

# Public Document Pack

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 16TH DECEMBER, 2020

### SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Please find attached supplementary papers relating to the above meeting, as follows:

**Agenda No    Item**

- 2        a)        MINUTES - 18 DECEMBER 2019 TO 23 SEPTEMBER 2020 (Pages 3 - 22)

To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the following dates:

18 December 2019;  
11 March 2020;  
23 September 2020.

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 2a

The following Minutes are attached for the Joint Staff Consultative Committee to consider and approve:

18 December 2019;

11 March 2020;

23 September 2020.

.

This page is intentionally left blank

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD IN THE FIRST FLOOR, ROOM 2/3, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,  
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY ON WEDNESDAY, 18TH DECEMBER,  
2019 AT 10.00 AM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** *Councillors Kate Aspinwall (Chairman), Keith Hoskins and Claire Strong*

**In Attendance:** *Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Kerry Shorrocks (Corporate Human Resources Manager), Maggie Williams (Senior Human Resources and Contracts Manager), Dee Levett (Unison Representative), Christina Corr (Staff Consultation Forum Representative), Dylan Bailey (Democratic Services - Work Experience) and Matthew Hepburn (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

**24 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

*Audio Recording – 2 Seconds*

As a result of Councillor Kay Tart, Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee, having sent her apologies for absence, it was required that a Chairman be elected for this Meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Keith Hoskins, seconded by Councillor Claire Strong and;

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Kate Aspinwall be elected Chairman of the Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

**25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio Recording – 53 Seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kay Tart and Terry Hone.

**26 MINUTES - 3 OCTOBER 2019**

*Audio Recording – 1 Minute 9 Seconds*

The Unison Representative sought clarification from Item 21 on the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 October 2019 and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 3 October 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

**27 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio Recording – 2 Minutes 40 Seconds*

There was no other business notified.

## 28 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio Recording – 2 Minutes 49 Seconds*

- (1) The Chairman welcomed those present at the meeting and introduced Dylan Bailey who was in attendance at that meeting as he was at North Hertfordshire District Council on work experience.
- (2) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) The Chairman drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

## 29 STAFF CONSULTATION FORUM

*Audio Recording – 3 Minutes 33 Seconds*

The Corporate Human Resources Manager advised the Committee of the matters discussed at the Staff Consultation Forum held on 2 October 2019 and 6 November 2019, as follows:

- The NHDC update;
- Property Services update;
- Employee queries;
- IT Updates;
- Document Centre Restructure

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Kate Aspinwall;
- Councillor Claire Strong; and
- Councillor Keith Hoskins.

Members entered into a discussion relating to an employee's query at the SCF Forum around vacancies being advertised internally only before they are advertised externally and as to whether or not this should be the case.

In response to questions raised, the Corporate Human Resources Manager and the Service Director – Resources confirmed that:

- Self-service issues linked to the current payroll system would be resolved with the introduction of the new payroll system;
- Lots of staff helped out at the Parliamentary Election in December 2019 as well as many staff being left in the office to cover those who were involved with the Election; the overall response from staff was good;
- Staff were able to clean their desk with cleaning equipment if they wished.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forum held on 2 October 2019 and the Draft Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forum held on 6 November 2019 be noted.

**30 PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE AND ANNUAL REPORT 2019**

*Audio Recording – 19 Minutes 45 Seconds*

The Corporate Human Resources Manager presented the information note entitled People Strategy Update and Annual Report 2019 and advised the Committee of the following:

