

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

CABINET

Date: 17th July 2008
Report of: HR Joint Transition Project
Title Culture and Values – transition and beyond

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To propose a set of common transitional values to guide the period up to vesting day and to consider options for a set of core organisational values for Cheshire East as an important step towards building a positive high performance culture for the new Council.

2.0 Decision Required

2.1 The Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) support the common transitional values proposed in 8.4 and the adoption of these by the Blocks and Joint Transition Projects supporting Cheshire East as outlined in 8.5.
- (ii) provide comment on the draft core values options of IMPACT or ASPIRE outlined in 7.2 for the new Authority with a view to wider consultation on one or both of these options

3.0 Implications for Transitional Costs

3.1 None identified for transition.

4.0 Background

4.1 An initial discussion document went to Cheshire East Joint Committee in March to outline the type of culture associated with becoming a flagship Unitary Authority and to make an initial assessment of the current cultures within the seven existing Cheshire Councils. The paper included some initial draft values and associated behaviours and outlined a number of considerations to ensure the values are lived in the new Authorities.

4.2 The paper was broadly supported and next steps were to obtain initial feedback from employees and trade unions on the draft core values and key behaviours and to seek initial input from newly elected Members of the Shadow Authority to progress this work further.

5.0 Summary of initial feedback

5.1 The draft core values were shared with Heads of Service and their teams across all seven Authorities and a summary of this feedback is provided in **Appendix 1** of this report. Overall the concept of developing core values for the new Authority was welcomed but employees felt that they needed to be simple and more memorable and inspiring. The key behaviours were welcomed as it was felt these brought the values to life and would help to recognise positive behaviour and challenge and manage inappropriate styles.

5.2 Initial Member input regarding organisational values, has been obtained from the during recent induction events. A summary of this feedback is provided in **Appendix 1** with a number of common themes emerging.

6.0 Aligning Vision and Values

6.1 Work to develop a compelling vision for Cheshire East is underway involving Members and Officers. Although this is still work in progress a strong message emerging from this work is that the overall aim of the new Authority is to have a **POSITIVE IMPACT** on all sections of the Community we serve for example:

...affordable and accessible public transport
 ...low youth offending
 ...empowering people to live independent lives
 ...enable children to achieve their full potential
 ...feeling safe and secure
 ...seamless partnership working
 ...improved quality of life
 ...clean, green, safe environment

6.2 The core values of the organisation must underpin the vision by defining HOW we will achieve these **ASPIRATIONS**. Like an iceberg values are often below the surface and unseen but critically these beliefs drive and shape behaviour which impacts directly on the experience of customers, partners and colleagues which ultimately affects performance.

7.0 Revised draft core values

7.1 Building on this initial visioning work and the feedback from Members, employees and trade unions over recent weeks, further work has been done on developing a set of core values specifically for Cheshire East. The importance of ensuring that the values are memorable, inspiring and enduring over time has been focused on and a different approach is suggested using a mnemonic to capture in one word what working for or with the new Authority is all about.

7.2 Two possible options to describe the core values of the new Authority are summarised below and these are further defined with examples of values based behaviours in frameworks provided in **Appendices 2 and 3**.

| Option 1 – “ASPIRE” VALUES | Option 2 – “IMPACT” VALUES |
|---|---|
| <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act with integrity and challenge others do to the same • Support and help colleagues and customers to grow, learn and develop • Push to deliver our promises and make the right things happen for customers • Involve, communicate and engage with others, valuing all contributions • Respond positively to change and find ways to improve the services we deliver • Empower colleagues, customers and communities to find the right solutions | <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity – be open and honest, expecting the same from others • Motivate – take time to communicate, listen, consult and empower others • People - put customers and communities at the heart of what we do • Accountable – deliver our promises ensuring efficient use of resources • Change– seek ways to improve the way we deliver our services • Team - work and learn together for the benefit of Cheshire East |

8.0 Values based transition

8.1 Creating the culture for the new Authority has already started as these norms and beliefs develop and evolve from what people see, hear and experience. The messages and experiences employees and Members have shape and define what people perceive as important in the new organisation and individuals adapt and conform to those implicit expectations.

