

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

3 December 2015



DRAFT Minutes

Present: Claire Morgan (Chair), John Robinson, Kerry Shorrocks, Maggie Williams, Oliver Furbur, Anne McDonald, Geri Hatch (Sub for Catherine Cole), Dee Levett, Sharon Nahal (notes), Debbie Hiscock (item 1)

Circulation: Those Present, Property Services, David Scholes, Amanda Dell, Christina Corr and Catherine Cole

KS introduced Anne McDonald as the new SCF representative for the 2nd floor following Chris Carter's departure last month.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Scholes, Amanda Dell, Christina Corr and Catherine Cole.

2. Property Services Update

JR confirmed the SCF that had written to Property Services following on from a query raised at the last SCF with regards to the cost of sanitary products located in the vending machines in the female toilets. DH advised that Property Services were looking in to this and conceded that the cost was high. DS will provide an update via email once she has met with the suppliers.

Action: DH

DH also confirmed that the multi vend machine which is owned by the Council will stock a variety of healthy snacks along with other items that are currently available i.e chocolates, crisps etc. Following on from a question about vending at Town Lodge next year, DH advised that this facility would be available at Town Lodge.

GH confirmed that an officer on the first floor had asked that lighting around the back entrance of DCO be looked at as in the evenings when leaving the office, this didn't appear to be as well lit as it could be. DH advised that this hadn't been reported to Property Services previously but would look in to this and update SCF.

Action: DH

A question was raised around the lack of pens for staff when signing in. following discussion, JR requested that Jo Dufficy arrange for a stock of pens to be made available.

Action: JD

DH was advised that the third cubicle on the 4th floor ladies toilets appears to be out of action quite frequently and whether the flush mechanism could be looked at. DH advised that she wasn't aware that this was happening frequently but would have this looked at.

Action: DH

A question was asked about the decant plans for Town Lodge and whether consideration had been given to allowing for a 'rest room' similar to one on the 4th floor. This is regularly used by a number of staff. DS confirmed that this hadn't been taken in to account but would raise the issue with ID.

Action: DH

In discussing the facilities at Town Lodge, DH confirmed that there would be no shower facilities available. The date for the decant is currently set between March 2016 – June 2016 but this could be subject to change.

In terms of meeting room availability, DH advised that the current system would be updated to list rooms available to book at Town Lodge. Finally, DH advised that she would be meeting with Head of Service/Corporate Manager to look at their office requirements in due course.

OF advised that he had received a query on the cost of the replacement of chairs once the building had been refurbished and whether it made sense to dispose of chairs that were in good working order with new ones when they were not required.

DH advised that there was not budget for new furniture and that at present, the plan was that all existing furniture will remain. In terms of chairs, it was envisaged that new chairs be purchased at the cost of £138 per chair. However, due to budget constraints this was not possible and agreed that chairs that were in good working order, would not be replaced.

AMc commented that chairs on the 2nd floor were quite old and required replacing. DH advised that Property Service could arrange to replace these but that the budget would have to come from the service area.

SCF thanked DH for attending the meeting.

3. Mattes Arising from Previous Minutes

Subject to change of the date at minute 3, page 2 the minutes were agreed.

4. NHDC Update

JR updated on the autumn statement which was published last week. The LGA have put together detailed analysis of the changes and that this can be accessed following this link:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6869714/On+the+Day+Briefing+SR+2015.pdf/fadcf449-c787-43c0-8648-1ccf403a9275>

JR advised that the Department for Communities & Local Government has already agreed to take a 30% reduction in its funding over the next 4 years, and the impact on funding for Local Authorities is likely to see similar if not greater reductions. The impact on Local Government is likely to be known in mid-December

Communications around recycling is being further promoted to encourage residents to recycle but to recycle the right items. A four page pull out has been included in the recent Outlook publication a copy of which can be found by following this link <http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/customer-services/publications-and-consultations/outlook-magazine>

While we are a high performing authority for recycling, there has been an increased amount of items that can't be recycled found in residents' bins in recent months. This

causes problems at the recycling facility, reducing the quality of the recyclables and can also lead to lorry loads being rejected and sent to landfill. To tackle this a three month campaign has recently started.

The communications programme aims are:

- To ensure residents fully understand what can and cannot be recycled at the kerbside and where they can recycle items such as waste electrical items.
- To ensure residents 'know what goes in' and have the opportunity to correct bad habits before any step up in rejecting bins takes place.
- To ensure residents understand the implications of contaminating their grey bins – from a cost, quality and environmental perspective.

Finally, at the Cabinet meeting on 15 December 2015, Cabinet will be considering Saving proposals for forward as part of the budget for 2016/17, reports on approving a new parking scheme at NHLC and the refurbishment of the Leisure Centre. The Local Plan will also be discussed.

DL asked when the Museum project would be completed and JR advised that it was envisaged that works would be complete mid January 2016 but that there were still legal/financial issues to be resolved.

5. Office Accommodation

It was noted that the majority of the issues concerning office accommodation had been raised earlier on the agenda. KS advised that work was currently taking place around a 'value engineering' exercise in an attempt to look at how costs could be reduced.

6. Employee Queries

OF requested that consideration be given to the messages when participating in events such as the minute silence for the Paris victims. For instance, it would be helpful if a brief statement could be given as to why we are participating etc and then for the message to say the silence will commence and when it has finished. There was a little confusion recently as to when it started. JR advised that he would pick this up with JD.
Action: JD

KS confirmed that SCF representative was required on the Office Accommodation project and at the Joint Staff Consultative Forum. KS requested that SCF members consider this and advise her of any nominations.
Action: SCF

7. Chair for Next Meeting

OF agreed to Chair the next meeting.