

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

04 November 2020



Present: Anthony Roche (**AR**), Dee Levett (**DL**), Christina Corr (**CC**), Ian Couper (**IC**), Vic Godfrey (**VG**), Emma Jellis (**EJ**), Laura Bignell (**LB**), Lea Ellis (**LE**), Andrew Betts (**AB**), Debbie Hiscock (**DH**), Antonella De Maria (**AD**), Chloe Hipwood (**CH**), Caitlin Bruce (**CB** – **notes**)

Circulation: Global

1. Apologies

Jo Keshishian

2. Matters Arising

None discussed.

3. MSU (Management Support Unit) Restructure

AD: A new Grade 5 role is being created; this is due to the fact that the tasks in this role have moved away from the generic Grade 4 job description. Within the Careline administration some tasks cannot be considered Grade 4 tasks. This restructure will not have any impact on existing posts in the MSU. The role was job compared to the current Grade 4 job description but was not a match. The consultation began on 28th October and will end on 11th November.

There have been no queries so far.

4. Waste Restructure

CH: The restructure has been proposed to ensure that both North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) and East Hertfordshire District Council (EHC) have an effective and efficient client team to manage the joint Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract. Previously there had been difficulty recruiting to posts and filling the technical skills gaps within the existing roles. It is expected that the new posts will provide career development opportunities within the team and organisation to help ensure staff retention within NHDC. The aim is to move the service forward and expand on use of Whitespace and analytics, for data lead service. As a result of proposed reduction in hours the two Service Development and Support Managers are at risk of redundancy.

Question: How do the contract officers feel about the proposal?

CH: There have been no responses yet.

AB: The team is currently without a Contracts Officer which has put a greater workload on remaining staff. It is hoped the new plans will give a more focused approach to the work.

5. Building Services Update

There was some concern over the number of people on the 4th floor on a Thursday at the District Council Offices – everyone in the offices has been observing social distancing.

6. IT Update

A reminder to staff to be vigilant when opening links and releasing spam emails – there was recently a cyber-attack on Hackney council.

The Information at Work update has been delayed to 06/12 as it is currently unstable.

Emails are now in the Cloud – if you would like to be able to access your emails from your personal device please contact the IT helpdesk.

The helpdesk continues to be very busy – **if you are able to log your issue on the IT helpdesk as opposed to contacting the employees directly please do** as this helps the service run more smoothly.

There is a new IT apprentice starting on 12/11.

7. NHDC Update

A new national lockdown has been announced from 05/11 – 02/12, the tier that we were in when we entered the lockdown may not necessarily be the same tier we will be in when we come out.

Hitchin Town Hall and Museum will be closing but the café will remain open for takeaway orders.

There may be the need to redeploy some of the staff who have volunteered to be redeployed to help services that are under pressure.

Environmental Health are under pressure at the moment and the EU transition could bring changes in food safety laws.

Homeworking is to continue into the new year and will continue to be monitored.

The Local Government reorganisation has been put on pause for now.

Howard Crompton will be discussing the transformation programme at the staff briefing (05/11).

Question: What are the current financial constraints of the council?

Answer: We currently have reserves which are being used – we are also getting some funding from Central Government. There is some financial pressure, but we are able to keep going.

Staff survey results will be covered in the staff briefing.

Please consider whether you need to be in the District Council offices during the second lockdown.

8. Joint Staff Consultation Committee (JSCC)

Question: Is the JSCC still beneficial as what is covered during the meetings is covered through various other forums.

The JSCC is considered useful for members.

IC to speak to JK about the need for JSCC and SCF

The next SCF member for the JSCC needs to be decided

9. Employee Questions

Question: Will staff be supplied with screens with a camera going forward for zoom/ teams meetings?

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

Question: Can there be more updates from senior management?

AR replied that this would be discussed in the staff briefing.

Question: Will the staff survey results still be relevant given the survey was carried out a few months ago now?

AR responded that there would be a re-run of the survey to gather more up to date feedback.

Question: How does booking time over Christmas work and what time will staff finish on Christmas Eve?

Answer: The stat days have been booked automatically by iTrent and the office will now be closed on Christmas Eve (announced in staff briefing). Instructions on how employees should book this day off will be sent out by JK.

Question: Have HR noticed an increase in stress related absence during this period?

LB answered that they have not.

Chair for next meeting – Dee Levett

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)