

Culture - our approach

What we are already doing

Our role is changing - public services will be delivered in a totally different way and we must change our attitude and working practices to respond to this.

Our role will be to make things happen. Therefore, we need to adopt a new and different approach in everything that we do. We will have to work more efficiently and better to give our customers a great service, despite budget cuts.

We are still relatively new. Following the amalgamation of five former councils we inherited several different cultures and, as such, have still to develop and embed a culture and way of doing things that defines the new council. As a new organisation we have a real opportunity to develop a culture that reflects a new, modern and customer focused organisation.

Working with staff and councillors through a series of forums, a set of core values that will underpin our work, and represent what we stand for, have been developed and agreed:

- √ placing our customers first
- √ strengthening our communities
- √ adopting a 'can-do' approach in everything we do.

Staff feedback at the forums has also helped to shape an action plan that focuses on: communication – recognition – leadership – behaviour.

Communication – looks at improving the intranet and contact directory – the who's who in the organisation, as well as agreeing standards for future communication and leadership of communication across the organisation. The new contact directory will be launched shortly.

Recognition – we launched the Corporate Awards Scheme (CAS) and held the first awards ceremony in October 2010. The 2011 awards have been launched and include monthly awards for team and employee of the month. Recognition of the team and employee of the month will be well publicised.

Leadership – whilst we have still to agree corporate standards for communication, there are areas of excellent communication practice across the organisation, such as the department of resources away-days, staff forums, team briefings and regular one-to-one meetings.

We also held a series of face-to-face forums in November and December 2010 to update staff on the challenges facing the council over the next four years. The leader and chief executive met more than 3,000 members of staff and invited questions and discussion about the future.

Regular news updates are published on the intranet to update staff and members of council news and the changes that the organisation is facing – often directly from the chief executive as an update or video blog.

New members of staff meet the chief executive and leader at their induction and have the opportunity to ask questions and understand the culture that they promote.

What we intend to do

We need to promote our culture – the values that underpin what we do, our brand and what we stand for, what we're like and how we do things. Our values make us unique - a modern organisation that embraces change. An organisation that:

- √ places its customers first
- √ strengthens its communities
- √ adopts a 'can-do' approach in everything it does.

We want to be an organisation that reflects a strong service mentality, which thinks about the whole experience for our customers and how we can make it good one. We want to adopt a consistent 'can-do' approach and make things happen.

Re-organising and transforming our services will focus on our customers' experience and how we can make this better. Our aim is to develop a culture where we go the extra mile to help our customers and make Wiltshire Council one of the best in the country.

Our culture plan sets out how we will:

- embed the council's values and what we stand for – our brand Wiltshire
- adopt a 'can-do' approach in everything that we do

- deliver a leadership development programme that promotes key competencies and behaviours that reflect our culture
- promote team work and collective responsibility and accountability
- develop entrepreneurs and empower staff to take risks to reflect an innovative dynamic organisation
- place our customers and communities first and increase their confidence, trust and satisfaction levels in the council
- involve our customers and communities in shaping services and the future direction
- increase staff satisfaction and confidence in the council and the services it provides – the staff survey will provide a bench mark on current satisfaction and areas relating to culture
- increase staff involvement in decision making and change in the council and the services in which they work
- ensure that staff and elected members are well informed and are ambassadors for the council
- ensure that communication underpins the way we do things
- recognise success: celebrate and value our staff members, councillors and other community leaders.

What we want to achieve

We need to create a sense of pride in the council, which will, in turn, increase morale, satisfaction and motivation. This will be reflected in the way we do things and how we talk to one another and to our customers and stakeholders.

We want to be an organisation that works corporately and openly, engaging its staff, elected members, customers and communities in its work, decision making and any changes that need to happen.

Embedding a culture takes time, focus, energy and the belief and drive of all our leaders and managers to make it happen and underpin everything we do.

Our behaviour reflects what we stand for and how we do things. How we behave will make or break our relationship with our customers and communities. How they see us is our reputation and this is a key driver for us. We know we have to adopt a new and positive culture that reflects a modern, innovative and different council.

Our success over the next few years will be largely dependent on how we do things; how we embrace change and the relationships and trust that we build. A true 'can-do' approach needs to emanate throughout the council and all its services and customers and communities will come first.