- An update on the progress made in the last quarter on the People Strategy 2015-2020;
- The Local Government Employers would be releasing a new Workforce Development Framework during Spring/Summer 2020;
- It was proposed that the Council would adopt the framework in order to create a workforce development plan and create the People Strategy during the Autumn/Winter 2020/21.
- Recruitment had been busy that year with a total number of vacancies advertised during the period January to November 2019 at 93;
- There were 12 Apprentices working at the Council;
- April 2019 saw the end of a two year pay deal of 2% with higher increases for the lowest paid to meet the rising rate of the National Living Wage and to work towards it increasing up to the rates expected in 2020;
- The Payroll project had placed a huge demand on the Human Resources team;
- The iTrent system was more modern and user friendly and would allow Officers and Councillors to submit expenses and view payslips via mobile devices;
- The Employee Assistant Programme was available to Officers and Councillors; recent data obtained showed reasonable use;
- A new staff recognition scheme had been introduced;
- There were more trained Mental Health First Aiders;
- The Employee Handbook would be redesigned in order to modernise it and make it easier for staff to find information;
- Work was going to be undertaken to streamline HR Policies;
- The Short-Term absence target of 3.50 for 2018/19 was exceeded by 0.60 days;
- 106 Staff took up the Flu Vaccination;
- The Annual joint funded Unison and NHDC Children's Christmas tea party took place on Friday 13 December 2019 which 20-25 children attended;
- Appendix A illustrated the Staff Turnover Rates;
- The absence rates from November 2018-October 2019 were discussed.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong; and
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall.

In response to questions raised, the Corporate Human Resources Manager provided the following:

- The absence rate in July 2019 was higher than expected at that time of year; this was looked into;
- The Flu Vaccination was not available to Councillors;
- Support was offered to Staff on Long-Term Sick;
- Pay negotiations were still ongoing. However, it would be unlikely that people will see an increase in their pay in April 2020.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the Information Note entitled People Strategy Update and Annual Report 2019 be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Committee to consider the People Strategy Update.

### 31 INFORMATION NOTE - EQUALITIES UPDATE

*Audio Recording – 41 Minutes 32 Seconds*

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager presented the Information Note entitled Equalities Update and advised that the data within the Information Note was nearly a year old as, owing to absence, the information was not able to be brought to an earlier meeting of that Committee.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager advised as follows:

- The data was required to be published, in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, in January 2020 on the Council's website;
- Further explanation was provided on the statistics on page 36 of the Information Note at Paragraph 3.1.1.1 – 3.1.1.3.
- The figures illustrated that the make up of the Council's workforce, joiners and leavers by protected characteristics remained very stable with few changes;
- There had been a significant increase in the number of long term sickness cases in 2018;
- There was an increase in leavers in 2018 to 58 which compared to 46 leavers in 2017 and 60 leavers on 2016;
- The Council's Gender Pay Gap figures for 2018 had been submitted in March 2019 and the full Gender Pay Gap Report was attached as Appendix 2 as well as being available on the Council's website;

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor Keith Hoskins; and
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall.

In response to questions raised, the Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager and the Corporate Human Resources Manager advised the following:

- Actual numbers would be given as well as the percentages in order to clarify the percentage of female employees in the workforce;
- Data relating to how far employees commuted in to work and the number of employees who lived within the District could be obtained;
- HOP (Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal) into Hertfordshire was a one-stop shop for those wishing to upskill in Hertfordshire;
- An employee's Marriage Status was one of the 9 Protected Characteristics that meant it was statutory to publish data relating to this;
- An Ethnicity Pay Gap would be required to be published in the future;
- Software to ensure job adverts and interview questions contained gender neutral language was being looked into;
- There was not an issue with Equal Pay at the Council; there is an issue with The Gender Pay Gap.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the information note entitled Equalities Update be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Committee to consider the Equalities Update.



### 32 STRATEGIC DISCUSSION PAPER - SALARY SACRIFICE SCHEMES

*Audio Recording – 1 Hour 33 Minutes 4 Seconds*

The Senior Human Resources Manager presented the Strategic Discussion Paper – Salary Sacrifice Schemes and advised as follows:

- A Salary sacrifice or salary exchange scheme was where an employee has agreed to exchange part of their salary in order to obtain a non-cash benefit from their employer;
- Prior to 2017, the Council offered a number of benefits under the salary sacrifice scheme;
- Childcare vouchers had now ceased but were available to employees still within the scheme;
- Halfords Cycle2work Scheme was a live benefit;
- Buying more Annual Leave was a benefit that was being looked into.

The following Members asked questions and entered into a brief discussion on the subject of buying and selling annual leave;

- Councillor Keith Hoskins;
- Councillor Claire Strong; and
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall.

