading change - motivating; inspiring confidence; providing knowledge and generating understanding
- Building relationships – treating each other with respect
- Being supportive, approachable and demonstrating “can do” attitude
- Helping employees deal with challenges and get us through the hard times
- Empowering staff to get involved
- Being ambitious role models – recognising successes and setting high standards

## **Empowerment of Managers**

Most research into employee engagement recognises that operational managers are pivotal. They are the conduit for information up and down the organisation; they hold the service information and have direct access to and influence on employees delivering services. Our employee survey re-enforces this. Service management and communication is viewed positively. Therefore, it is important that this management resource is harnessed effectively and that managers are appropriately skilled and supported in their role. Therefore, many of the actions in the programme below focus on involving and enabling managers better. In particular, action is needed to:

- Give timely information to managers first to ensure they understand the message and direction required so that they can translate this into a service context and ensure services respond appropriately.
- Provide a clear and consistent statement of expectations of managers
- Provide access to management development
- Make time for people management

## **Delivery of Key Messages**

Often communication can lack direction and come over as complex and confusing. Only 56% of employees in the employee survey find the information they receive easy to understand. Therefore, we must:

- Provide a simple expression of what we are here for – the overall sense of purpose for the Council.
- Provide understandable goals that help define the boundaries of what is useful activity and what is not.
- Clearly establish what want to communicate and make messages simple

In the main it is expected that CMT or the Chief Executive would set the Key Messages for each activity. These are then re-enforced through the further activities in the programme. It may be that issues stem from government, other external sources or elected members, but these will be set in context and prioritised for engagement with employees.

## THE MORAY COUNCIL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2011

### AIMS OF ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

- building and communicating shared priorities for the benefit of Moray
- encouraging leadership at all levels
- planning now, for the future
- empowering managers to engage their staff in service issues and the change process
- creating opportunities and confidence for people to contribute at a level that is right for them
- creating an environment for collaborative working and sharing good practice
- developing honesty and transparency
- encouraging consultation, communication and engagement
- establishing a cycle of engagement and improvement

### PROGRAMME OF ACTION

To achieve change, action needs to be clearly led and sustained. It is important to create the time and expectation for these actions to be put in place and maintained. There is considerable scope for improvement across the Council, in some cases by learning from the examples of best practice that are already in place. However, the initial actions need to focus on creating a strong base point across services, which will form a foundation for the development and improvement of employee engagement throughout Moray Council. Therefore, the programme set out below builds up the actions over a 2 year period and establishes an ongoing engagement cycle for future development.

#### 1. Develop employee promise/charter/proposition:

- (i) set out what employees can expect of the organisation, how they will be managed and what they can expect in return (**Appx 1**). Jan 2012
- (ii) Extend to statement of management standards and expectations which all managers are required to sign up to. Dec 2012
- (iii) Develop management standards to link more closely to competencies and be used for assessment of development needs. Dec 2013

#### 2. Managers' briefings

- (i) chief executive quarterly briefing to 3<sup>rd</sup> tier managers on strategic issues, priorities and direction. Corporate Directors will join the Chief Executive to

participate in an open question and answer session. Generates understanding of and commitment to a management direction which managers will communicate to teams and take forward within services (e.g. service planning). Mar 2012

- (ii) Summary briefing material or copy of presentation provided to managers post meeting to aid communication within services Mar 2012

### 3. Team Talk

- (i) Managers will hold face to face meetings with staff on a regular basis to set the strategic issues, priorities and direction in a service context and ensure appropriate action to support and deliver. Apr 2012
- (ii) The Corporate Management Team will identify ISSUES once per month that are to be communicated by managers to their teams. These will be sent electronically to all managers each month. Jan 2012
- (iii) Time for team talk will be reviewed after 12 months to assess whether further developments are required to support this communication. Dec 2012
- (iv) Managers will be required to develop structured plans for team talk (e.g. corporate priorities; service planning; team issues; individual development or training) Aug 2012
- (v) Summaries of activities and feedback will be prepared and considered at DMTs to inform future actions and activities. Directors will feed this into CMT. Dec 2012

### 4. Listening Meetings

- (i) Chief Executive will meet with groups of 8 to 12 managers for a structured discussion based on key corporate initiatives. Will refer to issues from Managers Briefings and how these are progressing in services. Also discussion of corporate initiatives, how staff are reacting in services, etc. Series of meetings to be held twice per year. July - Oct 2012
- (ii) Overarching report of discussions will be prepared for consideration by Corporate Management Team and be used to inform next Managers' briefings and corporate planning. Oct 2012

Listening days will be extended to staff. On 2 days per year a series of 60 minute sessions will be established for up to 15 employees to meet with the Chief Executive and e.g. 2 senior managers to discuss issues affecting them and their services. Invitations will be extended but groups can also submit a request. May/June 2013

## 5. Service/Learning Visits

- (i) CMT will spend one afternoon per month on a visit to a service, meeting staff. This will allow employees to engage directly with senior managers and to give their feedback on the issues that affect them in order to raise management awareness and that appropriate actions can be taken. Feb 2012
- (ii) The Convenor/Vice Convenor (and other senior members?) will accompany the Chief Executive on a series of visits to services e.g. over a week of the committee recess, to engage directly with employees and allow services to show case achievements and good practice. Sept 2012

