

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

5th November 2014



Minutes

Present: David Scholes, Kerry Shorrocks, Chris Carter, Claire Morgan, Amanda Dell, Dee Levett, Helen Rae, Jack Hughes, John Robinson, Susanne Gow, Maggie Williams

Guest

Speakers: Antonella Di Maria (Item 2), Anthony Roche and Norma Atlay (Item 4)

Apologies: Christina Corr

Circulation: Those present, Christina Corr, Intranet

Actions

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Christina Corr

2 Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme

ADM advised SCF that NHDC would be introducing a Car Salary Sacrifice scheme on the 1st December. ADM commented that the scheme would be replacing NHDC's previous lease car scheme and advised SCF of the following:

- By entering the scheme, staff will sacrifice an element of their gross pay in order to receive a non-cash benefit.
- The scheme is administered by a company called Inchcape and the scheme itself is called Just Drive
- The amount deducted from gross pay is determined by the list price and CO2 emission of the car.
- In order to be eligible for the scheme, employees must be over 18 and the salary sacrificed must not bring the employee's salary under the National Minimum Wage
- Road tax and insurance are included in the scheme and no CO2 cap has been placed on the cars available to staff.
- The scheme allows for 2 cars per employee with the scheme lasting 3 years.
- The scheme is an irrevocable change to an employees terms and conditions and early termination of the scheme will result in a charge.
- FAQ's are currently being produced and will be made available to staff shortly
- A road show on 2nd December will offer staff the opportunity to find out more information on the scheme.

KS commented that whilst NHDC are widening the benefits package offered to staff, it is important that staff are fully aware of the terms and conditions of the scheme.

3. Car Loan Scheme

KS advised that NHDC's Car Loan scheme is not widely used. The scheme also no longer offers a competitive interest rate for employees compared to what they might get from car dealer and the fact that a salary sacrifice car scheme would soon be available, it has been decided to cease the car loan scheme. Current loans would be honoured

4. Legal Services Restructure

AR presented the proposed Legal Services Restructure report and explained that the proposal was separated into 2 parts. Part 1 of the restructure proposed that with changes to the Structure and Job content the revised posts of Senior Lawyer, Property Lawyer, Contracts Lawyer and Advisory and Litigation Lawyer will be submitted for Job evaluation.

Part 2 of the restructure proposes the redundancy of the Property and Planning Legal Advisor, which will be replaced by a Property and Planning Lawyer post that will be submitted for Job Evaluation.

- The planning work undertaken by this role has significantly changed over time. In April 2015 the way in which the Council receives planning contributions will change, resulting in a reduction in unilateral undertakings work. This work accounts for half of the Property and Planning Legal Advisor's workload
- The property work undertaken by this post has reduced as a project to voluntarily register all NHDC land and property interests has concluded.
- There has been an increase in workload for the Property Solicitor post with cannot be delegated down to the Property and Planning Legal Advisor,
- Replacing this post with a Property and Planning Lawyer post would fill an obvious gap in the support offered to the Planning Department which is a statutory service.

AR explained that formal consultation for staff affected by the restructure was now open until the 28st November, with a decision taken on 1st December as to whether the restructure will be finalised. KS added that Outplacement support and redeployment opportunities are offered to any staff that are at risk of redundancy.

5. Matters Arising form the Previous Minutes

No matters arising – the Minutes were agreed.

6. Green Issues/Ideas

AD passed on a query from the Document Centre requesting feedback on the new brand of printer paper used. SCF agreed this was a good idea but that when providing feedback staff should ensure that the old printer paper is out of circulation first.

7. NHDC Update

KS advised that a project was currently being undertaken to look at the possibility of a Joint Waste service between NHDC and East Herts District Council. If this project was to come to fruition, savings of £10m could be made over the life of the new contract. A report detailing this project will go to Cabinet in December.

DS added that this project came from a peer review within the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership to see whether a shared service within the county could be both cost effective and operationally effective. Whilst NHDC's current waste contract expires in 2017, it is important to make decisions now on the future of the Waste Management service NHDC provides.

KS informed SCF that Winter Outlook was going to be published shortly and that social media and text alerts were now being used to contact the general public with messages such as severe weather warnings.

DS commented that budget workshops were taking place throughout this week with Members and that whilst the budget has been set for 2015/16, there are still savings to find over the next few years. A report detailing proposals is going to Cabinet in December. This will include growth items as well as savings, for example saving on revenue costs by the purchase a Waste Management fleet.

DS informed SCF that a business case for a Building Control Shared Service was going to a board meeting in November and Cabinet in December or January. DS commented at this would offer a commercialised Building Control department which would stand as a Local Authority Holding Company which would allow the service to operate more commercially.

KS commented that the NHDC Children's Christmas party would take place on Friday 12th December. Details on how to book were on the intranet.

DS updated SCF on the Crematorium project, explaining that structural arrangements were being reviewed to decide which were the most advantageous to NHDC. A report on the Crematorium is going to Cabinet in December.

CC advised that a meeting of the Office Accommodation Project Board is taking place next week. Updates on the project can be found on the Intranet via the link below.

http://srvinternet01.north-herts.gov.uk/intracontent/index/strategy_and_performance/dco_refurbishment_and_modernisation.htm

9. Employee Queries

AD raised an employee query regarding the Pay Proposal, where some staff thought that the "Grade 5" as detailed by the National Joint Council

was the same as the NHDC Grade 5 and thought they would benefit from the 'bottom-loaded' part of the proposal should it come to fruition.

KS confirmed that the Grade 5 salary listed by the NJC is the national pay bands and these are lower than NHDC's Grade 1 salary. Any bottom loaded increase should the pay proposals become an accepted pay offer would be at our Grade 1 only.

KS explained that for staff excluding chief officers the pay proposals were for an increase of 2.2% payable in January 2015 to April 2016. In addition a lump sum of 0.45% of the new salary was being offered to staff. Of this £100 would be paid in advance and the balance paid in April. KS advised that the lump sum would be pro-rata for Part Time staff and would be subject to Tax and NI.

Further Communications for staff will be done if this becomes a formal accepted pay offer.

CM stated that whilst she was still retaining her role 4th Floor rep, she was now stationed on the 5th Floor. This raised the issue of ensuring that SCF reps are visible to staff and staff are able to contact them easily. It was agreed that a list of incumbent reps would be provided on the SCF webpage.

SG commented that the Chairman's Annual Christmas Reception will be a lunch time drop-in session with drinks and buffet and all staff were warmly invited. It would take place on Friday 19th December. Further details of this will be provided in the coming weeks.

10. Chair for Next Meeting

Chris Carter.