In response to questions raised, the Corporate Human Resources Manager, the Unison Representatives and the Service Director – Resources advised the following:

- Selling Annual Leave was not something that would be recommended as it was important for Staff to take time out of work;
- Staff were encouraged to use their Annual Leave entitlement;
- It may not be affordable to sell back annual leave.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the discussion paper on Salary Sacrifice Schemes be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Committee to consider the discussion paper on Salary Sacrifice Schemes.

### 33 FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS

*Audio Recording – 1 Hour 47 Minutes 35 Seconds*

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the discussion topic for the next meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee would be:

- Career Development, Talent and Succession Planning.

The Next meeting of The Joint Staff Consultative Committee would be held on Wednesday 11 March 2020 at 10:00am.

The meeting closed at 11.57 am

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD IN THE FIRST FLOOR, ROOM 2/3, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,  
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY  
ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH MARCH, 2020 AT 10.00 AM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** *Councillors: Kay Tart (Chair), Tony Hunter and Martin Stears-Handscomb*

**In Attendance:** *Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Kerry Shorrocks (Corporate Human Resources Manager), Maggie Williams (Senior Human Resources and Contracts Manager) and Matthew Hepburn (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

**Also Present:** *Ben Glover (Staff Consultation Forum Representative)*

**34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio Recording – 14 Seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kate Aspinwall, Terry Hone and Claire Strong and;

UNISON Representatives:  
Debbie Ealand;  
Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews;  
Dee Levett and;  
Christina Corr.

Having given due notice Councillor Tony Hunter advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Claire Strong and Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Kate Aspinwall.

**35 MINUTES - 18 DECEMBER 2019**

*Audio Recording – 34 Seconds*

Members present at the Committee meeting advised that owing to their absence at the last meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee, they were unable to approve the Minutes of 18 December 2019.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 18 December 2019 be approved at the next meeting of the Committee.

**36 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio recording – 59 Seconds*

There was no other business notified.

### 37 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio Recording – 1 Minute 10 Seconds*

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

### 38 STAFF CONSULTATION FORUM

*Audio Recording – 1 Minute 46 Seconds*

The Corporate Humans Resources Manager advised the Committee of the matters discussed at the last three Staff Consultation Forum, as follows:

4 December 2019:

- MSU Restructure;
- 3 members of staff had taken up the Cycle to Work Scheme;
- Pay and pension update; and
- Employee queries.

8 January 2020:

- Payroll project update; and
- IT Update.

February 2020:

- Revenues and Benefits;
- Building Services update;
- Payroll update and key dates to note including 30 March 2020 being the launch date for iTrent.
- Advising staff to download payslips and other documents before the closure of SAP; and
- Windows 10 rollout update.

Members entered into a brief discussion relating to the new payroll system which the Corporate Human Resources Manager and the Senior HR & Contracts Manager provided responses to, including:

- The new payroll system worked on a multiple of devices; and
- Human Resources were able to access payslips from the SAP system if required.

In response to a Member's question regarding homeworking, the Windows 10 update and Citrix, the Service Director – Resources responded as follows:

- The District Council Office's computer equipment would be initially updated with Windows 10, after which this would be rolled out to homeworkers.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forum held on 4 December 2019, 8 January 2020 and the draft Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forum meeting held in February 2020 be noted.

**39 PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE INFORMATION NOTE**

*Audio Recording – 13 Minutes 58 Seconds*

The Corporate Human Resources Manager presented the information note entitled People Strategy Update and advised the Committee of the following:

- Work was underway to create a new People Strategy;
- The LGE were developing a new Workforce Development Framework;
- The Council now had 12 Apprentices in post, of these 10 were Entry Level and 2 were Higher Level Apprentices;
- The 2 Human Resources Apprentices were undertaking the CIPD qualification;
- Managers were bidding for another 2 Apprentices;
- The Payroll Project was time and labour intensive for the Human Resources department;
- The Pay Policy Statement for 2020/2021 went to Full Council in February 2020 was published on the Council's website;
- The unions put in a pay claim for 10% or £10 per hour, whichever was greater;
- The LG Employers wrote to employers on 5 February to say 2% had been offered but was rejected;
- Preparation was underway for auto re-enrolment into the Local Government Pension Scheme;
- GP consultation services had been introduced for all NHDC employees;
- New contracts for the Wider Wallet discount scheme and Kiddivouchers will commence from 1 April 2020; and
- From April, Regular Performance Reviews (RPRs) would become the main mechanism for regular one to one discussions.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager directed Members to Appendix A on page 28 within the report relating to absence and advised from January 2019 to December 2019 rolling year 4 days were lost to short-term absence.

