

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

7 June 2017



- Present:** Clare Morgan (Chair), Kerry Shorrocks, Dee Levett, , Maggie Williams, Sue Collett, Ian Couper, Debbie Hiscock, Andrew Mills, Vic Godfrey, Jonathan Charter, James Watson (notes)
- Apologies:** Rebekah Edwards, Christina Corr, Anne McDonald, Holly Butrimas-Gair, Emma Jellis, David Scholes.
- Circulation:** Those present, Rebekah Edwards, Christina Corr, Anne McDonald, Holly Butrimas-Gair, Emma Jellis, and David Scholes.
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1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Rebekah Edwards, Christina Corr, Anne McDonald, Holly Butrimas-Gair, Emma Jellis, and David Scholes.

2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

None

3. NHDC Update

KS let the group know that Norma Atlay is choosing the early retirement option and will be leaving NHDC in September.

DH stated that the radiator that bled is now fixed & the contacts list has now been updated to include Careline.

The issue regarding the fire alarm that went off two mornings was brought to the group's attention. DH said they were unsure why the alarm went off. Checks have been done and there is no reason why it should happen again.

4. Office Accommodation Update

KS explained to the attendees that construction on the DCO is progressing well with workings currently ahead of schedule. The curtain walling is now down with the asbestos all been removed.

Selection of Carpets/Kitchen equipment etc is taking place to be prepared for when the time comes for them to be installed.

5. IT Projects Update

- VG specified that the Help desk which is made up of a Team Leader and 2 officers received 7667 requests in the last year with 285 reported incidents in the last 14 days, around 20 a day as well as 46 feature requests covering new projects.
- Currently a mobile project called mobile pass is taking place with the intention of those working at home being able to use soft media on their mobile instead of the blue token software.

- A certain amount of monitors didn't meet regulations. As a result a capital request has been made to replace 18 monitors.
- VG requested that all staff complete the feedback form after making an IT call as this feedback is used to help improve the IT service. These are looked at weekly on Fridays.
- 15 councillors have been provided with tablets in the last couple of weeks mainly being used to access emails and papers regarding current projects.
- Good technology is now in place for those who want to access their emails on their mobile/work devices. 101 staff are currently using Good technology including 32 of the 49 councillors. CM asked if the tablets are using Good technology. VG confirmed that the tablets are currently using this technology.
- Desks will be smaller once staff moves back into DCO. IT are looking at installing arms on the desks which are able to move around, tilt, and change height to help clear desk space. The arms will soon be moved from IT into the hot desk areas for staff to get familiar with them. VG stated that if any staff wish to try them out at their desks then to notify him and IT will install them.
- NHDC currently use Windows 2010, IT are researching into using Windows 2013 and Office 2016. NHDC currently run 380 different types of software which will all need to be compatible with the latest Windows/Microsoft products. It was indicated that the last time this exercise was done it took around 18 months to talk to all suppliers to ensure their software was at a level that NHDC can migrate and be compatible.
- The recent issues around cyber security were raised, which the group being reminded that cyber security is the highest risk in this organisation. VG explained that the reason the National Health was hacked was due to them using Microsoft XP which was decommissioned around 2 and a half years ago by Microsoft. Cyber attacks are mostly caused by internal staff for example staff who are leaving open an unknown email which as a result could effect the whole network.
- The technical team worked heavily for the election which was technology driven. There were 6 laptops running in the evening at the count centre. Postal votes were put on the system at 9 followed by all the data taken to the council to be processed through the laptops.
- A new product called Clearswift is now running well replacing the Egress system.
- IT recently went live with a new disaster recovery centre. The main data centre is near the DCO with the diesel generator moving from Town lodge to the car park in the DCO to protect as much of the electricity supplies as possible.
- The disaster recovery site used to be in the town lodge however has been moved due to it being in the same building that the council are currently working in. The back up site now resides in unit 3 at Beverly close storage on the other side of Letchworth.
- The network team are currently working with Hitchin Museum to help get their new interactive software running.