8.2 When looking at high performing public and private sector service organisations a number of common characteristics are evident which differentiate between the good and the great. The differentiating characteristics tend to focus on positive or constructive factors such as how people interact and how tasks and problems are approached.

8.3 Although different core organisational values will probably be developed for Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester their overall meaning will be very similar as both new organizations aspire to deliver great services to the citizens of Cheshire in the years ahead.

8.4 At this early stage of transition it is not appropriate to introduce specific core values for Cheshire East as it will be several months before the new organisation has its own identity, key appointments are made and employees are allocated to the new Authority. In order to put strong cultural foundations in place however it is suggested that a set of common transitional values is adopted by both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester building on the work to date as follows:

Transitional values:

- **Putting People First** – ensuring customers and communities are at the heart of what we do
- **Acting with Integrity** - being fair, equitable, open and honest and expecting the same from others
- **Working Together** – working collaboratively and in partnership with others for the future of Cheshire
- **Deliver our Promises** – taking personal responsibility for making the right things happen

8.5 These transitional values should underpin the design work currently underway within the Blocks, the way employees, Members and partners are engaged and consulted, inform the appointment process and criteria for key roles and guide the delivery of services during this transitional period. A draft transitional values checklist for Blocks and Joint Transition Projects is provided in **Appendix 4**.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 Creating a high performance culture for the new authority is critical to success and cannot be left to chance. Defining and agreeing core values and key behaviours for the new organisation is a crucial first step in starting to unite employees and set out expectations across the four Authorities which will come together to form Cheshire East.

9.2 A values based approach to transition will become increasingly important to lay the foundations for the new Authorities but also to guide behaviour and decisions as pressures build.

9.3 The real challenge will be to ensure that all policies, process and practices during transition and within the new authorities reflect the core values so that they come to life and are truly lived across the new organisations day in and day out. This must be a shared responsibility of all Members and Officers.

10. Next steps

10.1 In order to progress this work further next steps are to:

- agree the transitional values with Cheshire West and Cheshire to enable a common approach during this period
- fully align the work underway on Vision, brand and corporate logo development with the core values development for Cheshire East
- consult with employees, trade unions, Members and new Chief Executive and senior management team on the draft core value options for Cheshire East
- develop an overall approach and plan to launch and champion the core values for the new Authority as part of induction
- integrate the core values into key HR and operational processes during year one so that the values truly become the way we do things in the new organisation.

For further information:-

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Background Documents:-

Documents are available for inspection at:

Cheshire East Democratic Services

Westfields

Middlewich Road

Sandbach

CW11 1HZ

APPENDIX 1 – Summary of initial feedback on core values and key behaviours

| Member priorities | Employee feedback |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty and integrity • Trust with accountability • Can do / will do • Listen and include • Supportive, friendly and approachable • More emphasis on clear, timely, two way communication • No blame – continuous learning and improvement • Freedom to try things • Proactive rather than reactive • Innovative and creative • Celebrate success – communities and ourselves <p>Top 3 Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting customers first (treat as individuals) • Delivering our promises (what and when) • Working together / teamwork | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like behaviours - help to bring values to life • Cannot argue with - broadly what you would expect • Helps me to feel part of something bigger • Too many values and behaviours / some duplication • Strengthen integrity and respect for public services • Strong link to code of corporate governance • Strong link to brand and delivering customer experience • Remove jargon and use simple language • Remove “we don’t” element • Needs a “fresh feel” to reflect new Authorities • Needs to be simple, inspiring and memorable • Need to work through how we will live the values • Need to monitor and evaluate properly to embed |

