

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

03 March 2021



Present: Dee Levett (DL), Christina Corr (CC), , Vic Godfrey (VG), Emma Jellis (EJ), Jo Keshishian (JK), Alison Fox (AF), William Stafford (WS), Matthew Hepburn (MH), Caitlin Bruce (CB – notes)

Circulation: Global

1. Apologies

Anthony Roche, Ian Couper, Nicola Viinikka, Dee Levett, Debbie Hiscock, Andrew Betts

2. Matters Arising

Question: Had anyone set up the automated response for the SCF inbox.

Answer: Unsure at the moment. CC/EJ to send an email to the inbox and check.

3. NHDC update

The response for the staff survey was acknowledged, thank you to all who participated. The outcomes will be shared in the next staff briefing (24/03).

Legislation on exit pay caps has been withdrawn.

Pay claim from the unions for April 2021 is being considered by a round of regional pay briefings, and the response from the National Employers group is expected after the May elections, so the outcome may not be decided until June/July.

SCF members were invited to think about potential discussion topics for JSCC meetings – this is to be revisited in the next SCF meeting.

COVID-19 vaccinations can be recorded as special leave as other medical appointments would be.

The inclusion group is looking for more staff to join. If this is something you would be interested in please email HR help.

4. People Recovery Strategy

The draft recovery plan was circulated to the SCF members prior to this meeting, IC and AR will discuss this further in April's SCF meeting.

Suggestion: It would be good to have drop ins/ zoom training for managers around mental health and how to manage this upon a return the district council offices.

Question: Would having a bad reaction to the COVID vaccine and so having to take time off as sickness absence count towards an attendance procedure trigger?

Answer: No.

Question: Is the people strategy document a working document/ draft?

Answer: The document has been agreed by the Leadership Team and aims to set out the approach to supporting staff in the recovery from the pandemic and the return to the office. – it is not expected to be redrafted, but staff comments are welcome. The strategy will result in a number of actions and these will form part of the HR service plan going forward.

5. Employee Queries

JK to raise with staff recognition award panel that some employees struggle to relate a reason for a nomination to one of the values and behaviours.

Question: Will there be any further support for working from home?

Answer: NHDC will be supplying laptops (the laptop procurement has now started) as well as wireless keyboards and mice and docking stations.

A concern was raised that the People Recovery Strategy mentions the withdrawal of the £500 set-up allowance for home-workers. JK confirmed that this allowance was introduced 10 years ago to encourage staff to start working from home, and had only ever been provided as a one-off payment. It was provided in the past to support with costs such as IT equipment and was no longer needed now that NHDC will be supplying this to all home-workers.

6. IT Update

First batch of laptops have been ordered and the second batch has been tendered. They cannot be ordered in one batch due to storage concerns.

Please may FOIs be completed and returned by the return date.

Transformation – Robotic Process Automation (RPA) software is out for tender, this closes on 05/03.

7. Building Services Update

Any queries or concerns should be emailed into the property services inbox.

8. AOB

The SCF members thanked Lea Ellis for her time and effort while she was a member of the SCF.

The SCF will now be looking for a new member – if you are interest please speak to one of the current members or email the SCF inbox: SCF@north-herts.gov.uk

Chair for next meeting – Alison Fox

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):

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

Nicola Viinikka Visitor Services Assistant based at Hitchin Town Hall and Museum

Matthew Hepburn #4311 - Member, Committee & Scrutiny Officer

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