

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

07/12/2022

Present: Anthony Roche (**AR**), Ian Couper (**IC**), Rebecca Webb (**RW**), Mark Robinson (**MR**), Andrew Betts (**AB**), Claire Bernard (**CB**), Christina Corr (**CC**), Louis Franklin (**LF**), Dee Levett (**DL**) Caelan Ballard (**CB – notes**)

Circulation: Global

Chair for Meeting: Louis Franklin (**LF**)

1. Apologies

Alice Ashbrook

2. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

Nothing noted.

3. NHC and HR updates

NHC Update

- The Staff Briefing held on the 6th of December will have covered most of the NHC updates for this month.
- The next Inclusion Group Meeting will be held on the 13th of December and will discuss diversity and inclusion in the Council's recruitment process, as well as in the Council's reward and recognition schemes.
- Pay negotiations for 2023 will begin in early 2023, with the Union's pay claim expected in January and the regional briefings in February. HR will be taking part in these meetings, and updates on the pay negotiations will be shared here.

Wellbeing Update

- Some articles have been published about financial support on Insight; these articles also include discounts targeted at easing the burden around Christmas.
- There will be a 'Focus on your Finances' Session on the 8th of December from 10 to 11.30am. This session will demonstrate how to budget more effectively, maximise workplace benefits, and save and invest finances with confidence. Staff can book their place for this session via [GROWzone](#).
- HR are preparing messages related to Blue Monday, which will be on Monday the 16th of January 2023.
- A briefing on the GP Helpline is due to take place in January. This briefing will give staff an overview of the service provided in the GP Helpline, as well as provide an opportunity for staff to ask any questions they have about the service.

4. Employee Queries

Q: We have received some complaints about staff using desks in the DCO and not cleaning the desk after use. Can the agreed procedures on desk cleaning be recirculated?

A: Yes, a reminder about the expected office procedure and COVID prevention at work can be sent out again.

Q: Can the absence policy be amended so that multiple short absences, each for only a couple of hours, can be counted as a single half-day absence?

A: The occasions and number of days are measured as part of the attendance policy, and an absence of less than 1 day will still count as an occasion. An employee should make the decision as to whether they are well enough to work. Some roles allow homeworking which may make it easier to continue to work whilst not feeling 100%. If an employee feels too unwell to work, they should advise their manager and it will be recorded as sickness absence.

Q: In the DCO, there have recently been a number of used cups left in the sink after a meeting on the 4th floor for other staff to clean up. Can a reminder be circulated to ask staff that if a meeting is hosted, all attendees are responsible for washing their own cups and plates?

A: Yes, both external and internal visitors should be responsible for cleaning up after themselves, so a message can be sent out to remind everyone of this office etiquette.

5. IT Update and Queries

- V3 has been launched and some people now have V3. IT are sorting out a few small issues before the main rollout begins.
- When the rollout begins, it is very important that staff attend the V3 installation slot which IT have allocated to them. If a member of staff is late to their set-up slot it will have to be rescheduled.
- IT also ask that managers request a laptop for a new starter well in advance of their start-date, as a laptop will need to be allocated and built for V3, which can take time.

Q: In Buntingford, half of the desks are taken by PC's which the Council has moved away from using. Are we going to get new computer monitors to accommodate staff laptop docking stations, and will the PCs be taken away?

A: Yes, the PCs will be taken away. IT are currently moving through the District Council Offices to remove the PCs on all floors, replacing them with docking stations, and this will be done in Buntingford too. However, IT have to be mindful of cost and will not buy docking stations for desks which are not used.

Q: Is the office in Buntingford going to get bigger computer monitors?

A: IT are not currently considering this, however, if a bigger monitor is something a member of staff requires for their work, options can be considered.

Q: There is a shortage of up-to-date staff laptops at the moment which means staff often have to wait while their laptop is repaired or a new one is allocated. How will moving away from PCs affect this?

A: Going forward, IT will have a pool of laptops which can be rebuilt and updated to V3. If a staff member's laptop is broken, IT should also be able to provide them with something which will enable them to join their Zoom and Teams meetings as normal while the laptop is rebuilt.

6. Green Update

No Green Update for this meeting.

7. Building Services Update

- Some of the desks previously restricted for social distancing have been removed, meaning there are a few more desks available on each floor of the Council offices.

If anyone has any issues, please email these to propertyservices@north-herts.gov.uk

8. Ideas/Suggestions

None

9. AOB

None

Chair for next meeting – Christina Corr

Have something to say?

If you have an issue that 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):

Claire Bernard #4323 - MSU team

Christina Corr #4325 - Senior Technical Officer Revenues and Benefits

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

Alice Ashbrook #4235 - Assistant Licensing Officer

Louis Franklin #4262 – Admin Support Officer