- VG and team are looking at changing the structure of IT this year because of cyber & anti virus. VG suggested to staff if they get any unexpected or suspicious emails to delete them.
- Data protection is changing in May 2018 to something called General Data protection regulations (GDPR). There have been 102 subject access requests regarding data protection in the past 12 months. For example a member of the public asking what records do the council have on them.
- In the past year there has been 655 freedom of information requests.
- CCTV has been reinstalled around Town Lodge and Hitchin Museum.
- The information team look after £1.3million worth of assets across the organisation for IT including checking all PCs, cameras, and tablet verifications. VG encouraged staff if there is anything in your H or G drive that hasn't been used in years to delete and make up space.
- GISLPG (maps) bringing in £35,000 per year allowing for the IT department to generate an income for the council.
- IT currently taking on various tasks for the joint waste contract between North and East Herts, attending a number of meetings.
- IT working with David Miley and his team for committee reports such as big meetings involving lots of documentation. Soon these papers will be on a tablet and easier to access and use. Templates will soon be updated allowing for them to be digitalised.
- IT updating main planning land charges application to a product called Uniform, being lead by Antonela De Maria.
- IT has been working with environmental health on their project called Tesgoney which is to enable them to be more mobile working.
- IT to work with careline to look at options at modernising their technology and making it more secure.
- 75 gigabits of data is being used in the H drive, this accumulates to 335,000 files. 733 gigabites of data is being used in the G drive which is around 2.3million files in total. IT is currently using 27 terabits of disc space including backup data.
- DL asked when a global email has been sent out for a minute silence, when the time comes people may miss while working. Is there any way for an alert or pop up can be set up to remind people that the minute silence is due. VG said that Micollab is an option that could be used to send out something to remind people, especially for those homeworking.
- Thanks were given to Vic and his team for all the hard work they have been doing in an efficient and friendly manner.

- **Communications Restructure**

KS is currently managing the communications team at present. Sarah Dobor has returned from maternity leave with Jo softly leaving as she was working temporally. Sarah has adjusted her hours to working Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The Web Manager Gavin is changing some focus to be more about the council digitalised services. A senior communications role is being created who will back up the communications manager and deal with more complex issues in the team. The role will be part time and is currently in the consultation stage which will close around 11th/12th June. There are no redundancies as a result of the restructure. Nikki Lennox is also leaving the council to take up a role elsewhere.

- **Ground Maintenance Restructure**

AM stated to the group that one of the grounds monitoring officers have take the option of flexible retirement, therefore reduced his hours to a three day week which has brought forward the need for succession planning. The proposal of the restructure is to introduce a 4th career graded post giving somebody an opportunity to get the appropriate training depending on the individual skill set so they can take on the role and succeed in the post once others retire or move on. This post then gives other members of the team the durability to concentrate on tasks such as burials for example at present there 80,000 graves that need checking to ensure there is data available. There are no redundancies with the consultation process open on 7th June lasting for around a week.

- **Parking Services**

JC informed the group that as of Monday 5th NHDC opened consultation with over 11 enforcement officers regarding the proposal to formally introduce parking enforcement on Sundays and evenings. This includes extending their cover until 9pm and issuing on 2 nights a week, however this could increase if things seem to be worse than first thought. It at a later date Sunday charging is introduced in car parks, and then the working pattern will change again to reflect this and provide cover for Sundays.

Cos had input into the router and NHDC have been able to ensure that their 4 day week and rest days remain unchanged. 1-1 feedback from them is all positive about the proposal that has gone forward.

It is expected to have an effect for around 4-6 weeks and then begin to calm down. Staff night working is random with the hope know one will pick up a pattern. It has been arranged so there will be four people out on the evenings split into pairs. It has been done this way in case any staff are sick or on holiday so 3 members can still go out together.

They have been equipped with body warm cameras which have been in operation for 6 weeks.

- **Employee enquires**

It was requested can phones ringtones be altered for call that are on hold so that the person knows that a call is on hold and it isn't a new caller that ringing. Query is due to be sent to Jo to see what can be done.

JW asked is complement slips are still available for departments to use. Group stated that they are still available and to order them from print.

DL mentioned that there was a concern about people smoking outside the Broadway as the smoke is going under the doors into the building. Group indicated that smokers should be advised to smoke at an alternate location.

CM asked for an update in regards to the management restructure.
KS stated that the restructure is still ongoing with the senior management now having three strategic director vacancies and a head of service vacancy.

- **Chair for Next Meeting**
- Christina Corr or Claire Morgan