

The Southend Way – Values Handout an introduction

Context

Southend on Sea Borough Council has about 1,800 employees in an extremely diverse range of roles, from social workers, gardeners, train drivers (!) and housing officers to lawyers, planners, project managers and commissioners.

As a local authority, we are facing unprecedented challenges in the form of policy changes, funding reductions population increase, rising expectation and tough national economic conditions. This requires transformation, both in 'what we do' and 'how we behave', to deliver our organisational purpose of "Creating a better Southend".

We know times of change can be very unsettling for people, we already know from our staff engagement survey that engaging leadership, effective communication and recognition were priorities for staff.

We understand in times of change all of those themes become **even more important** and that is why they feature strongly in our culture change programme – The Southend Way.

This Volatile, Unpredictable, Complex & Ambiguous (**VUCA**) environment brings challenges to leaders, who can be expected to know the answers to all our concerns. The style of leadership on such a journey needs to re-assure those who follow, leaders need to find meaning and celebrate progress in very different ways.

How we behave on our journey will ultimately decide the impact of our endeavour. Those whom we meet, support, help, influence or inspire will see in us, the very essence of what we are about .

Whatever binds us during that journey should be readily apparent from our behaviours.

"What you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you say" Ralph Waldo-Emmerson

That brings us to the other meaning of '*the Southend way*' – *the way that we behave in Southend*, our culture - how we do things around here as we seek to create that better Southend.

We can be much clearer about our 2nd meaning of the word 'way', how we continue to do things for Southend – 'our way' of doing things is represented in the values we uncovered in 2006.

Collectively it forms our culture.

How we react to the challenges of this uncertain journey, to the obstacles, frustrations, new friends and new relationships, and also, the farewells and goodbyes will be down to us and our values.

Our Values

Uncovered in our first culture change programme in 2006, from the aspirations that our people had about how they wanted **their** organisation to be, our values are very powerful links to peoples emotional attachment to their careers/roles.

Values guide our behaviours, to act as a framework or reference point for how we do things. They are demonstrated by the attitudes and behaviours we display at work.

External inspectors (Ofsted, RoSPA, IIP, professional & public alike), visitors and partners have often commented that there is a noticeable 'way' about how we work in Southend Council. A 'spirit' that is about our commitment to our town and our enthusiasm to make it a better Southend.

It's being passionate about the town and it's people, what we can do to help.

Committing to achieve the results that we set our sights on, never resource rich we focus strongly on a 'can do' approach. If we don't have the resources we need then how do we about getting them?

Those values first uncovered 2006, were revalidated in 2011 and **are more important than ever.**

Wherever our ultimate destination is, how we behave whilst we go forward is completely 'in our gift'.

We need to harness the potential impact of our values now, they are more important than ever, they keep reminding us that our commitment to being proud to be a public servant, serving Southend, is still based on the right things – '**our Southend way**' of working:

EXCELLENCE

We aspire for excellence in our work

Continually challenging ourselves towards achieving excellence for customers - from individuals, teams, services & ultimately the overall organisational impact. Committing to excellence excites us to give our very best.

AS ONE

We work as one organisation

Customers don't fall 'between the cracks', experience a fragmented, or uncoordinated service. Increasingly this aligns to our partners, suppliers and other agencies with whom we work we expect their support too with this.

RESPONSIBLE

We are all responsible for the performance of our organisation

Responsible for what we achieve – not just what we do. We are proud of our impact, rightfully expecting to be recognised and held responsible for the differences we make. Everyone of us takes some responsibility for the performance of the whole organisation.

OPEN & HONEST

We are open, honest and transparent, listening to other's views

Being clear on what we prioritise and why, what we can do, what we can't do and how we use the resources to do it are critical. Listening to other's views, *especially when they disagree with our own*, means we remain informed of all our Southend community's needs.

CUSTOMER CARE

Good customer care is at the heart of everything we do

Ensuring our focus is on the best experience for the customer in everything that we can achieve for them. We have serious duties that we will deliver against meaning some customers will not be pleased to meet our staff, compassion and understanding around their experience is equally important.

SUPPORTIVE

We support, trust & develop each other

Supported and trusted to use your discretion, expected to achieve great things and committed to developing yourself and others along the way. With leadership, teamwork, coaching, enthusiasm and energy - we seek to bring out the best in each other.

VALUING ALL

We value the contribution of all our people

Everyone counts. **Everyone**. Every great advance started from one person's sole idea, then deciding to make a difference and involving others progressed it. We value all our people, their ideas, creativity and energy to ensure we serve all of our Southend community's.

Please reference these in your appraisals, 1-2-1's and in team, service and group planning sessions.

If you would like the POD team to complete a Values workshop with you to explore this further please contact us.