

## Staff Consultation Forum

5<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Committee Room 1

### Attendees

Kerry Shorrocks  
John Robinson  
Christina Corr  
Jenny Donovan (For Chris Carter)  
David Carr  
Tim Neill  
Gail Dennehy  
Ian Fullstone  
Jackie Rushton  
Ian Davis  
Dee Levett  
Claire Morgan  
Andy Cavanagh

### Apologies

Chris Carter  
Sue Graves  
Nigel Schofield  
Garry Melding  
Heather Cain

		Actions
1.	<b>Apologies</b>  As above.	
2.	<b>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</b>  Ian Fullstone – Head of Development and Building Control attended to outline a proposed restructure for Strategic Planning and Enterprise. IF advised that currently there are two posts – Local Development Framework Manager and Projects Manager which it is proposed are amalgamated to a Local Plan and Projects Manager post. There will also be a new post, a Principal Planning officer post and two temporary posts. It is proposed that the two temporary posts will be for between 2 and 4 years. IF advised that a saving of £10k would also be made. Consultation has now started.	
3.	<b>Property Services</b>  Ian Davis Senior Building Surveyor, attended the meeting at the request of the Staff Consultation Forum.  It was asked if there was a mechanism in place to advise staff when reported faults had been dealt with, ID advised that this was not currently possible but all issues relating to property should be e-mailed to Property Services to ensure faults were reported.	

	<p>It was asked if there was a possibility that air conditioning would be installed within the building. ID explained that the building trapped and retained heat in a number of ways. The DCO was designed and built in the 1970s. It has a lot of glass panes that absorb heat from sunlight, and the number of PCs and other electrical equipment and people all increase heat generation. Overnight and at weekends the building is locked up including windows, which further retains the heat.</p> <p>A report would be taken to October Cabinet regarding refurbishment options for the building, as the decision had now been made to remain at the Council Offices. If approved, works could begin during the next financial year. ID advised that comfort issues for staff were a high priority and natural ventilation options were being looked into.</p> <p>Car park – additional lighting will be on site during February 2013. A decision is yet to be made on the specification.</p> <p>The vending machine contract is currently being looked into and will be going out to quote over the next 2 months, with the changes during next financial year. Staff comments would be considered when doing this.</p> <p>It was asked if there was any comparison between Zip boilers and kettles. ID advised that kettles were more economical as Zip boilers were on boil all day, kettles could be boiled as and when required. ID advised that Zip boilers were a problem because they can only be repaired and maintained by Zip.</p> <p>SCF thanked ID for this attendance which had helped clarify a number of matters.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Green Issues</b></p> <p>CM brought a request from the waste and recycling team for staff to take extra care in ensuring only the right compostible items go into the food bins and cardboard bins. For example if a sandwich is discarded still wrapped in cling film it causes a problem.. Cardboard packaging with a plastic window, an empty box of chocolate with the plastic tray still inside, plastic bottles and plastic bags were among items found in these bins. The help and cooperation of staff in this matter is greatly appreciated.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Home-working/Office Accommodation</b></p> <p>No issues were raised.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b></p> <p>AC and TN attended for this item. AC gave the SCF an outline of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, a 5 year strategy which is updated every year. He explained that there continues to be a great deal of uncertainty around government funding receipts over</p>	

	<p>the future years. For 2013/14 the realistic best and worst case scenario was for a budget gap of £500k to £700k. It was asked if the money from the Housing Stock Transfer could be used in any other way to increase its value. AC advised that the housing stock receipts were Treasury capital which could only be used for capital expenditure.</p> <p>The Treasury Strategy report would be going to September Cabinet. A link to the medium term financial strategy is below.</p> <p><a href="http://srvinternet01.north-herts.gov.uk/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?t=2380">http://srvinternet01.north-herts.gov.uk/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?t=2380</a></p> <p>KS advised that a salary comparison paper would be going to JSCC in September.</p> <p>It was asked if travel expenses would be increased as staff are becoming out of pocket using their cars for work with the increased fuel costs. KS advised that we use the Green Book rates and can only increase these if the Green Book rates are increased. KS explained that many councils had been seeking to lower mileage rates by moving to HMRC rates which were lower than Green Book Rates.</p> <p>It was asked if letters to staff could be sent internally rather than through the post. It was advised that the majority of post was sent second class and that post to the home address was often better for personal letters because where these had been sent internally there were confidentiality issues such as letters being opened inadvertently by someone other than the addressee.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Staff Survey</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the staff survey would be deferred until the next meeting. KS advised all SCF representatives to read the report (link attached) and check to see if staff had received their service level results and if staff were aware of any service level action planning.</p> <p><a href="http://srvinternet01.north-herts.gov.uk/intracontent/index/communications_and_print/consultation/staff_surveys.htm">http://srvinternet01.north-herts.gov.uk/intracontent/index/communications_and_print/consultation/staff_surveys.htm</a></p>	
8.	<p><b>NHDC Update</b></p> <p>KS asked for thanks to be recorded to staff for their co-operation in ceasing to use the Hillshott Car Park. It was possible that this would become a permanent arrangement. KS reminded SCF that Town Lodge was also still temporarily available and there was ample parking within the Multi Storey, with the top floors having less width restriction..</p> <p>KS advised that filming would be starting in Letchworth during September and then November/December for the new 'World's</p>	

	End' film starring Simon Pegg and Nick Frost.	
9.	<p><b>Employee Queries:</b></p> <p><b>Shared Services</b></p> <p>GD gave an update on the situation regarding Shared Services including the following points.</p> <p>The IT team was briefed by a SOCITM Consultant on the report findings on 30th August, prior to the full team seeing the report.</p> <p>The project aims to get information to staff in scope before information is sent out generally to all other staff, but the SOCITM report was put out on the intranet so all staff got it at the same time as staff in scope.</p> <p>The last information regarding taking the final business case to Cabinet indicated it would be late October / November. The latest position on this was that the decision was likely to be put back further and a date was not yet available.</p> <p>GD said she had raised a query (about these matters and) as to why so little notice was being given for staff briefings.</p> <p>The last update of the FAQs was 20th August and this indicates that there have been 926 questions submitted. So far 362 have been answered and the aim was to complete this by end August.</p> <p>Programme Board / TU / SCF meetings were previously being held weekly / fortnightly, but at present there were no meetings taking place.</p> <p><b>Childcare Vouchers</b></p> <p>It was asked if any decision had been made regarding Childcare Vouchers. KS advised that the Senior Management Team had approved in principle a reward package that includes childcare vouchers amongst other enhanced staff benefits. This will now be subject to the Service and Financial Planning process.</p>	

Chair for next meeting : Christina Corr  
3<sup>rd</sup> October 2012  
Committee Room 1