

# Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

5 July 2017



**Present:** Christina Corr (Chair), Kerry Shorrocks, Dee Levett, Rebecca Webb, Sue Collett, Emma Jellis, Anne McDonald, Ian Couper, Holly Butrimas-Gair (notes)

**Apologies:** David Scholes, Rebekah Edwards, Claire Morgan, Maggie Williams

**Circulation:** Those present, David Scholes, Rebekah Edwards, Claire Morgan, Maggie Williams

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## 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Scholes, Rebekah Edwards, Claire Morgan and Maggie Williams

## 2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

There was a discussion about the notification of the minutes' silences that were held over the last month. As there is no tannoy system at Town Lodge, it is difficult to keep track of when the minute's silence is occurring. KS stated that they are there to observe as far as possible. A suggestion was made that an alarm on someone's phone is set if staff are able to observe the silence, so that it isn't missed.

There being no further outstanding actions, the minutes were agreed.

## 3. NHDC Update

Public sector pay has been in the news a lot recently. Unison have put in a pay claim and a review of the National Pay Scale is underway. KS will be attending a Regional Pay Briefing later this month along with other employers, Councils and Trade Unions. This should provide a useful update on pay for the coming years. KS will provide feedback from this briefing at the next SCF.

The HR update has been circulated to managers and SCF. CC queried when the Homeworking Policy was last updated as the circulation implied that it was recent, however RW has since confirmed that it was last updated in April 2016. HR will be re-issuing the Statement of Particulars for homeworking to reflect the policy update. It is also important for regular reviews of home working in case personal circumstances change as they are apt to do. Training is still available for managers.

At the last SCF it was confirmed that Norma Atlay will be retiring in August, which leaves three tier 2 vacancies (Strategic Director level). It is likely that NHDC will recruit for a Deputy/Assistant CEO post, rather than replace the three vacant positions. Once this person

has been appointed, the restructure of tier 3 posts (Head of Service level) will be looked into. The Assistant CEO post will be advertised internally as well as externally, and there will be input from organisations such as Hay and the Local Government Association.

KS reminded the group that the RPR deadline is approaching, so they should be completed and handed into HR by the end of July. CC queried what happens to the RPR's once they've been collected. KS stated that it is not possible for HR to go through every individual form, so it is the responsibility of the employee and their manager to research and gain advice on any development needs that have arisen.

The medium-term financial strategy will be reported to Cabinet later this month, which will include some significant savings.

#### **4. Office Accommodation Update**

There is an office accommodation project team meeting tomorrow (6 July). Debbie Hiscock has started to book meetings at service level prior to the move back to DCO.

DL advised that if anyone has any suggestions, now is the time to mention them e.g. lighting, chairs etc.

It was agreed that HC does a great job of keeping everyone informed on the project and he is happy for people to speak to him about it.

There were queries as to whether it would be possible for the windows to open following the upgrades to DCO. KS has since been informed that the windows will not open because the ambient temperature and airflow will be regulated inside the building.

#### **5. Staff Wellbeing Policy**

Keith Crampton circulated the Staff Wellbeing Policy to members of SCF for their comments. It was previously known as the 'Managing Pressure Policy' and the aim is to keep all 'wellbeing' information in one document. Any comments on this document should be sent to Keith before the end of July.

Other wellbeing tools for staff members include the Well@Work Intranet page, healthy lifestyle events and Wellbeing days such as the one that ran in September last year. NHDC is committed to providing a family-friendly working environment, for example providing flexi-time, homeworking and part-time working.

#### **6. Employee enquires**

SC raised the issue of Careline being a 24 hour service; however email systems are being shut down at 2am which can cause some problems for employees especially for MSU staff members who work only from email. SC asked if there was any way that the email system could be backed-up after 2am, ideally 6am, for those who are working the night shift.

**Action: HBG to follow-up with Vic Godfrey.**

SC also raised concerns about parking at the Careline office. Staff are being told that they can't park in the car park next to the building, and are therefore having to park much further away in an area where an assault recently took place on a female. This is making female staff members nervous and scared about parking there at night. IC confirmed that the

building is owned by NHDC but the car park is owned by North Herts Homes, so they are unfortunately within their rights to request this. It was suggested that staff members are given panic/attack alarms in the short-term.

Action: HBG to raise with Parking Services to see if there are any alternatives/resolutions to this health and safety issue.

HBG mentioned that the blinds in the Grounds Maintenance, Leisure and Waste department are not effective in screening the sun from computer screens, and also don't help in keeping the heat out in very hot says.

Action: HBG to raise with Property Services.

## **7. Chair for Next Meeting**

Christina Corr