

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

07 February 2018



Present: Claire Morgan(Chair), David Scholes, Anthony Roche, Kerry Shorrocks, Dee Levett, Maggie Williams, Emma Jellis, Rebekah Edwards, Rebecca Webb, Sue Collett, Ian Couper, Vic Godfrey, Christina Corr, Debbie Hiscock, Ben Glover, James Watson (notes)

Apologies: David Scholes, Vic Godfrey, Debbie Hiscock, Christina Corr, Emma Jellis, Rebecca Webb, Maggie Williams.

Circulation: Global

Toby Le Sage attended in Vic Godfrey's absence to discuss item 6 on the agenda.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Scholes, Vic Godfrey, Debbie Hiscock, Christina Corr, Emma Jellis, Rebecca Webb, and Maggie Williams.

2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Previous Minutes were agreed.

The fire evacuation information that will be displayed is the statutory notices located above the fire call points. There are refuge points located on each floor which are to be used by disabled persons should there be a need for them to have further assistance when evacuating. There are also red break glass fire call points that would be used to raise the fire alarm.

Fire Marshalls will consist of volunteers and/or managers who will be responsible for ensuring their floor is clear during an evacuation.

People signed up for the mobile phone alerts will get a text during an evacuation as to when it is safe to go back into the building. The mobile system was advertised in October 2017 by email as well as a webpage giving further details on what the system offers. Staff are encouraged to sign up for text alerts as it is a great way of communicating important information, especially in emergency situations. This can be done by contacting CSC or IT.

3. Smoking and the Workplace Policy Revision

Minor revisions have been made to the policy for night workers and those working late. These workers are advised to inform others when going outside to smoke and to stay closer to the building avoiding waste bins, the generator and open windows. The revised policy will be published on the intranet shortly.

Action: JW to contact property services to see if there are any existing cigarette butt boxes to have at the DCO.

4. NHDC Update

The senior management restructure is progressing. The proposals are being formalised and new job descriptions and person specifications are being completed. The proposals are to be announced within the next couple of weeks. This will be followed by a consultation period. A fuller update will be given at SCF in March. It was noted that any group of staff affected by a restructure would be asked if they would like to nominate a temporary SCF representative from among them and the same will apply to the Senior Managers.

Regarding pay offers for 2018/19 the Local Government Employers have received pay claims for Chief Officers and Chief Executives for 2% for the next two years in line with the pay offer for the rest of staff. Unite and GMB have rejected the offers. The Employers side are not going to respond formally until the main pay claim is settled and the Trade Unions are expected to announce the results of their consultation on pay in mid March.

A meeting of full Council on 8 February will seek approval for the revenue and capital budgets recommended by Cabinet. Once finalised those managing the budget will be notified.

A report regarding the regeneration of Hitchin's Churchgate Shopping Centre was also on the Council Agenda. Council were to be asked to agree, in principle, to a scheme for the redevelopment of Churchgate in a potential joint venture with Shearer property group.

The early bird special for the new green waste collection service is being launched and Customer Services may expect a large volume of calls.

NHDC have had some more positive discussions regarding Hitchin Town Hall however there is no solution as yet.

5. Office Accommodation Update

Work has been going on to sort out where teams will be located on their move back to the DCO and a programme of moves has been arranged. DCO reception will reopen on 5th March with a slightly later opening time. Notices will be put up at Town Lodge to say reception has moved back down the road and CSC staff will be at Town Lodge to direct customers to the DCO.

6. I.T. Projects Update

IT are following a plan of action for moving people out of Town Lodge and back into the DCO. The team are working out of normal hours to ensure the smooth running of the moving of equipment. As a result staff have been asked to be patient especially when it comes to issues raised through IT helpdesk.

The General Data Protection Act is coming in to force on 25th May. NHDC have to be compliant by that date so IT is working to analyse the data held and are looking to appoint a Data Protection Officer in the near future.

7. Employee Queries

A query was raised regarding the statutory days for Christmas and New Year. It was asked if the days are added to staff leave entitlement and if they need to be booked on SAP. It was explained that the 2 statutory days will be added to the leave entitlement. These days will need to be booked and reminders will be sent nearer the time. It was asked whether SAP could automatically deduct the leave but the system cannot do this.

It was agreed that a meeting room at the town lodge should be booked for SCF in March; however the DCO rooms should be available by then for future meetings to take place.

In regards to Town Lodge, there are a number of options regarding what to do with the building and the others owned. There is a mixture of ownerships listed building status and leases that makes the possibility of a redevelopment. Discussions are underway with the various parties involved.