

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 20 JANUARY 2010  
title: UPDATE ON STAFF MEETINGS  
submitted by: HR MANAGER  
principal author: MICHELLE SMITH

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update members on the Council's staff meeting system.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions - to achieve our ambitions we need to ensure that staff fully understand the Council's overall purpose, objectives and priorities. The staff meetings are a critical part of our communication strategy to support and enhance this understanding.
- Community Objectives – community objectives and actions are clearly communicated at staff meetings, so that staff are aware of their role in achieving community objectives.
- Corporate Priorities - the success of the Council relies upon well informed and motivated staff. the staff meetings allow us to communicate regularly with staff and are an open forum for staff to raise any issues of general concern or opportunity.
- Other Considerations – None.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Staff meetings have been in place at Ribble Valley since 1997 as a method for communicating with staff on a regular basis.

2.2 A 'staff meeting working group' made up of representatives from each directorate, meet with the Chief Executive to agree an agenda prior to the meetings taking place, based on suggestions from colleagues in their departments.

2.3 Historically, we have held 4 staff meetings each year, three of which were carried out on a directorate basis and led by each individual Director, with a fourth meeting for all staff which was jointly led by CMT.

2.4 Improvements to internal communications and Corporate/staff communications was highlighted as one of the actions from the last staff survey.

2.4 When Marshal became Chief Executive in April 2009, he reviewed current arrangements and increased the frequency of meetings to every two months.

### 3 ISSUES

- 3.1 In order to improve the effectiveness of staff meetings we now circulate the agenda (which includes summary information on staff movements, and a brief overview of items to be discussed) via payslips so that everyone is aware of when meetings will take place.
- 3.2 Meetings are still held on a Directorate basis with each Directorate holding two meetings each cycle in order to best accommodate all staff e.g part time staff, non-office based staff.
- 3.3 All meetings work to the same agenda, and a common briefing note is prepared for each Director to present at the meetings in order to ensure that the information to be passed to staff is consistent across the organisation. This allows staff to be flexible as to which meeting they attend.
- 3.4 This year we have also introduced a staff suggestion scheme as part of the staff meeting procedure. Working with UNISON we have created a suggestion/comments form which can be completed manually or electronically and we have encouraged staff to fill in the form with any thoughts/ideas as to how we could work better as an organisation, make savings, make improvements to the workplace, enhance communications etc.

Prior to each staff meeting the Staff Meeting Working Group look through the suggestions and decide which to submit to CMT for further consideration. Feedback on any action taken is given at the staff meetings.

- 3.5 With such a diverse workforce (part time/job share staff, 'remote' staff, multiple sites) it can be difficult to ensure that all staff are catered for by the staff meeting system. It is often difficult for our direct workforce to attend meetings, and we do try to schedule meetings so that the majority of staff have an opportunity to attend. In order to ensure that communication to staff is maximised, minutes are produced from the staff meetings and circulated to staff on a departmental basis. In addition, they are published on the staff Intranet for easy access.
- 3.6 The staff meeting system continues to be a key element of our overall communication strategy and has proved to be an effective mechanism for open dialogue with staff. There are also ranges of other communication activities, which occur on a departmental basis e.g team meetings, weekly team briefings, internal memos, regular Service Manager meetings, circulation of all committee agendas, which further enhance the communication process throughout the council.

Nevertheless we will continue to strive to continually improve the process and to ensure that all staff have access to the system or can raise any concerns/issues in such a forum.

### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications
  - Resources - Our staff are our most important resource, and it is vital that they have accurate and up-to-date information about the Council and its operations. Failure to communicate effectively with staff will impact on their ability to provide an efficient service.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – None.
- Reputation - The reputation of the authority as a good employer would be damaged if staff felt that there was no opportunity for them to communicate directly with the Council on matters which are of importance to them.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Note the report.

HR MANAGER

For further information please ask for Michelle Smith, extension 4402.