

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

07 October 2020



Present: Dee Levett (DL), Christina Corr (CC), Ian Couper (IC), Vic Godfrey (VG), Emma Jellis (EJ), Jo Keshishian (JK), Lea Ellis (LE), Caitlin Bruce (CB – notes)

Circulation: Global

1. Apologies

Anthony Roche, Andrew Betts

Due to a regular Chief Executives/ Managing Directors meeting in relation to Covid-19, Anthony has not been able to attend for a number of months. He should be generally able to attend if the start time is moved to 2pm. All agreed to move the start time on a trial basis.

2. Matters Arising

A question arose around the IT response in the previous minutes – Staff receive a text if there is an IT issue, so can IT use the numbers they have to call back staff? This raised a data protection issue in that the phone numbers provided by staff which are held in a central database can only be used for that purpose only. A limited amount of CSC staff have access to add or amend phone numbers and send out messages when required. The majority of text alerts regarding I.T faults come from IT Staff. IT encourage staff to leave a contactable number which they can be reached on when logging an IT support call and if the call is being made by a colleague please ensure you leave a contact number for the person with the issue.

The Intercom doorbell is now in place at the district council offices.

3. Business Services Update

A reminder for staff to contact Property Services if they have any issues in the building.

Question: How do staff book time in the office?

The response was if you are booking a short period of time this should be done through the booking system, if it was a longer amount of time (full days etc) then staff should contact their Service Director to get this authorised.

4. IT Update

Question: Will staff be supplied with screens with a camera going forward?

VG replied that the idea of issuing of staff with laptops was currently being looked at and would be subject to Member approval.

IT are still getting requests for laptops/tablets/pcs and are reluctant to purchase more tablets in case the plan to supply home-working staff with laptops goes ahead.

All mailboxes have been migrated over to the Cloud, next all H:drives will be moved over. This will allow access to emails and files without going through Blackberry work.

Softphone apps are currently being investigated for the regular system and the careline system.

There is a new contract for wifi at the district council offices, installations are about to start, this will be faster 5G wifi.

There was a brief outage of 2G systems for NHDC issued mobile phone users, this has since been fixed.

The citizens and members portals are being worked on. The members portal will allow members to report issues such as fly tipping and graffiti in their constituency while the citizens portal will allow them to do the same as well as pay for their council tax and report missed bin collections and other functions.

FOI and Data Protection requests are currently coming in at a high rate.

The Information and Asset Officer post as well as the apprentice post within IT have been filled.

5. NHDC Update

The next Shaping Our Future meeting will be held on 20 October, the SCF representative will be Lea Ellis. This meeting will look at the feedback of the staff survey and the equality and diversity group as well as addressing the stated outcomes of the Terms of Reference of said group.

The next Staff Briefing is on 5th November.

The staff survey responses have been compiled and IC is currently looking at how this should be presented to staff.

There was a very good response to our apprentice adverts which went out after the A-Level results were released. The process included a 2 stage interview and all 3 job offers have now gone out.

Question: Has the recruitment process been updated in line with actions from the Gender Pay Gap group – such as unconscious bias training, and use of new software to check job adverts and remove “masculine” words?

JK confirmed that these are in place. In terms of measuring the outcome, we review equalities data (on all protected characteristics) for job applicants as well as current employees, and we can review these when they are published at the end of the year.

The holiday flex scheme had 6 applicants, this was lower than anticipated but is likely due to uncertain times and the current situation.

6. Employee Queries

There had been no queries raised by members of staff. A discussion took place about the SCF: do staff understand its purpose or even know of its existence?

It was noted we were a member short. LE suggested a publicity drive for the group and offered to approach new potential members.

JK agreed to contact Comms to get some publicity done in Insight.

Chair for next meeting – Andrew Betts

Have something to say?

If you have an issue you think should be brought to the attention of the SCF, please contact any SCF representative via phone, email or in person. They will raise your issue at the next meeting. You will not be identified unless you want to be.

Issues relating to property e.g. broken lift, non-flushing toilets, etc. must always be reported to Property Services in the first instance: propertyservices@north-herts.gov.uk

Alternatively you can send any issues to the SCF inbox - SCF@north-herts.gov.uk

Representatives (and extension):

Lea Ellis #4830 - Community Engagement team based on Floor 3

Emma Jellis #4312 - MSU team based on Floor 4

Allison Fox #4203 - Technical Support Officer based on Floor 3

Christina Corr #4325 - Senior Technical Officer R&B team based on Floor 5

Andrew Betts #4282 - Contracts Officer (Waste Management based at Buntingford)