

DRAFT

Staff Consultation Forum

2nd December 2009

Committee Room 3

Attendees

Kerry Shorrocks
John Robinson
John Fisher
Chris Carter
Carole Casey
Margaret Bracey
Dee Levett
Richard Tiffin
Val Farquarson
Lesley Boast
Liz Goddard

Apologies

Christina Corr

Bob Leverett

Robin Norton

		Actions
1.	Apologies As above	
2.	Matters Arising Agenda item – Morale – To be carried forward to January meeting	JH
3.	NHDC Update JR advised that the report on the restructure would be issued to staff on 03.12.09. All staff significantly affected by the restructure would be consulted with before the publication of the report. Meetings with the Chief Executive and the Strategic Directors are arranged for : Monday 7 th December 2009 – 10am Monday 7 th December 2009 - 2pm Tuesday 8 th December 2009 - 2pm All meetings will be held in the Council Chamber.	

	Museums – A decision will be taken this week regarding Hitchin Town Hall. All staff directly affected will be updated on Friday 4 th December 2009.	
4.	<p>Review of Out of Hours etc Payments</p> <p>At the last meeting it was advised that NHDC are also looking unsocial hours payments. A question was raised about whether this was related to standby and call out payments. KS confirmed that the unsocial hours review was looking at shift and weekend payments not standby and call out payments.</p>	
6	<p>Lease Car Benefit</p> <p>KS advised that the consultation process had now closed for the essential car user allowance review. Draft proposed changes, the policy and criteria had now been to OD Board and agreed.</p> <p>KS advised that the changes will include reducing the 1000 mile threshold by 20% to 800 miles and a special consent process will be introduced for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees who are using their cars frequently in the course of their normal work, who are covering local areas and incurring lower mileage rates. This will be staff who are mobile workers whose duties include visits or inspections on a weekly basis such as planning <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees on a call out rota where it is necessary to regularly attend call outs rather than deal with situations remotely by telephone or electronically <p>Special consent applications will be authorised by the Strategic Director and the Corporate Human Resources Manager. KS advised that the policy will be updated on the intranet along with the frequently asked questions.</p> <p>KS advised that the OD team had agreed that a review of lease cars/benefits will be carried out during 2010/11.</p> <p>LB requested information on the number of people and how much the lease car scheme is worth. KS to advise.</p> <p>LB asked how the union are consulted on issues. It was advised that issues are raised at the Trade Union Liaison meetings. RT also advised that issues are discussed at the executive meetings of Unison. RT advised that staff need to let Unison know if there are any issues that they need to raise.</p>	KS
9.	<p>Update on the Lifts in the Car Park</p> <p>KS advised that we have now received an update from Property Services.</p>	

	<p>The left hand lift is still out of commission, the vandalised doors have been removed by the lift company in order for them to be straightened at their workshop on a special jig. Due to the age of our lifts, spares have been unavailable and have needed to be manufactured. Otis Lifts have promised to have the lift back into operation as a matter of priority.</p> <p>KS advised that staff who wished to load or unload their car could use the staff car park behind the Council Offices. Tokens are available from the CSC.</p>	
<p>10 Radio Interview Re Staff Cuts</p> <p>A question was raised about the Hertbeat Radio interview that followed the Comet article that stated "a further £400,000 could be cut through staff restructuring at the council, the majority of which would be saved by not replacing, or being slow to replace vacancies". JR advised SCF that elected councillors are free to give press and media interviews. The Report accurately reflected published budget proposals and it was noted that the statement was not attributed to an individual and must therefore be the view of the newspaper.</p>		
	<p>Staggered Annual Leave</p> <p>LB asked if NHDC could consider staggered annual leave, commencing on date of employment and this was considered to be more appropriate for service delivery. KS advised that the HR payroll system was not able to be set up to offer staggered annual leave.</p> <p>LB asked if it were possible to do this for flexi-time. It was agreed that this could be considered at a future date, to fit in with other projects and automatic locking of flexi sheets could be considered alongside this.</p>	
	<p>Staff Suggestions</p> <p>KS advised that the most effective route for staff suggestions was through managers in order to allow managers to consider the feasibility of ideas. The staff suggestion scheme that was on the intranet has not been in use for some time and arrangements would be made to remove it.</p>	
	<p>Green Group</p> <p>There had been no meeting of the Green Group since the last meeting of SCF.</p> <p>It was suggested that SCF re-incorporate green issues into their meetings, as the meetings of the green group were diminishing due to staff being unable to attend.</p>	

	<p>There was a discussion about staff collecting commercial waste for groups of staff and taking it for recycling into domestic waste facilities. KS explained a member of staff had been challenged on disposing of commercial waste and explained that the practice should be discouraged. It was suggested that staff take home any personal recycling waste for recycling at home.</p>	
	<p>Staff ID Pictures on Staff Directory</p> <p>It was asked if it would be possible upload Staff ID pictures onto the Staff Information Directory, it was suggested that new staff would find this useful when trying to identify staff in different departments across the authority.</p> <p>It was agreed that SCF representatives would canvass staff views.</p>	<p>SCF Reps</p>
	<p>Employee Queries</p> <p>A question was raised about the Death Grant Form – if a member of staff has a change in circumstances. KS advised that they needed to update the form and the form can be found on the intranet. http://srvinternet01/intracontent/insurance</p> <p>LB requested a breakdown of Grade 11 and above equality and diversity information.</p> <p>LB advised that the minutes of the previous meeting had not shown the details of the discussion, questions and answers on essential car users. SCF reps were reminded that they should feed back to the employees they represent, details of what was discussed at SCF. KS advised that a copy of the frequently asked questions would be attached to the November minutes.</p> <p>It was also agreed that from January, draft minutes of the meeting would be circulated to the SCF for changes and minutes would be seconded and signed by the Chairman at the next meeting.</p> <p>Death Benefits (In Service)</p> <p>It was advised that the Group Life Assurance Scheme Staff benefit is due for renewal in January 2010 and is being looked into as a savings proposal. The LGPS changes in 2008 improved death in service benefits from 2 times salary to 3 times salary.</p> <p>Staff Morale</p> <p>It was asked if stress and anxiety were being monitored, due to the changes taking place and the organisational restructure.</p> <p>A discussion about staff morale followed. It was agreed that this would be discussed further at the January meeting. LB to collate information from SCF reps and to share with SCF Members before the meeting.</p>	<p>KS</p> <p>SCF</p> <p>SCF</p>

	<p>Payslips</p> <p>A query was raised regarding the printing of payslips to include NI number, tax code and employee payrolls number. LG said these were definitely included in the print and advised that staff should refer to the FAQ's for further information.</p> <p>Flexi Timesheets</p> <p>LG advised that there were now hints and tips on the operation of flexi-time on the intranet.</p> <p>Staff Benefits</p> <p>It was asked if a consultation could take place asking which benefits staff valued and those that they feel are less important and could be sacrificed.</p> <p>KS advised that the value of benefits is regarded differently from person to person, Some benefits apply to all staff and some to just groups of staff. KS explained that the staff survey has questions on the range of benefits and their worth to individual staff.</p>	
	<p>Date of January Meeting</p> <p>It was agreed that the date for the January meeting would be 6th January 2010.</p>	

Chair for next meeting : Margaret Bracey

Date of next meeting : 6th January 2010 – Committee Room 3
2.30pm to 4pm