## 6. Employee Conference

- (i) Annual employee conference will continue to be organised for up to 200 invited employees to attend an event which will highlight corporate issues, feature key council projects and provide an opportunity to engage directly with senior managers through discussion groups. Already in place

## 7. Chief Executive Blog/Questions

- (i) The Chief Executive will establish a Blog with running communication giving an informal personal perspective. This needs to be updated at least weekly and must be rigorously maintained. Senior managers will take guest slots to ensure a continuous flow of information. Feb 2012
- (ii) Question Time – a regular mechanism for employees to submit questions or suggestions directly to the chief executive and have responses published on the intranet. August 2012
- (iii) Questions Live – live interactive web based session where chief executive or members of CMT will be give an interactive webcast for employees and then participate in questions. This will be a quarterly event. Jan 2013

## 8. Employee Recognition

Dec 2012

Develop awards scheme to recognise team and individual achievement.

## 9. Reaction

May 2012 onwards

- (i) There will be a systematic review of experience and feedback from each stage of the engagement programme. This will involve preparing a brief summary of the purpose, activity and main outcomes/responses for the main activity headings (e.g. manager briefings, team talk, etc). These will be used to assess the effectiveness of the activities, to adjust them as required, to respond to learning points and for future planning and development of the engagement process. Reports will be considered on a 6-monthly basis by CMT/SMT. Oct 2012

(ii) Sharing and Learning from Good Practice – examples will be drawn from the engagement process and actions developed for these to be shared where appropriate. This will require further consideration and development as the opportunities begin to emerge. **Dec 2012**

(iii) There will be communication to employees and their representatives of Reaction and measures put in place using the engagement process and normal council communications. **Dec 2012**

## **10. Management Training and Support** **Apr 2012 – Apr 2013**

The Council will support, develop and provide access to development and training for managers to support the implementation of effective employee engagement. Managers will also be appropriately supported to address the findings and recommendations from the engagement programme. To assist a consistent and committed programme, the following training will be available using modules from or complimentary to the developing the Public Sector Leadership management development programme. Senior managers will be expected to participate in 2 modules per year in order to set and cascade the new culture:

- Leadership: leading to motivate and transform; developing teams to thrive in a challenging environment; transformational leadership.
- Supporting People through change: dealing with the human reactions to change; coaching and challenging conversations.
- Fulfilling our Potential: anticipating and planning services for the future based on early interventions and innovation and creativity.

## **MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING** **Dec 2012**

Organisational intelligence will be used to monitor the effects of the employee engagement programme. This will include the employee survey, psif results, feedback from consultations and employee representatives, feedback from managers' sessions. Where appropriate, additional focussed surveys or consultations may be used to gauge impact and effectiveness of particular measures or in particular service areas. This will be reported to CMT/SMT for review and forward planning.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Use of The Term “Manager”**

Throughout this document “Manager” is used as a generic term to refer to supervisors and managers at all levels of the Council. When referring to communication within teams and services “manager” is used to describe the most senior employee in the team who would normally pass information to and from employees. This could be a chargehand, site supervisor, department head, team leader, etc.

“Senior Manager” is used to refer to the top three tiers of management within the Council, including head teachers.

CMT/SMT – this refers to the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service.

**Appendix 1****EMPLOYEE CHARTER**

We know that people; their skills, capacity and commitment are the key to delivering and improving council services. Our employee charter sets out our commitment to our employees to work effectively in partnership with them to ensure the best possible council services for the communities of Moray.

**As an employee of the Moray Council you can expect:**

- Clear and visible leadership
- A focus on efficiency, innovation and continuous improvement
- Opportunities for personal growth, career development and continuous learning
- An environment for collaborative working and sharing good practice
- A culture of honesty, transparency and pride in public service
- Communication and engagement which recognises and values your contribution
- Consultation with trade unions and employee representatives on work related matters
- To be treated fairly, with respect and to be valued and supported in the workplace
- Commitment to equality of opportunity for all
- Promotion of well-being and a healthy and safe working environment

**Managers Will:**

- Provide effective leadership with a clear sense of direction and context
- Demonstrate leadership by example and support and encourage you to perform
- Communicate effectively so that you can understand how you are affected
- Be clear on your role, duties and acceptable standards of performance
- Be supportive, approachable and demonstrate a “can do” attitude
- Help you deal with challenges and change
- Give you regular constructive feedback and participate in the employee review and development process to support your development

**In Return we expect you to:**

- Understand our communities and be committed to enhancing their well-being
- Understand and contribute in your team to the aims and values of your service and the Council
- Be committed to and show respect for your customers
- Do the best you can and take responsibility for and pride in your work
- Contribute to and participate in the development of your service

- Value and respect your colleagues, be a team player
- Be open to change, new ideas and challenge
- Be committed to your own learning and development
- Adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct and any relevant job related standards.
- Be an ambassador for the Council and ambitious for Moray