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SUPPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

DATE: THURSDAY 21 JANUARY 2010

TIME: 10.00 AM

PLACE: COUNCIL HOUSE (NEXT TO THE CIVIC CENTRE)

Committee Members–

Councillor James, Chair

Councillor Lowry, Vice Chair

Councillors Berrow, Dann, Sam Leaves, Lock, Stark, Stevens and Thompson

Co-opted Representatives

Substitutes–:

Any Member other than a Member of the Cabinet may act as a substitute member provided that they do not have a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter under review.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

Members and Officers are requested to sign the attendance list at the meeting.

**BARRY KEEL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUPPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

9. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY (TO FOLLOW) (Pages 1 - 2)

To receive an update on the Internal Communications Strategy.

City of Plymouth

Subject: Update on internal communications
Committee: Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Date: 21 January, 2010
CMT Member: Ian Gallin, Assistant Chief Executive
Author: Richard Longford, Head of Communications
Contact: richard.longford@plymouth.gov.uk
Part: Part 1

1. Introduction

A strategy to develop and improve internal and external communication in Plymouth City Council has been produced annually since 2004.

Three years ago a Communications Framework was published as part of the 'Striving for Success' Organisational Development Plan (appendix 1). This aimed to set out the organisation's commitments and standards for communicating with employees.

To help embed this framework into the culture of the organisation it was decided in 2009 to include an internal communications strand in CIP 13 – helping Council staff to perform better.

2. Key elements of the Council's internal communications framework

The framework aims to ensure employees are kept informed and that internal communication is two-way, by:

- Publishing a regular staff newsletter
- Providing an intranet with daily news and information updates for the 4,000 staff with access to PCs and providing links to a wide range of information and tools.
- Providing a monthly Team Briefing for managers to discuss with their staff at team meetings. The aim is to ensure important issues affecting the Council is discussed and for staff to give their feedback.
- Providing departmental and corporate staff conferences and briefings.
- Providing opportunities for employees to meet senior manager, such as 'open door' sessions and by managers 'walking the floor'.
- Holding one to one meetings between employees and their line managers and holding annual staff appraisals.
- Providing corporate and departmental inductions for all new employees
- Holding regular conferences to keep managers informed about corporate priorities and performance and encouraging them to brief their staff.

3. Internal communication performance

The 2007 Staff Survey showed there had been a significant improvement in internal communication since the previous survey in 2003. There were some areas where the Council's performance was in line or slightly better than similar authorities. For example,

- A higher than average number of staff felt they were aware of the organisations's long term goals.
- The numbers of employees feeling they had enough information to do their job well was average.

However, there were a number of areas in which performance was below average, including staff views on communication by managers. For example,

- 44 per cent of staff felt their managers communicated their views upwards on important issues (compared to a local authority benchmarking group average of 50 per cent).
- 57 per cent felt that their manager communicated effectively (compared to a local authority average of 61 per cent).

4. Internal Communication priorities 2010/11

In order to continue the drive to improve internal communications, the priorities over the next year are to:

- Update the Communications Framework and ensure it ties in with the Competency Framework so all managers and staff deliver the corporate standards.
- Relaunch the Upfront staff newsletter in a new format and distribute with payslips to address feedback from the Staff Survey that employees not based in offices do not see the newsletter.
- Revise the corporate team briefing system and ensure it is delivered consistently by throughout the organisation.
- Launch a new Staff Room intranet with a clearer navigation and improved information which is tailored around the needs of employees. The aim is to make the intranet a tool that helps employees to be more efficient and to feel better informed about the Council's priorities and performance.

5. Measuring future progress

The 2010 Staff Survey will include the same range of questions about internal communication as the previous survey. The data will be used to assess progress and to compare performance with a range of similar authorities to enable. It will enable new targets to be set to help drive continuous improvements in internal communications.