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Employee Engagement and Communication Policy

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1 Policy

We strive to engage our people because we know that a committed workforce focuses on the customer, performs more effectively and inspires innovation. We also know that the better the people feel about work, the less likely they are to be absent from work and more likely to talk positively to others in the wider community about work.

We will uphold and practice our [PEOPLE values](#) so that they are reflected in day to day behaviours. To make this happen, we will provide visible, empowering leadership, giving a strong strategic narrative about the organisation at the same time as addressing day to day matters as they arise. We will provide the means for employees to have a voice so that they continue to influence the organisation's direction. We will encourage managers to focus their people, giving them scope, treating them as individuals, through appropriate and flexible learning and development. This means that we expect positive and engaging behaviours from everyone across the organisation.

An environment which is conducive to people giving us feedback will help to inform us about our performance as an employer, in the same way that we will feed back to our people about how they are doing. We will make use of a range of communications channels, which do not rely on hierarchies. A positive relationship with trade unions is really important and we acknowledge their important contribution and commitment to engagement and communication. We are committed to appropriate facilities to support our recognised unions and we encourage membership from our people.

As we increase our flexible working practices through [Better Ways of Working \(BWOW\)](#), team members will be required to make extra effort to keep in touch with each other and what is going on in the organisation. This includes making the most of technology but not excluding face to face or voice to voice contact, to ensure that people feel included yet trusted to maintain cohesion without close supervision.

2 Guiding Principles / Key Elements

2.1 Engagement

- We seek to create an environment where there are shared agendas with common objectives where we can:
 - bring together partial, differing and opposed views and feelings
 - ensure common goals are developed and understood and staff have a clear sense of direction
 - value individuals' contributions in generating ideas and creative solutions through direct involvement and participation

- We will ensure that appropriate systems, processes and resources are in place to enable this.
- Employees are invited to take part in the council's [continuous improvement programme \(C-PIP\)](#)
- Developing a competence for change will ensure that people (particularly managers) are able to handle change competently and confidently.
- Our [PEOPLE values](#) shape our culture and guide the way our people act and make decisions
- Managers are expected to recognise exceptional contributions that are above and beyond commitment to the [PEOPLE values](#). Spontaneous recognition and celebration is encouraged.
- Dialogue throughout the organisation at all levels and in all directions is encouraged, because what people say, think and feel matters.
- We will formally assess how we are doing in meeting our commitment to [PEOPLE values](#) by asking people to take part in our employee opinion survey, publishing the results and taking action based upon this and other staff feedback processes.
- If we say we are going to do something, we will all make sure that we follow through with tangible action and communicate outcomes.
- We will continue to work in partnership with the trade unions to find ways of increasing staff involvement and engagement.

2.2 Communications

- Corporate publications can be used to distribute corporate messages to all staff and can be used by staff to communicate stories and important messages.
- Any information or articles which may be of interest to staff can be included in the news section of the intranet.
- For specific projects or staff engagement, web pages can be set up on the intranet.
- Information should also be disseminated by managers in ways that will best reach and engage their staff.
- The communications team provide a variety of documents about [communications, social media and branding](#) on the intranet.

2.3 Effective Working

- [Better Ways of Working \(BWOW\)](#) calls for individuals and teams to work more proactively to ensure that people stay in touch and can continue to participate in team and organisational activity.
- Managers will ensure that effective and appropriate feedback channels can be maintained within any new working arrangements that arise and that people continue to be involved in team and organisational matters

2.4 Working with Trade Unions

- The council has a formal commitment to working with recognised unions and employees are encouraged to join a recognised union.

- We will give recognised unions information in advance of meetings to assist in collective bargaining.
- We will ensure that there are proper processes in place to allow employees who are members of recognised unions to pay their subscriptions through their pay if they choose.
- We will inform unions and positively engage them in developing options, consultation and negotiation about major changes in the workforce.
- Employees who belong to a trade union will not be discriminated against as a result of their membership.
- Union representatives are
 - encouraged to participate in working groups, communications and decision-making
 - entitled to reasonable time off during working hours to undergo training in aspects of industrial relations relevant to the carrying out of their trade union duties.
- How the council and unions work together, including the nature of facilities and time off for union activities is set out in the Partnership & Facilities Agreement(s).

3. Individual procedures and guidance

[Guide to employee engagement and communications](#)

4. Related policies

[Behaviour policy](#)

[Equality and diversity policy](#)

[Resourcing and managing performance policy](#)

[Flexible working policy](#)

[Employee health, safety and wellbeing policy](#)

[Managing people change and leaving the organisation policy](#)

[Reward policy](#)

[Communications toolkit](#)

Version	Date issued	Description of and reason for change
v1.0	10 June 13	New policy
v2.0	1 July 2015	Fit for purpose policy review