

# CONSULTATION WITH STAFF (NON TRADE UNION MEMBERS)

## Report of Head of Services for Communities

DCC uses a variety of communication methods to ensure that all employees regardless of trade union membership are informed and consulted with on both significant change directly affecting them or on wider organisational change and developments. This complements the formal and informal information and consultative mechanisms that DCC uses to consult via the recognised trade unions, including the Corporate Forum, informal Joint Secretaries meetings etc.

### Consultation with all staff including non trade unions members

#### 1. Consultation on change directly affecting employees and future employment

In all circumstances where employees are directly affected by a change for example a restructuring of their service area or potential TUPE transfer, all employees receive the same information that the trade unions are provided with. A typical restructure exercise where there may be potential redundancies would involve the following:

- **Department Meetings** to communicate important information to everyone at the same time, for example, when the restructure is announced
- **Formal Staff Consultation Meetings** – As required under the Redundancy Policy. Usually held after the Consultation Document has been circulated and Collective Consultation has commenced.
- **Consultation Document** – Comprehensive report outlining key information about proposals, the consultation etc.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document** – A FAQ document is usually drafted at the beginning of consultation containing the answers to commonly asked questions. This document is usually updated and circulated at regular intervals throughout the consultation period to provide everyone with the answers to the questions that are specific to that particular restructure.
- **Team meetings** – The restructure being a recurring agenda point in team meetings
- **Email Updates** – one or more senior managers are usually responsible for ensuring update emails are circulated regularly (weekly, fortnightly or monthly depending on the speed of progress)
- **Consultation Mailboxes, feedback forms or email addresses** are usually set up/agreed at the beginning of consultation and details are provided within the Consultation Document and all further documentation and communications during the consultation period. This allows all staff to give views, raise concerns and issues and seek clarification. Depending on who needs to agree the responses, feedback/queries are responded to either continuously, on a weekly basis or at the end of the process,
- **Response to Consultation Feedback Document** – normally circulated via email to staff once formal consultation has closed. This is the document that confirms the outcome of the consultation process and possibly the next steps.

There are also mechanisms in place to engage and consult with all affected staff on issues like office moves. For example, for the major office changes like the Matford and Lucombe House moves, an office move newsletter 'How we work' has been developed. This gives opportunity to feedback, with regular updates to help with what can be a challenging issue and is sent to all affected staff. The project team are also developing a web page which will include all the information available and can be accessed via the Source.

#### 2. Consultation on organisation wide issues

DCC utilises a range of options for organisation wide information sharing and consultation, including:

- **Insider**, the corporate wide weekly newsletter informing employees about changes and proposals and which includes opportunities to consult and gaining feedback
- **Chief Executive Updates** via email which informs employees about important news often relating to external factors and influences. The latest update includes information on the Statement of Intent around devolution, Ofsted judgement and LGA Peer Review.

# ITEM 6

- **Ask Phil** – a button on the Source to directly email Phil Norrey with questions and feedback
- **The Rumour Board** where employees can pose questions anonymously to gain answers outside of their normal channel of communications with their manager and team
- **Invitations to informal breakfast/lunch meetings with Phil Norrey and other senior officers** – e.g. New Strategic Plan March 14, Café Conversations on the new Operating Model in March 2015
- **Focus Groups** – e.g. Future Landscape May 13
- **Public Consultations** - Employees are informed about and encouraged to participate in public consultation and attend public consultation meetings
- **Survey's** – e.g. Staff Travel Survey, Alcohol in the Workplace Survey where views are sought on specific issues

The information from this variety of communication methods is gathered on the Source, the DCC internal intranet so by regularly accessing the Source, employees can keep up to date at a time to suit them and respond as appropriate even if they were not available/busy when the original email/article appeared.

In addition to the corporate wide communications, service specific options are used to ensure that discussions take place within service areas. These include team meetings, both with the immediate team and also whole area team meetings, where employees can feed back on issues affecting both the service area and on wider organisational issues.

### **3. Consultation on Terms and Conditions**

The decision to consult on the proposal to change existing enhanced redundancy provision is one example of how DCC communicates and consults with its entire staff on changes to terms and conditions. The proposed changes to enhanced redundancy provision was communicated via Insider in February 2015, along with the information on changes to the senior pay structure. In addition, a Head of Service briefing note was sent for cascade to managers so the proposal on the enhanced redundancy pay could be discussed within their service areas via team meetings, one to one meetings etc.

It was decided at the commencement of the consultation on enhanced redundancy provision that the consultation information would be sent to all maintained schools (and Academies and Free Schools for information) via School Coms, including an option to respond via a mailbox. This was undertaken to ensure that the Head of Education and Learning communication reached all schools as this was the equivalent of the cascade system within Corporate DCC. A very poor response (3) was received via this method. Once the enhanced redundancy provision consultation is completed and a final offer agreed, there will be an opportunity to communicate further with all staff including schools.

### **Conclusion**

The Authority has developed a variety of methods of ensuring that it informs, consults and engages with all staff on the range of issues affecting them. This is in addition to its formal and informal mechanisms for informing and consulting with the recognised trade unions.

**John Smith, Head of Services for Communities**