

# Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

6 September 2017



- Present:** Christina Corr (Chair), Kerry Shorrocks, David Scholes, Dee Levett, Claire Morgan, Maggie Williams, Anne McDonald, Emma Jellis, Sue Collett, Vaughan Watson, Rebecca Webb, Gio Silverio, Karl Mallia, Lizzie Shepherd, James Watson (minutes)
- Apologies:** Vic Godfrey, Ian Couper, Rebekah Edwards, Debbie Hiscock.
- Circulation:** Those present, Vic Godfrey, Ian Couper, Rebekah Edwards, Debbie Hiscock
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## 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from, Vic Godfrey, Ian Couper, Rebekah Edwards, Debbie Hiscock,

## 2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

There was an update regarding the Affinity Water supply issue in Baldock that happened in August. There has since been a discussion with Affinity Water on wider non NHDC matters such as staffing issues. There was a post debrief matching exercise between data of vulnerable residents. Only 2 discrepancies were identified which is less than thought to be the case at the time. It was agreed that there should have been better communication with employees about what to do if the water goes off such as if the toilets aren't functioning correctly. Once the notes from the debriefing are produced, they will be considered. SMG are due to have a business continuity planning session in September to reflect on the lessons learnt and think about any new circumstances once moved back into the DCO.

## 3. NHDC Update

Insight has recently gone out with a message from David Scholes regarding the Deputy Chief Executive vacancy and recruitment. An advert has gone out in the MJ with an assessment day set for 6<sup>th</sup> October. East of England Local Government Association HR team are dealing with recruitment directly and will also be involved in the assessment process. Once appointed, the Deputy Chief Executive will then work on the 3<sup>rd</sup> tier of the senior management structure. The question was asked whether Members were to be involved in selection of the DCE. KS said that the Chief Executive had delegated authority for this recruitment, but Members would meet the successful candidate. As Christmas is only 3 months away staff should look at booking their annual leave as there are no allocated statutory days this year.

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

Debbie Hiscock is now having meetings with teams to start to discuss where in the DCO they will be situated. Kerry Shorrocks & Reuben Ayavoo are working on doing an equalities impact assessment. Willmott Dixon has indicated that there are now set standards in buildings due to equalities for example door frames being a different colour from the door itself so people who are visually impaired can clearly see where the door is. There is also investigation into whether there will be faith & rest rooms as part of the office refurbishment. An assessment draft will be brought to SCF in the future. The work also looks at people who may have other disabilities and individual needs so adjustments can be made in the future.

A query was raised as to how staff could raise issues relating to the new office as not all line managers were good at passing on information. KS said she would contact Howard Crompton to ask when a timetable and drawings would be available.

#### **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.

#### **6. Waste Restructure**

In 2014 North & East Herts worked together to create a strategic outline case to look at joint working. The mandate behind this was the Herts waste partnership which consisted of all the collection and disposal authorities who had showed that they had made significant savings due to joint working.

This was followed by an outline business case and it was determined that Buntingford depot would be used with one main client team based there to manage the contract. The contract is due to start on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018 with a new client team in place by February 2018 for a three month mobilization period.

September was decided for the consultation period with a 70 page document outlining in detail the proposal for the consultations. Over the last 3 weeks Vaughan has undertaken 1-1 consultations with the waste staff to put forward the proposals. An end of consultation review will then take place in collaboration with East Herts to look at how best to move forward.

North Herts is the lead authority with the possibility of staff transferring from East Herts with effect from December 2017. There will be an overall service manager with two teams, contract management and development and support services. Each team will have a manager and there will be 6 contract officers and 3 Development and Support Officers (appendix B). There is a total of 16 staff (13 FTE- 9 NHDC and 4 EH) with 12 posts available for the new contract.

GS stated that due to there being a restructure at East Herts which will affect their inspectors, as waste services officers there is concern as to what impact that may or may not have in terms of current positions and job vacancies which form part of the joint restructure. HR & Vaughan are aware of the concerns and are looking for clarification.

LS identified that timing hasn't been ideal especially as a lot of the waste staff are currently doing contract evaluations which takes up a lot of time. She informed the group that some staff were only given the consultation document an hour or so before the 1-1

meeting due to working hours or lateness of the document. There were also concerns around some of the new job descriptions and structures.

KM expressed his concerns as to whether the streets team at East Herts will be included in the process and if so it would make it a lot more competitive. He also enquired if street officers in the new restructure would have to be based at Buntingford or have to be there for a certain amount of hours/days and if they will have access to the DCO or other depots that are under the contract.

VW agreed with this concern as it would be unproductive time for contract officers if they have to travel from Letchworth to Buntingford only to travel back to Letchworth. It was agreed that hot desk areas in the DCO should be further investigated for waste officers to have access to.

The outcome of the restructure will be announced on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. It was appreciated that this was difficult timing, but this date was necessary to ensure the new structure was in place for the required lead in time to the new contract.

It was agreed that LS would contact the Comms team regarding issuing a message outlining the current pressures the Waste Team were facing.

## **7. Employee enquires**

The group were asked what is the IT policy on regular changing of passwords. It was stated that an email had recently been released from IT regarding passwords which informed staff they can change passwords themselves at any time. At the moment changing passwords is something that will have to continue as normal. It was agreed that an email would be sent to Vic Godfrey regarding password enquires.

## **8. Chair for Next Meeting**

Dee Levett.

**Appendix B: Proposed Structure - Joint Waste, Recycling & Street Cleansing Services**

