

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

2 August 2017



Present: Christina Corr (Chair), Kerry Shorrocks, Dee Levett, Rebecca Webb, Sue Collett, Emma Jellis, Anne McDonald, Rebekah Edwards, Claire Morgan, Maggie Williams, Ian Couper, Holly Butrimas-Gair (notes)

Apologies: David Scholes,

Circulation: Those present, David Scholes

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Scholes.

2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

The group thanked Keith Crampton for his work on the Staff Wellbeing Policy that was discussed in the last meeting (7 July) as this was not noted in the minutes.

It was noted that it was DL that asked about RPRs once they've been collected, and CC advised mentioning possible suggestions for the new DCO building, not vice versa as the minutes stated.

Attack alarms have been given to Careline staff members. Following a discussion with Jon Charter in Parking, HBG advised that Franklin Gardens non-resident bays can be used to park in. SC said it would be reiterated to staff that if an attack alarm is going off near the building, it must be reacted to rather than ignored.

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

3. NHDC Update

A member of HR attended a Regional Pay Briefing on 17 July where it was announced that the review of the National Pay Scales will not be ready in time for the 2018 pay round. The Trade Union have put in a detailed pay claim, however we might expect an increase in pay next year of 1% as there was this year. KS will update staff on the pay scales review regularly as information is received.

As we are now in the holiday period with staff away there is more pressure on individuals. KS thanked staff members for managing any change in workload to support their colleagues.

KS asked SCF for their opinion on the way the water crisis was handled yesterday (1 August). The overall feeling was that it was something that couldn't be helped, and that the

onus was on Affinity Water rather than NHDC to rectify the problem. It was noted that CSC had an increase in calls from customers.

DL raised an issue that came from a care home, who had been without water during the night of 31 July and whose electricity also went off during the day of the 1 August. They called NHDC to enquire about arrangements that may have been made for this scenario however no one seemed to know what to do. KS will raise this incident at SMT and wondered whether staff felt they'd been updated regularly enough throughout the day. It was agreed that there was too much time between initial communication and the second email that was circulated and it could have been more specific about the toilets. AM suggested that an announcement from Affinity Water could've been made to let residents know water supplies would be switched off prior to it happening in order that they could stock up on water supplies. Free water had also run out by 8.30pm which could've caused a problem for commuters coming home late. On a positive note, water was delivered to vulnerable residents in good time. A colleague of EJ asked why the Council hadn't arranged any emergency cover for vulnerable residents and why, if we run Careline, did we not check if residents had water to take their medication. This could've been used as a training exercise. KS confirmed that the management team will analyse the response to this issue.

Action: KS to discuss the response to the cut water supply at SMT.

Anyone who was at Norma Atlay's retirement buffet will be aware that she will be going on leave soon and retiring shortly after. DS is currently preparing a job advertisement for the Deputy Chief Executive post that will go out at the end of this month. There will be a half page spread in the Municipal Journal and it will also be open to internal applicants. The HR team from the East of England Local Government Association will be involved in the selection and interview process.

4. Office Accommodation Update

Following a meeting between the Project Team yesterday, it was confirmed that works are progressing well and are running on time. Debbie Hiscock has started to meet with individual managers to discuss the logistics of moving back to DCO. There will be a discussion about the possibility of tenants renting office space and also the relocation of Careline to the building. There was some damage to the carpet in CSC by Wilmott Dixon that they will be replacing. It raised the issue that CSC was last decorated 12 years ago and it may look tired in comparison to the rest of the building when the project is complete.

Wilmott Dixon will be taking part in a charity day, where they will be giving two days free labour to Hillshott School. They will re line a pond and decorate a classroom on 10/11 August and an article will be included in MIS to inform Members as they may want to get involved in the project.

Three Silver Birch trees were removed from the premises of DCO which will be replaced with 6 Birch trees.

There was a discussion at the Project Team meeting regarding the request by a retailer for a pop-up shop to be rented in the DCO. The response is likely to be no, as we can't show to have preferential treatment of one retailer over another. The idea of a charity pop-up stall was discussed between SCF members. Thought will have to be given to the layout of the reception area should outside companies be given space to rent part of the building. RE queried the security measures that would be in place, if any, as outside companies shouldn't have the ability to walk freely through Council departments and vice versa. IC confirmed that

a pass system would be implemented throughout and security doors would be used on fire escapes so staff would not be able to use these to enter the building.

5. I.T. Projects Update

This item was deferred to the next meeting of SCF as there is no update from the I.T. department.

CC and members of SCF thanked Vic Godfrey and the I.T. team for the great service they provide to staff, and for their efforts to respond to issues as quickly as they do.

6. Employee enquires

EJ mentioned a staff member's car was locked in the Town Lodge car park recently and therefore wanted to remind staff that the gates get locked between 7.30-8pm.

EJ raised a query about where staff members can go when smoking and where cigarette butts can be left. KS mentioned that the Waste department may have spare cigarette butt boxes that could be provided.

Action: HBG to follow up and raise with Waste/Property Services.

RE queried why there isn't a sabbatical or 'career break' policy. KS responded that this type of leave is covered in the Special Leave Policy. If employees wish to take an extended holiday/break, leave can also be accrued and taken with unpaid leave. MW suggested that staff members should discuss the options of extended leave with their manager. NHDC don't want to create a specific policy for this sort of leave as too many requests could be denied. KS reasoned that NHDC are a flexible employer and are open to discussion with regards to extended leave relying on custom and practice of what's been offered before.

CC reminded members of SCF and all employees that if there is an issue with something in the building, for example a broken kettle, it should be logged with Property Services as soon as possible. It was mentioned that faults are logged however no response is received from Property Services to acknowledge receipt of the message or to confirm that issues are being rectified. IC is aware of these concerns and is looking into ways of improving this system, for example creating one similar to the I.T. Helpdesk whereby a query/problem is assigned to a specific member of the Property Services team.

7. Chair for Next Meeting

Dee Levett.

KS mentioned that HBG is leaving the organisation and this would therefore be her last SCF meeting. Members thanked HBG for her efforts and for minute-taking following Sharon Nahal's departure.

Action: HBG to organise a replacement representative and minute-taker.