

## Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

03 January 2018



**Present:** Dee Levett (Chair), Anthony Roche, Kerry Shorrocks, Claire Morgan, Maggie Williams, Anne McDonald, Emma Jellis, Sue Collet, Ian Couper, Preeti Binning, Ben Glover James Watson (Minutes)

**Apologies:** David Scholes, Christina Corr, Debbie Hiscock, Rebecca Webb, Vic Godfrey.

**Circulation:** Global

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Preeti Binning from the Project Support Team was welcomed to the Meeting. She will be supporting James in taking the Minutes of the Meetings going forward.

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Scholes, Christina Corr, Debbie Hiscock, Rebecca Webb, Vic Godfrey.

### 2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Previous Minutes were agreed.

IIP Report - Assessor produced an updated report which was an improvement from the first report. The updated report will be shared in the near future.

An employee query had been raised regarding the cost of the IIP assessment and whether it was worthwhile to continue with this. It was agreed that this should be discussed at this point in the meeting. The question of continuing to seek IIP accreditation had been fully discussed at Corporate Board when the standards of accreditation had changed. It had been agreed to remain with the scheme but not to seek the highest level of accreditation. It was felt there was value to the Council and the process of assessment, which was why there was some disappointment with the quality of the initial report received. The process of assessment represented a good health check on the organisation in terms of opportunities for staff, career progression, appraisal and quality of people management and having the IIP trade mark encouraged recruitment as good candidates were likely to look to see if employers signed up to Quality Assurance schemes such as IIP. Continuing participation in the scheme will be considered again at the end of the period of accreditation and a value for money review undertaken at that time.

### **3. NHDC Update**

It has been decided to allocate both statutory days for Christmas & New Year 2018. Both Christmas Eve and New Years Eve fall on a Monday, this is the same as Christmas 2012 and both days were allocated then.

A pay offer was received on 5 December for staff up to Grade 12. The offer is 2% for 2018/19 and a further 2% for 2019/20, with larger increases for the lowest paid due to the National Living Wage. The pay offer is linked to the review of the NJC national pay scale. It is currently a pay offer and has not yet been accepted. For it to become a pay agreement it will need to be accepted by the trade unions. No Chief Officer pay claim has yet been received but it's expected that any pay claim will request the same offer that made to other grades of staff.

The first stage of the Senior Management restructure has been completed with the appointment of Anthony Roche as Deputy Chief Exec. The next stage will be the new Service Director positions. Anthony Roche and David Scholes met with all heads of services/corporate managers before Christmas and later this month will publish proposals to start consultation.

The draft financial settlement confirmed the council could increase council tax by up to 3% for 2 years. There was no expected change to the new homes bonus funding which is money for new homes in the area.

Overall combined with the savings that are expected from the joint waste contract with East Herts the council is in a reasonable position. The council does however still need to find substantial savings in the next 4 years and can expect further changes to the way overall funding is determined which may come in to effect from 2020/2021.

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

There was good attendance to office accommodation drop in sessions that took place before Christmas. Howard Crompton has prepared a Q&A so staff can see the questions that were asked and the answers given at the drop in sessions which will be circulated. It was stated that anyone wishing to arrange a visit to see the new DCO, should contact Maxine Johnson who is coordinating requests.

Fire evacuation procedures were circulated on a global email for staff to familiarize themselves for the move back to the DCO.

The idea for the canteen area on the ground floor of the DCO is that any food that requires a knife or fork or is hot should be eaten in the canteen especially with the office being open plan. There will be a TV as well as tea & coffee available for staff to use.

### **5. I.T. Projects Update**

IT has put a slideshow on computer screensavers showing images of the different stages of the DCO project.

### **6. Employee Queries**

A query was raised about the difficulty of getting full staff for Careline shifts particularly on Friday nights when as it was hard to get cover. The question asked was how well are resources planned for careline and to help cover all shifts.

HR offered to look at what has been requested via the recruitment process and look at vacancy and Careline sickness levels and proceed from there. It was noted that there may be opportunities when for Careline move into the DCO with other teams that may be around to assist. There was also discussion about capacity.

A question was asked about SCF representation on return to the DCO formerly the reps had represented associated floors in the DCO. The question raised asked was what will happen on return with departments being on different floors.

Following discussion it was suggested that they represent a number of service areas and I. It was agreed that this would be further discussed at SCF in the near future. There is now an SCF email available for staff to send in any enquires they wish to be raised. The email has not yet been advertised but will be in use once a rota between reps has been agreed.

Another query raised was about the planned fire evacuation process for the DCO, and whether it takes into account visitors & Councillors and asked how without signing in sheets would we know who was in the building.

With the new Open plan Offices there will be a lot less individual rooms to check and a sweep of a floor should be a quick process, after which the fire brigade can go in.

Councillors will be given the same evacuation information as staff and will also be assigned an evacuation area. During evening meetings the procedure will not change and they would be expected to follow them. The facilities assistant will be assigned search duties for the occupied areas (most of the building will be closed at night) and will also act as liaison officer. It is also envisaged that staff members attending evening meetings will also act as fire marshals.

The fire services will only enter the building to carryout a search if we inform them that we believe there are casualties in the building. By completing a full search of the area we would be in a position to do this.

It was also noted that no other local councils use signing in sheets and have similar fire evacuation procedures to the one proposed.

## **7. Chair for Next Meeting**

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