

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

2 November 2016



DRAFT Minutes

Present: Kerry Shorrocks (Chair), David Scholes, Maggie Williams, Emma Jellis, Dee Levett, George Sobota, Debbie Ealand, Claire Morgan, Christina Corr, Sharon Nahal (notes), Rebecca Coates (item 1), Mark Scanes (item 2), Debbie Hiscock (item 3)

Apologies: Catherine Cole, Anne McDonald

Circulation: Those Present, Catherine Cole, Anne McDonald

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Catherine Cole and Anne McDonald.

2. Introduction of Dashboard Cameras

Rebecca Coates attended for this item and explained that it was intended to introduce dashboard cameras in to for the Environmental Crime Officers vehicles. The rational for this was to protect the officers and consultation has been undertaken with IT, Legal and HR along with those officers concerned.

RC explained that the team are fully on board with these proposals and that these devices have been installed to prevent or detect criminal offences.

During the discussion it was suggested that investment also be made in to the provision of body cameras and RC explained that she was in discussion with the Parking Team as this was something that they too were considering.

There being no further comments, SCF thanked RC for her update.

3. Revenues & Benefits Restructure

Mark Scanes attended for this item and explained that he was implementing a restructure of the Systems & Technical Team which was agreed by Corporate Board in June 2016.

He explained that the restructure would see the transfer of responsibility for the Technical Team to the Technical Manager which would report direct to the Systems & Technical Manager and that there would be reduction in Senior Technical Officers from 3 to 2.

The overall effect of the changes, subject to Job Evaluation is that up to three Officers may have an increase of one grade, which will be offset by a reduction in the head count of 2 posts. Furthermore, MS advised that the Systems & Technical Team had agreed to reduce consultation time from 30 days to 14 days.

There being no further comments, SCF thanked MS for his update.

4. Property Services Update

Debbie Hiscock attended for this item. DH briefed on the office accommodation project and advised that decant would commence this weekend and that plans and the schedule for the decant were available on the intranet or by following this link <http://intranet.north-herts.gov.uk/home/strategy-and-performance/dco-refurbishment-and-modernisation-project/office-refurbishment-0>

A number of staff attended the recent open day earlier in the week and were very positive about the move in general. DH explained that the old Museum space in Letchworth was now referred to 'Broadway Offices' and would house the training rooms for the Council.

It was noted that Planning Policy and Democratic Services would not be moving until the end of November due to work commitments.

Finally Dh advised that confidential/non confidential waste bins will be provided on all floors to assist teams with the disposing of files that are no longer required and that Howard Crompton will be writing to all staff on a weekly basis to provide them with an update on the moves.

There being no further comments, SCF thanked DH for her update.

5. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

CC requested the minutes be updated to include the query raised regarding the printing of large volume print jobs on the MFD printers when it would be much more cost efficient to send these to the Document Centre for printing.

Subject to one other minor change, the minutes were agreed.

6. NHDC Update

DS provided an update on the Local Plan and the closing date for consultation was 30 November. The steel works are now in place on site which when complete, will accommodate a new learning pool, new café and dance studio. This investment will see a rise in the Council's income by £20,000 a month. In addition, nearly 100 additional car parking spaces have also been created at the facility.

Budget workshops will be held with Member prior to reports being presented to Cabinet in December. Currently the Council is looking to fund a £3.5m gap over the next 4 years.

The new Council newsletter 'Insight' had recently been launched and there had been some very positive feedback. Should anyone have comments/suggestions then she should be forwarded to Jo Softly, Kerry Shorrocks or David Scholes.

Finally DS advised that the proposals for the Senior Management Restructure would be published in a few weeks. DL asked whether the Council would be looking to restructure the other areas within the Council and DS stated that was not the case.

KS reminded everyone that details for the Children's Christmas party would shortly be sent out and that the event would be held at the Brotherhood Hall.

KS reminded officer to look at remaining annual leave entitlement for 2016/17. It was also confirmed that carry over leave approval was automatic and authorisation for carrying over no more than 5 days was now with individual line managers. However, any leave not booked by the end of May would automatically be removed and lost.

7. Office Accommodation

This item was covered under agenda item 4.

8. Employee Queries

CM asked whether SCF representatives would need to be re-nominated to represent the areas they would be representing following the move to Town Lodge. It was agreed that this would be further considered when we move back in to the Council Offices.

EJ requested clarification as to whether mileage could be claimed from home to work and back forth if individuals at to come in to Council Offices to attend meetings for a number of occasions on one day. KS advised that this was covered in the Home Working Policy but, if an individual has meeting scheduled then they should make arrangements to work in the office for that day/half day. Further information on this can be viewed by following this link to the Home Working Policy <http://intranet.north-herts.gov.uk/home/human-resources/hr-policies/home-working>

DL requested that a reminder be circulated to staff to advised should officers move away from their computers then to lock their screens so that sensitive information could not be viewed by those walking past. DL advised of a couple of recent incidents she was informed of where sensitive information could be viewed when screens were left unlocked.

KS advised that GS was shortly leaving the organisation following a recent appointment and thanked him for all his efforts with SCF. Holly Butrimas-Gair had been nominated to represent the 4th floor on SCF.

9. Chair for Next Meeting

Christina Corr to chair next meeting.