APPENDIX 2 – “ASPIRE VALUES FRAMEWORK” – *examples of values based behaviours*

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|--|---|---|
| Act with integrity and challenge others to do the same | Support and help colleagues and customers to grow, learn and develop | Push to deliver our promises and make the right things happen for customers |
| We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat everyone with dignity and respect • Speak up when others are behaving inappropriately • Respect the standards and practices that help us to operate • Be accountable for taking informed risks and difficult decisions • Separate personal feelings from professional requirements | We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take ownership of our own development • Coach and encourage others to grow and go outside of comfort zones • Take time to reflect and learn from own and others experiences • Give and seek constructive feedback • Find ways to narrow gaps and remove inequalities for others | We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to understand customer needs and requirements • Manage expectations and keep customers informed • Make efficient and best use of money and resources • Own problems and take responsibility for solving them • Get it right first time, balancing urgency with quality and efficiency |
| Involve , communicate and engage with others, valuing all contributions | Respond positively to change and find ways to improve the services we deliver | Empower colleagues, customers and communities to find the right solutions |
| We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively listen and encourage ideas • Influence others positively and constructively • Work in partnership and be prepared to compromise • Be open and honest in our communication with others • Recognise and acknowledge contributions and achievements | We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage creativity from everyone • Be flexible about ones job, responsibilities and ways of working • Quickly implement agreed changes • Keep abreast of new developments • Try new ideas and approaches • Take the initiative and make suggestions • Push to be better | We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring people together • Actively share knowledge and information with others • Provide appropriate resources to enable things to happen • Remove barriers and support others in resolving issues • Develop simple and easy to use processes |

APPENDIX 3 – “IMPACT VALUES FRAMEWORK” – examples of values based behaviours

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Integrity – be open and honest, expecting the same from others We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat everyone with dignity and respect • Speak up when others are behaving inappropriately • Respect the standards and practices that help us to operate • Get it right first time, balancing urgency with quality and efficiency • Separate personal feelings from professional requirements | Motivate – take time to communicate, listen, consult and enable others We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively listen and encourage ideas • Keep others informed, providing clear and timely two way communications • Actively share knowledge and information with others • Remove barriers and support others in resolving issues • Recognise and acknowledge contributions and achievements | People - put customers and communities at the heart of what we do We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put ourselves in the shoes of others • Take time to understand customer needs and requirements • Treat each person as an individual providing choice where possible • Develop simple and easy to use processes • Find ways to narrow gaps and remove inequalities for others |
| Accountable – deliver our promises ensuring efficient use of resources We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage expectations and keep customers informed • Provide appropriate resources to enable things to happen • Make best use of available resources • Own problems and take personal responsibility for solving them • Be accountable for taking informed risks and difficult decisions | Change – constantly seek ways to improve the way we deliver our services We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage creativity and ideas • Experiment and try out different approaches • Quickly implement agreed changes • Keep abreast of new developments • Be flexible about ones job, responsibilities and ways of working | Team - work and learn together for the benefit of Cheshire East We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take ownership of our own development • Coach and encourage others to grow and go outside comfort zones • Take time to reflect and learn from own and others experiences • Give and seek constructive feedback • Be prepared to compromise |

APPENDIX 4 - Transitional values checklist

When developing a product / process / policy please take a few minutes to reflect on the transitional values to ensure your approach and solution supports and reinforces the cultural aspirations of the new Authorities.

| Putting People First – ensuring customers, communities and colleagues are at the heart of what we do | Acting with Integrity – being fair, equitable, open and honest and expecting the same from others |
|---|--|
| <p>1. How / have client needs / requirements / priorities been identified and agreed?</p> <p>2. How / are processes / policies simple, joined up and empowering – making us “easy to do business with”?</p> | <p>3. How / has the impact of the process / policy / model been considered to ensure a fair and equitable approach?</p> <p>4. How / have you left a legacy which can be celebrated and from which the new Authorities can build?</p> |
| Working Together – working collaboratively and in partnership with others for the future of Cheshire | Deliver our Promises – taking personal responsibility for making the right things happen |
| <p>5. How / have you communicated, engaged, listened and consulted with key stakeholder groups to solve problems and develop solutions?</p> <p>6. What mechanisms have you established to capture and share learning during transition?</p> | <p>7. What mechanisms are in place to meet deadlines and commitments, have expectations been managed?</p> <p>8. How / have resources been managed and prioritised to achieve dual aims of sustaining service delivery and a smooth transition?</p> |