

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

12/01/2022

Present: Anthony Roche (AR), Ian Couper (IC), Rebecca Webb (RW),
Maggie Williams (MW), Emma Jellis (EJ), Christina Corr (CC),
Nicola Viinikka (NV), Dee Levett (DL), Mark Robinson (MR), Anne
Banner (AB)

(Fallon Rumball-Nunan (FRN – notes))

Circulation: Global

1. Apologies

Andrew Betts, Vic Godfrey, Debbie Hiscock

2. Matters Arising

None

3. Revenue and Benefits Restructure

AB presented key points to the attendees regarding a Revenue and Benefits restructure proposal. Due to a number of specialist officers and a lack of resilience, the proposal is to create three roles that incorporate more than one specialist area to better facilitate any leave periods and succession planning.

4. NHDC update

- No Pay Award update, ballot will close on the 14/01/2022.
- Itrent update in February, the functionality will not change but visually will be different. All the user guides will be updated in line with this.
- Holiday Flex applications will run from 1st – 28th February.
- W/C 17th January all employees to receive check in emails with support reminders. Look out details on Headspace - coming soon!
- From 2024 we will have elections every 4 years.
- Final version of the draft budget has been published for the Finance Audit and Risk Committee
- 25th January 2022 Staff briefing to include a detailed budget update.
- All out election decision 2024 – NHC will be recommending to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) how many councillors are required. This will figure will be decided by full council but final decision to be made by the LGBC.

Question: Are there any mental health and wellbeing provisions in place for councillors?

Answer: Yes, we plan to include them in the check-in emails, however Headspace will be for employees only.

Question: Will the 2023 elections go ahead, or will they defer until 2024?

Answer: Those elected in 2022 are elected for 2 years. 2023 elections will be deferred until 2024.

5. SCF - Terms of Reference/Survey Results

Attendees thanked all those who had taken the time to share views on future of SCF.

Key Topics Discussed:

Employee Representation

The following discussions followed:

How many employee representatives should there be: It was decided that there would be 8 employee representatives in total including an apprentice representative, this was a popular suggestion in survey findings.

Should there be a guest slot: In the survey a guest slot was suggested, such as councillors, it was agreed that this would be inappropriate as SCF an employee forum. JSCC then provides the forum for Councillor input.

How employee representatives should be allocated: It was agreed that no employee should be discouraged, as a representative from each directorate may not be practical.

The length of an SCF employee representative term; a maximum of 3 years was discussed with a proposal that SCF employee representatives can be re-elected if they wish. To be reviewed as part of more detailed discussions.

Attracting new employee representatives. It was agreed that a global email will be sent from the SCF Mailbox asking for volunteers. **All SCF members to contribute, HR to support. MR to adjust SCF Mailbox to allow global emails to be sent.**

Suggestion for SCF to be highlighted in future staff briefing. It was decided that SCF item will be added to Agenda for Staff Briefing on 25 January. **All SCF Members to send content to AR to present.**

Summary of other suggestions:

- Those on shift to alternate employee representation.
- Content of the existing monthly global email to be more varied and invite people to engage.
- SCF Staff queries form on SCF intranet page.
- Monthly SCF Insight articles, e.g., Getting to know your Employee Representatives.

Topics to be covered in SCF



The survey results suggested that the current topics are relevant and should remain. Attendees discussed the additional inclusion of *Green* and *Welfare* issues as these were frequently suggested in survey findings. Proposed new agenda to follow for further discussions. **MW to create amended agenda.**

SCF Terms of Reference

MW to amend TOR based on meeting outcome and issue for discussion at February SCF Meeting to be finalised.

Due to time limitations two further dedicated meetings were agreed to discuss:

- SCF Job Descriptions. **FRN to organise.**
- Future Communications regarding SCF with member of communications team. **SCF members to organise.**

Any relevant information from these meetings will be communicated.

6. Employee Queries

Question: Why does annual leave carry over not come from last year's holiday allowance when I book annual leave?

Answer: The remaining annual leave balance you see from 20/21 should have been carried forward to this year and added to your entitlement. As you have booked leave for this year it will only be taken from 21/22 balance

7. IT Update

- Password policy change from 90 days to 12 months, this will be applied when you next update password.
- Information at Work project – training available and recommended as significant changes to functionality.
- Please contact IT if you have not yet been issued a laptop.
- Reminder to comply with Freedom of Information statutory return times.
- 2021 saw 9947 IT help desk tickets logged.

8. Building Services Update

IC welcomed questions.

Question: If you are only collecting something from the DCO do you need to book a desk?

Answer: No but please make sure you comply with health and safety (Covid-19 and fire) regulations, including making sure that sign in and out of the building.

9. AOB

None

10. Summary of Actions

Action	Responsibility
SCF Global Sent from SCF Inbox	All SCF members to contribute, HR to support. MR to adjust SCF Mailbox to allow global emails to be sent.
SCF added to Staff Briefing agenda – 25 th January	All SCF Members to send content to AR to present.
Amended SCF Agenda for further discussion	MW to amend agenda. FRN to circulate.
Amend TOR based on meeting outcome and issue for discussion at February SCF Meeting to be finalised.	MW to amend TOR. FRN to circulate.
SCF Job Description Meeting	FRN to organise. SCF Members to attend.
Communications meeting with Communications Team	SCF Members to organise. HR to Support.

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):

Emma Jellis #4312 - MSU team based on Floor 4

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

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