

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

01/03/2023

Present: Anthony Roche (**AR**), Ian Couper (**IC**), Rebecca Webb (**RW**) Claire Bernard (**CB**), Louis Franklin (**LF**), Christina Corr (**CC**) Alice Ashbrook (**AA**) Drew Betts (**DB**) Dee Levett (**DL**), Mark Robinson (**MR**), Fallon Rumball Nunan - Notes

Circulation: Global

Chair for Meeting: Drew Betts

1. Apologies

Anthony Roche, Mark Robinson.

2. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

None

3. NHC Updates

- North Herts Council's 2023/2024 budget was approved by councillors at last week's Full Council meeting (Thursday 23 February) more information can be found [here](#).
- Council Delivery Plan is going to cabinet week commencing 13th March current version can be viewed [here](#).
- [Churchgate project](#) has consulted with the public and is currently in review.
- Leisure and Waste projects set to be finalised.

HR and Employee Wellbeing Update

- HR held a [Menopause Virtual Kitchen on the 2nd March at 12.30](#) if you weren't able to make it there is some further support [here](#).
- Pay Award 2023 update – claim from the union in January for 12.7%, reduction of the working week from 37 to 35, an additional day's annual leave and a review of family leave and pay. The National Employers responded with an offer of £1925 on each spinal point (for most grades -more senior grades will receive a 3.88% or 3.50% offer) It is important to note that NHC apply the increases but work from own pay scale is different from NJC. It is expected that there will be further negotiations prior to a finalised offer being announced.
- Our new and improved Employee Assistance Program launches on 1st April 2023. Anybody seeking support from current provider will continue. We are really excited to share more information with you, keep your eyes peeled!

4. Employee Queries

Q: From previous minutes, when can we expect an email to be circulated regarding office etiquette?

A: It can be expected this week.

Q: Can employees update photographs on staff badges.

A: Yes, if you email propertyservices@north-herts.gov.uk they can arrange this.

Q: Is there any update on the long service awards?

A: Discussions are ongoing, we will respond to all those who have queried in due course.

5. IT Update and Queries

No IT update, questions were welcomed.

6. Green Update

Contributions to the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)

HCCSP members have asked officers to work through each of the current action plans (Water; Biodiversity; Carbon Reduction; and Transport) to present revised versions which consider action to date, clarified targets, and a broader view of the work of other organisations and community groups. We are continuing to lead on the biodiversity subgroup and action plan and have begun to work through this. The partnership have also invited relevant community groups and organisations to attend subgroup meetings to input their expertise.

Work continues to progress the actions in each of the plans, with the HCCSP Project Lead Officer working with various departments in all the authorities to monitor updates.

We are currently analysing postcode data for the Solar Together acceptances in North Herts. We requested this data to aid our evaluation of the scheme and to understand how participation has varied across the district. Installations of the panels for those who accepted their offers are now progressing and are still on track to be completed by April.

The Policy Team continue to be a part of the Behaviour Change Subgroup and the Adaptation Subgroup. The Adaptation subgroup are working to identify climate-related risks from across the county and now have a template on which we can begin recording these under the categories of key climate impacts (i.e extreme heat; rainfall & flooding; drought; and wind/storms).

Sustainable Warmth

At the end of 2022 we continued to progress our work on the Sustainable Warmth fund. This scheme is to retrofit homes (insulation, new windows/doors, possibly things like solar panels if people have already done all the other efficiency improvements) for those who earn less than £30k per year and whose property has one of the poorer EPC ratings. In December we worked with comms to do social media and leaflet promotion and sent out a mailout to possibly eligible households. Early indications suggest we have hit our target number of referrals which should allow around 55 homes to be retrofitted in North Herts in this round of the scheme. We are also beginning to prep for the next round of funding which will target just off-gas properties.

Green Courses Research

Following a question that was asked at the recent Environment Panel meeting, the Policy Team have conducted research on courses, modules, and vocational training available in Hertfordshire with links to sustainability, climate change and the environment. The courses include those from school leavers to undergraduate degree courses both available at Hertfordshire Colleges and Universities as well as The Open University. We are looking at how to promote this information.

Green Business Awards, and Prizes for Residents

We have completed research into green and sustainable Business awards across the country, run by businesses, organisations, and councils to recognise businesses that are showing contributions to sustainability and Net Zero targets. We will be raising this at the next Hertfordshire Sustainability Officers Group to see if there is the opportunity for the Local Enterprise Partnership to incorporate something similar in their Green Growth efforts to help and encourage businesses to decarbonise.

Responding the Water Company Consultations

We have been preparing NHC's response to the Water Resources Management Plans (WRMP) laid out by the water companies. We have so far completed our response to the Affinity Water plan and have begun looking at Anglian Water.

Engaging with Planning on SPDs and the Baldock Development

We are currently engaging with Planning colleagues to ensure alignment between NHC's environmental goals and the content of the Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document. We are also ensuring that the goals and actions of the relevant HCCSP action plans are fed in.

We are also working with Planners to define and maximise sustainability aims for the Baldock development in the Local Plan.

7. Building Services Update

Questions welcomed.

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

Q: A member of the public has asked why has Hitchin Arcade has 2 male toilets and 3 unisex toilets?

A: If you pass this through, we can investigate it.

8. Ideas/Suggestions

None

9. AOB

This will be Alice Ashbrook's last SCF meeting as she leaves NHC at the end of March, taking a career break to go travelling. Good luck Alice and thanks for all your contributions!

Chair for next meeting – Louis Franklin

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 phone extension):

Christina Corr #4325 - Senior Technical Officer Revenues and Benefits

Claire Bernard #4323 - MSU Admin Support Officer

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

Alice Ashbrook#4235 - Licensing Officer

Louis Franklin#4262 – Admin Support Officer