Following the Corporate Human Resources Manager's report on absence, there was a discussion regarding the Coronavirus outbreak. In response to Member's questions on this matter, the Corporate Human Resources Manager responded as follows:

- The short-term absence procedure would be changed;
- Cleaning equipment was available for staff to use;
- Staff were able to bring their personal laptops into work if they wished; and
- Homeworking was being encouraged.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager directed Members to Appendix B – 2019/2020 HR Service Work Plan detailed on page 29 within the report and informed the Committee that the next HR Work Plan would be available at the Joint Staff Consultative Committee in June.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the information note entitled People Strategy Update be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Committee to consider the People Strategy Update.

#### 40 INFORMATION NOTE - EQUALITIES UPDATE

*Audio Recording – 30 Minutes 40 Seconds*

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager presented the information note entitled Equalities Update, as follows:

- In 2019, there was an increase in female staff;
- There was a small number of employees declaring a disability;
- Human Resources would like to define what constitutes as a disability in order to encourage staff to declare their disability;
- The new payroll system would enable staff to make a disability declaration;
- There had been a 2% increase in staff from other ethnic origin;
- 45 – 54 years old made up the largest group of employees;
- There was an increase in those aged 55 years old who had left the Council;
- The biggest reason for those choosing to terminate employment with the Council was resignation;
- Tools for ensuring the use of gender-neutral language in recruitment advertisements, job descriptions, person specifications and interview questions were now being implemented;
- Gapsquare software to identify where there were pay disparities was being used; and
- Eliminating unconscious bias training was being rolled out.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager advised that the percentages within the table at paragraph 3.2.2 - Distances from Home Locations to DCO - on page 45 of the report were incorrect. She provided Members with the accurate figures.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn; and
- Councillor Kay Tart.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager responded to questions raised accordingly.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the information note entitled Equalities Update be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Committee to consider the Equalities Update.

#### 41 STRATEGIC DISCUSSION PAPER - SUCCESSION PLANNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

*Audio Recording – 53 Minutes 25 Seconds*

The Corporate Human Resources Manager presented the Strategic Discussion Paper entitled Succession Planning and Career Development, as follows:

- Regular Performance Reviews were an integral way for employees and managers to discuss career and personal development;
- There was a core list of essential learning on the Learning Management System;
- There were a range of development opportunities;
- Coaching and Mentoring were an additional tool to support personal and career development;

- The Career Development Survey 2019 revealed that some staff members were happy in their current role and did not wish to progress up the career ladder;
- The Career Development Survey 2019 illustrated that the percentage of people satisfied staying in their current job increased with age; and
- Staff working full time felt that sponsoring work-related qualifications was the most important measure to develop their career.

The following Members took part in the discussion:

- Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb;
- Councillor Kay Tart; and
- Councillor Tony Hunter.

In response to points raised by Members, the Corporate Human Resources Manager provided the following responses:

- The Career Development Survey was sent to all staff and it would be re-run in the future;
- Training was taking place to ensure managers understand how to conduct RPR discussions;
- Staff were encouraged to discuss with their manager the areas that they would like to develop;
- In order to improve job satisfaction:
  - The Flexi-time policy had been modernised;
  - The early Christmas closure has been made permanent;
  - There were more social clubs taking place i.e. 'Pay Day Drinks'; and
  - The Staff Recognition Scheme had been introduced.
- There were a number of workshops and training opportunities available on the learning management system.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the discussion paper on Succession Planning and Career Development be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Committee to consider the discussion paper on Succession Planning and Career Development.

