

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

04/10/2023

Present: Ian Couper (**IC**), Claire Bernard (**CB**), Louis Franklin (**LF**), Christina Corr (**CC**), Dee Levett (**DL**), Drew Betts (**AB**), Mark Robinson (**MR**), Caelan Ballard – notes (**CB**)

Circulation: Global

Chair for Meeting: Drew Betts (**AB**)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Anthony Roche, Rebecca Webb, and Vicky Kent.

2. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

None

3. NHC Update

- The Leadership Team have been discussing the upload of profile photos for everyone on Outlook and Teams to further support hybrid working. The photos would only be viewable on internal messages. The Leadership Team is also looking at an opt-out process.
- Thank you to all staff who have been involved in the office clear-out days. A reminder will be sent to teams still working on clearing their old items from the office, and all staff are reminded to ensure confidential waste is disposed of properly in the confidential waste bins.
- Staff are also reminded to clear out lockers, as there will not be enough for one each now that the lockers on Floor 3 can no longer be used.
- Some additional EV chargers will be installed outside the back of the DCO to accommodate new Careline vehicles.
- The consultation regarding the terms and conditions and pay for Deputy Chief Officers has now concluded. Deputy Chief Officers pay will be linked to Green Book, and they will be able to choose whether their notice period is in line with the Green Book rules or Chief Officer terms.

HR and Employee Wellbeing Update

- HR has sent out an email regarding arrangements for the free flu vaccinations this year. The process to claim a free vaccination has changed this year; anyone who wishes to get the vaccine and is not eligible through the NHS must book the vaccination themselves and can then reclaim the expense on iTrent. There are many pharmacies offering flu vaccinations, including supermarket pharmacies, and you can use loyalty cards if they provide a discount. ASDA are offering the vaccine for £12, Superdrug from £8.79 with a loyalty card, and Tesco are charging £13.
- The next Personal Development Morning will be held this Friday morning and will focus on our Inclusion value. The Inclusion Group are holding a drop-in session starting at



9.30am in Committee Room 1 on the First Floor of the DCO. All staff are welcome to attend to meet the members, find out what the group is working on or how to get involved.

Q: As the Waste Team also use electric vehicles, can they use the new EV chargers?

A: The EV chargers are only available to use during the day and with use of an EV charging card, but if there is a spare charger it may be used for Waste Team vehicles.

Q: Is there any further update on pay increase negotiations?

A: The pay increase negotiations are still ongoing and National Employers are meeting with the Trade Unions at the end of October. When any update is available it will be communicated to staff, and the agreed award will be processed through payroll as soon as possible.

4. Employee Queries

Q: Under the McCloud case, the Court of Appeal ruled that younger members of the main public service pension schemes have been discriminated against because protections do not apply to them. Following consultation in 2020, the Government proposed to remove age discrimination from the LGPS, ensuring members would not receive a lower pension because of the reforms. The new LGPS draft regulations are due to come into effect this month. Will details on the McCloud remedy and any effects on pension contributions be circulated to all staff?

A: Any changes to the pension scheme or pension contributions will be circulated by LGPS. A Government factsheet on the McCloud remedy, including information on who is affected and what the changes mean can be found here: [The McCloud judgment and your LGPS pension \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/931222/the-mccloud-judgment-and-your-lgps-pension.pdf).

Q: While feedback has been mostly positive regarding the changes to the Long Service Awards which now commemorate 5, 10, 20, 30 and 40 years of service, a few concerns have been raised about how the change will affect long-serving staff who were between Service Award thresholds before the updates were implemented. A few concerns were also raised that some staff feel they have also missed out from previous updates to the Long Service Awards, as the amount given for each of these long service milestones used to be lower, and some staff were also taxed on the Awards they did receive. Is there any update on an agreement with the Leadership Team following changes to the long service awards?

A: An agreement has been made with the Leadership Team and details of this will be emailed out to those affected soon (i.e., those who had more than 30 years' service when we transitioned to the new award scheme).

5. IT Update and Queries

- The IT team has had another new addition; Ivan is a new IT Helpdesk Officer. Interviews will also be taking place tomorrow for a new IT Helpdesk apprentice.



- The V3 Rollout for staff is now complete and the V3 system is running smoothly. As such, the Citrix system for staff use is now being decommissioned.
- The Windows 11 rollout will begin soon but is currently still in the testing phase. The V3 rollout for Councillors is continuing, and these V3 devices will be the first to have Windows 11 installed.
- SharePoint is on the IT road map and is continually being tested. The G: Drive is now on SharePoint and working well. A couple of departments have begun to use SharePoint for various tasks to allow IT to test it in action and iron out any issues.
- IT are hosting more bitesize training sessions on Personal Development Mornings following the success of the last IT training session about OneDrive. The next bitesize IT training session will be held this Friday, on the 6th of October from 10.30 to 11.15am on Teams. The session will focus on Excel Pivot Tables & Conditionals.
- Suggestions for future bitesize training sessions are welcome.

Q: The Waste Team have been contacted to return unnecessary tablets and old work phones following the implantation of V3 on workstations and the upcoming rollout of new work phones. Is there an estimate on when the new smartphones will be issued for those who cannot use a soft phone due to their role?

A: The rollout of the new work phones is in progress and will be delivered soon. Staff are asked to bear with IT as this is a complex & multifaceted rollout project.

Q: The bitesize IT training sessions have been fantastic, and staff seem to be really engaged in them. Is there any chance that notes from the sessions can be sent around afterwards so that staff can recap what has been discussed?

A: Unfortunately, IT doesn't currently have the capacity to create & circulate extensive resources due to the format of the sessions, but any specific questions or queries about the content of the sessions can be answered via the IT helpdesk.

Q: The Revenues & Benefits department still uses a particular program, which requires the use of Citrix, which is the system it was written for. Will a new program be written for the department now that Citrix is no longer used?

A: The organisation still has a Citrix footprint because of legacy applications like the one mentioned. There is also a new digital project underway, Loco, which is a rationalisation of all software used throughout the Council which will be consolidated to a single platform. This project will hopefully remove some of the need for a new version of the Revenues & Benefits program to be written. Loco is a digital project rather than an IT project, but IT are heavily involved in the design and implementation of it and will collaborate with service areas. There is also a finance technology procurement currently in progress, and when implemented it will allow the integration of various files and money between systems. This will also help to remove the need for a new Revenues & Benefits program to be written. Any issues or bugs with these existing programs will be worked on and fixed as normal.

6. Building Services & Facilities Update

Q: The new drinks machine in the DCO canteen has the ability to serve soup. Is this something which can be considered leading into the winter months?



A: Response from Property Services after the meeting. It is not something that is easy to add in. Also, when we tried having soup in the last machine it wasn't very popular.

Q: Are there any new updates about the letting of the third floor?

A: There is a very interested potential letter, but leases are currently being agreed which might take some time.

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

7. Ideas/Suggestions

None

8. 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 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

Louis Franklin #4262 – Admin Support Officer

Vicky Kent #4396 – Community Protection Apprentice