

Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee – review of the Employee Commission and the Co-operative Values

1. Background

On the 08 August 2012 the Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee decided to carry out an independent review of the:

- **Employee Commission** – to establish whether the commission has effectively engaged our employees in moving forward our approach to co-operative working within the Council.
- **Co-operative Values** – how well the Values have been communicated and put into practice both within and outside the organisation.

2. Existing information to support review

Appendix 1 provides a background to the Employee Commission, existing feedback from members of the commission and other useful information to support the review.

Appendix 2 provides background and work to date to communicate and embed the Co-operative Values and information to support the review.

3. Scoping

The scope of the review will be discussed at the next Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny meeting on 27 November 2012.

To aid discussion, possible review areas are outlined below:

Review area	Activities
Employee Commission	
Review employee awareness of the work of the employee commission – for employees who haven't been directly involved in the Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation with employees' e.g. one to one discussions, focus group.• To engage employees without access to PC you could speak to Communication Champions
Understand the views of Employee Commission members regarding the process and how they have been involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of existing feedback to identify areas of focus - see Appendix 1• Consultation with members of the Employee Commission e.g. one to one discussions, focus groups - we can provide you with a list of commission members for you to select or select some for you to work with.
Review the outcomes that have been delivered by the Employee Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the impact of the work of the employee commission sub-groups by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Reviewing progress reports (Oct 2012) and information from last Employee Commission meeting 19 Oct 2012.○ Reviewing observations from the Scrutiny members who attended the Employee Commission meeting on 19 Oct 2012.○ Each theme sub-group is currently developing measures of success. These measures could help to assess the impact in the longer term.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify lessons learned and principles from the Employee Commission which should be build into the new Employee Forum model.

Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee – review of the Employee Commission and the Co-operative Values

Review area	Activities
Review the effectiveness of the Employee Forum once it has been launched (Jan 2013).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with employees who have been involved. Evaluate number of employees attending and outcomes
Co-operative Values	
Review employee awareness and understanding of the co-operative values (Phase 1 – employees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with employees' e.g. one to one discussions, focus groups, emails. An Energy Meter is being developed which is an easy to use online engagement tool. Towards the end of 2012, the Energy Meter will be launched and employees will be asked a series of questions to find out how satisfied they are in their current role. One of the questions will be: 'How well informed do you feel about the council's values and priorities?' <p>The results of the questionnaire can be forwarded to Scrutiny to inform their assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-run the same questionnaire in 12 months.
Review external awareness and understanding of the co-operative values (Phase 2 – external)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review feedback from Co-operative Commission meeting 12 Oct 2012. The focus has been on communicating values internally. However, a plan is being developed to communicate the values externally.
Review how well the council is embedding the values within the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the work carried out to date to embed the values. Review existing feedback - see Appendix 2. Investigate examples of best practice and identify where we are not doing so well and how we can improve. Make recommendations about how we can do more to embed the values

4. Main Officer contacts

Debbie Byle, Project Officer – Co-operative Council Delivery Team (tel. 380137 email debrah.byle@telford.gov.uk)

Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Officer (tel. 383114 email Stephanie.jones@telford.gov.uk)

5. Next steps

- Agree review scope and timescales with Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee – review of the Employee Commission and the Co-operative Values

Appendix 1 – The Employee Commission

Background

As part of the Council's commitment to become a Co-operative Council, in July 2012 members agreed to establish an Employee Commission to invite employees in developing the approach to co-operative working within the Council.

The ethos of the Employee Commission is that it is employee-led, open to all and offers a new way for employees to get involved in shaping the organisation.

In September 2011, the opportunity for any employee to be a member of the Employee Commission was publicised over a three week period. Commission members submitted their ideas for discussion and this formed the agenda for their first meeting.

The first Commission meeting was held on 14 October 2011. Councillor Shaun Davies, lead Cabinet member for Environment, Co-operative Council and Partnerships opened the meeting. Richard Partington, Managing Director then explained the critical role that employees play in helping the organisation to become a Co-operative Council.

The Employee Commission identified and prioritised five themes to focus on:

- Employee Engagement & Communication
- Employee Volunteering
- Skills Planning & Development
- Social Responsibility
- Financial Management.

Sub-groups, made up of volunteers from the Commission were established to review each of the themes, discuss ideas and develop proposals and recommendations.

Each sub-group met on a regular basis and had a support officer assigned to facilitate discussions and help to develop recommendations and a chair person nominated from each group. Once recommendations were approved by Cabinet in May 2012, a member of the Senior Management Team and a Councillor was assigned to help to support the Employee Commissions and their sub-groups to deliver recommendations.

The sub-group support officers ensured that members were kept up to date on the work of other groups where relevant. This also involved particular sub-groups agreeing to take forward recommendations which were also considered a priority by another group.

In addition, the sub-groups ensured that the appropriate linkages were made with the Co-operative Commission.

Councillor Rae Evans was invited by Councillor Shaun Davies to take a lead member role and has work closely and discussed ideas with the Employee Commission.

Consultation with employees

In January 2012, a survey was sent out to all employees to invite their views on the Employee Commission themes and the proposed Co-operative Values. The results of the survey have been used to shape the final proposals.

Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee – review of the Employee Commission and the Co-operative Values

280 employees took part in the survey and the table below provides the number of employees who completed questions on all or selected themes.

Theme	No. of employees
All themes	121
Employee engagement and communication	218
Financial management	165
Employee volunteering	171
Social responsibility	176
Skills planning and development	190
Co-operative values	155

One of the Employee Engagement and Communication sub-group priorities is to improve information provided to employees who do not use a PC regularly as part of their role. Therefore, a series of team visits and drop-in sessions were delivered. The team visits in particular have been an effective way of engaging with these employees, which has resulted in the completion of 40 surveys.

A summary of the survey findings and further information about the work of the Employee Commission is available on the Council [Intranet pages](#). Daily News articles have been issued to inform employees over the last 12 months.

Feedback from the Employee Commission

Feedback has been gathered throughout the last 12 months (see table - Existing documentation to support review).

In particular, in March 2012 Employee Commission members were asked to give feedback on their experience. 86% of respondents indicated that they would be interested in taking part in this type of work in the future.

The Commission gave their views on what has worked well, including:

- The opportunity to work and network with a diverse group of colleagues.
- Contributions made by everyone were valued and collective decisions were made.
- Effective planning and communication throughout helped to maintain momentum and interest.

Feedback on what could be done differently in the future, include:

- Allowing more time to discuss ideas and develop proposals.
- Changing the frequency, timing and length of sub-group meetings.
- Having smaller groups help decisions and recommendations to be made.

Some general comments received by members of the Commission include:

- “Thank you for thinking about things differently”
- “It has been a good opportunity for networking to develop good working relationships”.
- “I am looking forward to hearing the outcome of our proposals and recommendations”.

Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee – review of the Employee Commission and the Co-operative Values

Existing documentation to support review

Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2011 – Co-operative Council Cabinet report • Co-operative Council six months on – Jan 2012 • Co-operative Commission cabinet report – March 2012 • Latest progress report – October 2012
Record of Employee Commission meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of members can be provided. • 14 Oct 2011 documents • 11 Dec 2011 documents • 19 Apr 2012 documents • 19 Oct 2012 documents
Feedback from Employee Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2012 Employee Commission Feedback - This information was used to enable them to agree the way forward on delivering their recommendations. • Feedback 19 April 2012 – what has worked well and what could be done differently in the future. • Questions and answers 19 April 2012 • 19 Oct 2012 On the one hand – what has been good / what has not been so good • 19 Oct 2012 Discussion on new employee forum • Former members' feedback report – some employee dropped out of the commission once recommendations had been made. We asked all these people to give feedback.
Communication and consultation with wider organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Commission survey findings Jan 2012 – sub-groups asked employees questions for each theme to help inform their recommendations (this was available electronically and hard copies of the survey were made available to employees who did not have access to a pc) • Update to Employee Focus Group – 28 June 2012 • Employee Commission intranet pages and various daily news articles.
Other information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next steps for the Employee Commission (delivery of recommendations – May 2012-to date) – this document provides information about who is involved – this was circulated to the employee commission and uploaded on the intranet for all employees. • Measures of success for each Employee Commission theme – to follow

Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee – review of the Employee Commission and the Co-operative Values

Appendix 2 – The Co-operative Values

Background

Being a Co-operative Council is about us working together with our residents, partners and local organisations to collectively deliver the best we can for Telford and Wrekin. We believe that how we do things is just as important as what we do - that is why we have adopted Co-operative Values.

These Values were developed by the Co-operative Commission and are based on what residents and council employees told the Commission about the sort of Council and Borough they would like to see in Telford and Wrekin.

The Council has listened to the Commission and are committed to putting Co-operative Values at the heart of our organisation. The aim is that our actions will speak louder than our words.

The Co-operative Values

Openness & Honesty We will – be open and honest in the way we work and make decisions and communicate in a clear, simple and timely way We would like everyone to – take action and responsibility for themselves and their community to the best of their abilities
Ownership We will – be accountable for our own actions and empower people with the skills to help themselves We would like everyone to – take action and responsibility for themselves and their community to the best of their abilities
Fairness & Respect We will – respond to people’s needs in a fair and consistent way We will and would like everyone to – respect and care for themselves and others, value the different ideas and skills that people bring and treat each other as equals
Involvement We will – work together with the community, involve people in decisions that affect their lives and be prepared to listen and take on new ideas We would like everyone to – work with and support others, get involved and share their views to help us develop the way we do things

What’s been happening to raise awareness and embed the values?

- Initial internal communication campaign delivered end July and September 2012 (Council website, posters, daily news and possible use of screensavers) Communication campaign for Co-operative Priorities ran in parallel.
- Plan of additional activities currently being delivered to further communicate and embed the values and Co-operative priorities - See Co-operative values communication action plan.

What’s next?

- Currently planning external communications to raise awareness and embed the values across the borough.

Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee – review of the Employee Commission and the Co-operative Values

Existing documentation to support review

Reports and plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-operative Values and Communication report• Co-operative Values and Communication plan.
Feedback from employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback from Apprentice Forum 24 September 2012.• Feedback from manager briefing 06 November 2012.• Co-operative Values intranet page and examples of living the values.
External coms and consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback from Co-operative Commission at 12 October meeting.• Co-operative Values web page.
Other information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Posters