## 42 FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS

*Audio Recording – 1 Hour 15 Minutes 47 Seconds*

**IT WAS AGREED:** That possible discussion topics for the next meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee be circulated to Members.

The next meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee would be held on Wednesday 17 June 2020.

The meeting closed at 11.18 am

Chair

This page is intentionally left blank



**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**ON WEDNESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 10.00 AM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** *Councillors: Kate Aspinwall (Vice-Chair), Terry Hone, Keith Hoskins and Claire Strong*

**In Attendance:** *Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Kerry Shorrocks (Corporate Human Resources Manager), Jo Keshishian (HR Operations Manager), Lea Ellis (Staff Consultation Forum Representative), Dee Levett (Unison), William Edwards (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Hepburn (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

**Also Present:**

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio Recording – 20 Seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kay Tart (Chair) and:

- Debbie Ealand – Unison;
- Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews – Unison;
- Andrew Betts – SCF;
- Christina Corr – SCF;
- Allison Fox – SCF; and
- Emma Jellis - SCF

**2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio Recording – 36 Seconds*

- (1) The Vice-Chair welcomed those present at the meeting;
- (2) The Vice-Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded and streamed live on the Council's Youtube Channel;
- (3) The Vice-Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

**3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio Recording – 57 Seconds*

There was no other business notified.

#### 4 STAFF CONSULTATION FORUM

*Audio Recording – 1 Minute 5 Seconds*

The Service Director – Resources presented the Staff Consultation Forum minutes and provided a brief overview of the matters discussed. He advised that there had been no Staff Consultation Forums in April, May or June owing to the pandemic.

It was raised at a later stage of the meeting but Members requested that the attendance of Senior Management at Staff Consultation Forums should be improved.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forums held in March 2020, July 2020, August 2020 and September 2020, be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Joint Staff Consultative Committee to consider any issues addressed by the Staff Consultation Forum.

#### 5 INFORMATION NOTE - HR UPDATE

*Audio Recording – 3 Minutes 9 Seconds*

*NB: Councillor Claire Strong joined the Committee at the start of this item.*

The Service Director – Resources presented the Information Note entitled HR Update, including:

- The Coronavirus had impacted on the plans to create a new People Strategy for 2020 – 2026;
- The Council had developed a strategy known as 'Shaping our Future' which would help to evolve the organisation and create a diverse, inclusive and resilient workforce. The first meeting of the steering group was due to take place in September;
- The Human Resources Department had carried out Welfare Calls for all staff during April in order to check on their wellbeing during the 'lockdown' period;
- The National Pay Bargaining had been completed. Employers had made a final offer of a 2.75% pay increase; and
- The Exit Payment Cap may come into force at the end of October 2020.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Terry Hone;
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall;
- Councillor Claire Strong; and
- Councillor Keith Hoskins.

The Members' questions opened up a discussion on Mental Health particularly in light of the pandemic and the effects it could have on Staffs' wellbeing.

In response to Members' questions on what the Council was doing to support Staff during the pandemic, the Corporate Human Resources advised as follows:

- The pandemic had an enormous impact on Staffs' Mental Health;
- Welfare Calls were carried out by HR in order to ascertain if any colleagues were struggling or in need of further support;
- Staff had access to the Confidential Employee Assistant Programme;

- There was information on intranet to help staff during the lockdown including a lockdown toolkit; and
- There were trained Mental Health First Aiders.

The discussion on Mental Health continued and Members raised that the Welfare Calls were carried out in April and a lot had happened since then.

In response to that point, the Corporate Human Resources Manager advised that there was a People Covid Recovery Plan which would look at Staffs' Mental Health and more Welfare Calls were due to take place.

The Service Director – Resources added that they were looking at rolling out support to Line Managers in order to help them carry out welfare calls to their staff and the Staff Survey was conducted in August which helped pick up any issues staff had.

In response to the Service Director's point, The HR Operations Manager advised that there was a managers section on the Employee Assistance Programme to help them support Staff experiencing mental health issues. She also advised that further welfare calls were made to staff if required.

A Member raised the subject of Domestic Violence and whether staff were able to come into the Office for 'rest-bite'.

