

Update on Implementation of Recommendations from Previously Completed Scrutiny Reviews

Summary

1. This report provides Members with an update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the previously completed scrutiny reviews which fall within the remit of this overview & scrutiny committee.

Background

2. Staff Sickness Absence Management Scrutiny Review
At a Scrutiny Event for Members in July 2011, the Committee agreed to carry out a scrutiny review on staff sickness, specifically to identify ways of reducing sickness absence levels across the organisation. The Committee agreed to set up a Task Group to gather information on the potential areas of focus for the review for the full committee's consideration.
3. In January 2012, this Committee received a scoping report for the review detailing the Task Group's initial findings and as a result, agreed the following objectives for the review:

Objectives:

- i. To revise the Council's Absence Management Policy & procedures to ensure they take account of iTrent, are in line with best practice, and written in a more formal assertive language;
- ii. To identify improvements in:
 - a. the provision of Management training
 - b. the induction programme for all new staff
- iii. To explore ways of introducing a change in culture within the workforce moving away from a policy of 'managing absence', towards one of 'encouraging attendance'.

4. Work on the review concluded in March 2013 and the Task Group agreed that:
 - a) The current policy document covering everything for all was not suitable and that a short, clear and succinct policy for employees, together with a separate guide for managers would be more appropriate
 - b) The organisation would benefit from all new starters receiving information on the council's sickness absence procedure and all managers receiving the relevant training.
 - c) Overall, the Task Group concluded that improvements in training and induction, an updating of the policy and a rise in staff morale (there needs to be mutual respect and support to enable all staff to perform to the best of their ability), would over time assist in changing the culture of the organisation. They recognised that this would be difficult and take time, and that there was no 'quick fix'. They therefore agreed it would be necessary to revisit the question of how best to create a change in culture once the revised policy and change to working practices had been embedded throughout the organisation.
 - d) The current processes lacked positive reward and recognition for good attendance.
 - e) The authority did not make adequate use of online training for staff.
5. In May 2013 the review recommendations were approved by Cabinet, and this report presents the first update on their implementation – see Annex A.
6. Customer Engagement Scrutiny Review
In September 2012, having considered a scrutiny topic submitted by Cllr Barnes on 'Engaging the Disaffected', the Committee agreed to undertake a scrutiny review to look at the issues affecting levels of community engagement across the city, in the following three areas:
 - i. Community Engagement
 - ii. CYC Customer Services
 - iii. Financial Inclusion
7. A Task Group was set up to scope and carry out the work on the review on behalf of the full committee, and following some initial investigation, the following review remit was agreed:

To identify ways of empowering people and improving community engagement

Objectives:

- a. To improve communications between CYC and Parish Councils
- b. To improve communications in non-Parish Council areas.

8. The final report and the review recommendations were presented to Cabinet in June 2013, and the first update on the implementation of those recommendations is shown at Annex B.

Consultation

9. The Assistant Director of Customer & Business Support Services has provided the update information contained within Annex A, and the Head of Communities and Equalities has provided the update information contained within Annex B. Both will be in attendance at this meeting to answer any questions arising.

Options

10. Members may decide to sign off any individual recommendations where implementation has been completed, and can:
 - a. request further updates and the attendance of the relevant officers at a future meeting to clarify any outstanding recommendations relating to the above reviews or;
 - b. agree to receive no further updates on those reviews

Council Plan 2011-15

11. In regard to the Staff Sickness Absence Management Review, the Council Plan recognises that staff are the most important resource of the Council and without whom it could not deliver its services and priorities. Ensuring staff receive the proper levels of support in times of illness etc is one way in which staff can be made to feel valued and engaged.
12. The Community Engagement Review supported the council's aim to build strong communities and be a city full of active and self-reliant communities, where everyone has an effective voice in local issues and where there is a strong sense of belonging.

Implications

13. There are no known Financial, Human Resources, Equalities, Legal, ITT or other implications associated with the recommendation made in this report.

Risk Management

14. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no known risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

15. Members are asked to note the contents of this report and sign off all recommendations that have been fully implemented.

Reason: To raise awareness of those recommendations which are still to be fully implemented.

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Report Approved



Date

1 November 2013

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex A – Update on Staff Sickness Absence Management Review

Annex B – Update on Community Engagement Review