

Staff Consultation Forum

7th November 2012

Committee Room 1

Attendees

Kerry Shorrocks
John Robinson
Claire Morgan
Dee Levett
Sue Graves
Nigel Schofield
David Carr
Chris Carter
Christina Corr

Apologies

None

		Actions
1.	Apologies As above.	
2.	Proposed Restructure of Housing Public Protection Andy Godman - Head of Housing & Public Protection Service attended to outline his proposals for a 2-phase restructure within Housing and Public Protection. AG advised that the proposal had been approved by SMT in September. AG had carried out informal one-to-ones with staff and this would now progress to formal on-to-ones with those staff involved. AG advised that the external grant which supported the Anti Social Behaviour officer had now been withdrawn, but the savings from the restructure would now support the post. It was advised that as a new technical officer post was going to be created, firm reporting lines would need to be put in place. It was asked if changes during phase 2 of the restructure would have any impact on phase 1. AG advised that this was not envisaged but staff affected would be kept fully informed.	
3.	Office Accommodation AC attended for this item. AC advised that a report on office accommodation provision would be taken to Cabinet in December. Key recommendations from this report are that North Herts District Council purchase the lease of the building and to ensure appropriate investment can be made to carry out works to the building. A structural survey has been carried out and a design specification is currently under way which will include	

	<p>energy efficient measures, i.e. improved lighting and heating and create a more open plan environment.</p> <p>AC was asked when it was likely that improved lighting in the multi-storey car park would be carried out. AC to advise SCF.</p> <p>It was also requested that once the report had been to Cabinet that an update on progress be reported to SCF on a regular basis.</p> <p>SCF recommended that SMT consider decanting to another building whilst works are carried out could be preferable in cost terms and to optimise working conditions and also to look at the office layout with regard to better utilisation of office space and the requirements of staff.</p>	AC
4.	<p>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</p> <p>None.</p>	
5.	<p>Green Issues/Ideas</p> <p>CM advised that she had received the following update from Waste Management regarding office recycling.</p> <p>It has not been possible for Property Services to procure compostable cups for the vending machines cost effectively so the cups will not be changing.</p> <p>However, due to the launch of NHDC's commercial recycling service, the cardboard from DCO and the document centre is now sent for recycling rather than composting so we can now accept hot drinks cups in the cardboard bins</p> <p>These cups should not be placed in the food waste caddies please, only in the cardboard bins.</p> <p>Paper towels, brown envelopes (with or without windows) can also go in with the cardboard. Paper towels can also still go in the food waste caddies.</p> <p>Posters around the offices and intranet pages have been updated to reflect this.</p> <p>http://srvinternet01.north-herts.gov.uk/intracontent/index/property_and_support_services/green_office_recycling.htm</p>	
6.	<p>Home-working/Office Accommodation</p> <p>None.</p>	

<p>7.</p>	<p>Hitchin Town Hall</p> <p>JR gave an update on the Council's approved proposal to develop the Town Hall and Museums. Staff continue to be involved in cataloguing and recording of items at the Museums in preparation for opening in 24 months time.</p> <p>Corporate Business Planning – the second of the Councillor budget workshops has taken place with the three groups separately. Good progress has been made in identifying savings and JR advised that there will be some staffing implications and consultations with staff affected will take place shortly.</p> <p>KS advised that a reward scheme for Council employees was currently being investigated which may include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bikes for Work • Childcare Vouchers • Retail discount scheme <p>A bid will be made for necessary funding via the Business Planning process. KS advised that she will keep SCF updated on progress. SCF supported the proposal.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>NHDC Update</p> <p>JR advised that there continued to be uncertainty regarding government funding for this year, which will be known during December.</p> <p>As part of the Localism Act, NHDC have received the first few applications for the Community Assets Register, which will require for assets not to be disposed of before community organisations have been offered the chance to purchase them.</p> <p>As we are now approaching the winter period, managers are to be reminded of the Adverse Weather Policy. http://srvinternet01.north-herts.gov.uk/intracontent/index/human_resources/personnel/when_your_nothere/adverse_weather_conditions.htm</p> <p>Ash trees – JR advised that North Hertfordshire had a lot of Ash trees but not all species of Ash were affected by the fungal infection affecting some Ash trees. NHDC are currently reviewing where all the 'at risk' trees are located in North Herts. Advice is being provided to residents via the web http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/leisure_and_culture/parks_countryside_and_open_spaces/parks_open_spaces/ash_tree_dieback.htm</p> <p>JR advised that during the filming of World's End, several members of staff were given parts as extras. The filming was due to start again on 14th November.</p>	

	<p>JR reminded SCF about the importance of the Gifts and Hospitality Register as we approached the Christmas period.</p> <p>http://srvinternet01.north-herts.gov.uk/intracontent/index/human_resources/personnel/working_trust/gifts_hospitality.htm</p>	
9.	<p>Employee Queries:</p> <p>CC advised that concerns have been raised regarding the high cost of items that can be purchased from the vending machines. It was asked if the Council received any income from the machines or whether it was cost neutral. JH to contact Property Services.</p> <p>It was asked if the Chief Executive had an open door policy. JR reminded SCF that the Chief Executive has offered to speak with Teams at their meetings and that requests for this or from individuals to speak with him should be directed via his PA Jill Welshman, in the first instance.</p> <p>It was asked if staff could volunteer to take redundancy. KS advised that the reorganisation policy had been updated with a paragraph explaining the Policy on voluntary redundancy. It would only be used if it was decided to invite applications on a Council wide or a service level basis in response to business needs. The updated policy can be viewed on this link.</p> <p>http://srvinternet01.north-herts.gov.uk/intracontent/index/human_resources/personnel/fair_treatment/reorganisation .htm</p> <p>Annual Leave – It was asked if it was possible for staff to carry over more than 5 days annual leave as staff found it difficult at year end to ensure that they take all their entitlement. It was advised that in the first instance they should contact their line manager to discuss.</p>	
10.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>KS advised that the Annual Joint Council and Unison-funded Children's Christmas Party was now Santa's Tea Party, aiming at the younger children that the event attracts. The party would be held on Friday 14th December 2012 at the Council Offices. It is free of charge and open to NHDC staff's children and grandchildren and will suit children up to 8 years of age. There will be entertainment, food, party bags and a very special visit from NHDC's own Father Christmas!</p>	

Chair for next meeting : Chris Carter
5th December 2012
Committee Room 1

Dates for JSCC : 19th December 2012
20th March 2013