In answer to the Member's point regarding Domestic Violence, the HR Operations Manager advised that she was not aware of any cases but acknowledged it was a very difficult subject for staff to raise. She further added that she was in contact with the Community Protection Manager regarding the White Ribbon Campaign and putting a White Ribbon on the intranet.

In answer to the Member's point regarding staff being able to come into the Office, the Service Director – Resources confirmed that staff were allowed to come into work if it helped their Mental Health.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager advised that she would have a conversation with the Learning and Employee Engagement Manager regarding implementing some Mental Health webinars for managers.

A Member raised the point that some staff may not talk about their mental health to Managers or Human Resources but would more likely open up to their colleagues during lunch or whilst making a drink. However, owing to remote working, 'Kitchen catch ups' and informal colleague conversations were now harder.

The Service Director – Resources and the Corporate Human Resources Manger responded that team meetings should still be taking place and staff should be encouraged to still talk to each other as the social side of work was important, even if this now needed to be done differently.

The Staff Consultation Forum Representative informed that the Staff Social Committee were thinking of ways to bring staff together. She also added that the organisation was doing well in raising awareness of Mental Health.

Following the discussion on Mental Health, Members moved their attention to Recruitment, including:

- Unconscious Bias in job advertisements; and
- The software used to remove words that could unconsciously discourage someone from applying for a role.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Kate Aspinwall

In answer to questions, the HR Operations Manager advised that it was difficult at that stage to determine if the software was working as the equalities data was reviewed annually. Furthermore, owing to Covid, there had been a decline in applications.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the Information Note entitled HR Update be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Committee to consider the Information Note entitled HR Update.

## 6 STRATEGIC DISCUSSION PAPER - KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

*Audio Recording – 43 Minutes 50 Seconds*

The Corporate Human Resources Manager presented the Strategic Discussion Paper on Knowledge Management and outlined the importance of capturing the skills and passing those onto other members of staff.

The HR Operations Manager contributed to the discussion by sharing her own personal experience of transitioning into a new job role and how she had referred to a knowledge capture to help.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Kate Aspinwall; and
- Councillor Claire Strong.

In response to questions, the HR Operations Manager advised that on the new payroll system, managers were able to input an employee's end date once a notice of resignation or retirement had been received. Once an end date was inputted, HR were notified of this.

The Staff Consultation Forum Representative spoke of the benefit of job shadowing and learning about what other teams and colleagues do.

In answer to job shadowing, the Service Director – Resources agreed that job shadowing was good and allowed people to develop and progress.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager echoed the comment made by the Service Director – Resources by stating that the Organisation wanted people to progress internally to other roles.

**IT WAS AGREED:** That the Strategic Discussion Paper on Knowledge Management be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Committee to consider the discussion paper on Knowledge Management.

## 7 FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS

*Audio Recording – 1 Hour 55 Seconds*

Members considered which subjects should be discussed at future meetings and

**IT WAS AGREED:**

- (1) That the discussion topic for the next meeting would be:
  - (i) Wellbeing for carers, supporting employees with caring responsibilities;
- (2) That a separate update on the topic of Apprenticeships be provided to the Committee; and
- (3) That in light of the current pandemic, the topics of Managing a Remote Workforce and Employees' Mental Health and Wellbeing, be incorporated into the Information Note - HR Update.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Committee to choose a discussion topic of interest.

## 8 RETIREMENT OF CORPORATE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

*Audio Recording – 1 Hour 10 Minutes 47 Seconds*

The Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee thanked the Corporate Human Resources Manager for her service to the Council at what was her last Joint Staff Consultative Committee before retiring.

The Service Director – Resourced joined in thanking the Corporate Human Resources Manager for all her work. He informed Members that she had worked for North Herts District Council for 18 years and within those years she introduced the pay grade system, the centralisation of the HR, homeworking in 2010 and apprenticeship schemes in 2012.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager thanked the Service Director – Resources for his kind words and that it had been a pleasure working for North Herts District Council for all those years.

The meeting closed at 11.17 am

Chair

This page is intentionally left blank