



## **Staff Consultation Meeting**

**06 June 2018**

**Present:** Ian Couper, Kerry Shorrocks, Claire Morgan, Dee Levett, Maggie Williams, Ben Glover, Emma Jellis, Sue Collett, Christina Corr (Chair), James Watson, Justin Goodwin (for Vic Godfrey)

**Circulation:** Global

---

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from David Scholes, Anthony Roche, Rebecca Webb, Vic Godfrey and Debbie Hiscock.

### **2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

2. IT have sent a representative to this Meeting to give the requested update.

4. The blinds have now been fitted in DCO and the technology will be installed in the Council Chamber in mid August. The replacement grills are now in place.

The previous Minutes from 2 May were agreed.

### **3. NHDC Update**

The new Senior Management structure which comprises 6 Service Directors was implemented on 1 June 2018. The June edition of Insight included a message from AR which contained a reminder of the new Service Director responsibilities. SAP has been reconfigured to reflect the new reporting responsibilities and although there have been some initial problems with this new structure, these should now be resolved. It is expected that over the coming months the Service Directors will be reviewing their areas of responsibility and this might lead to further changes.

The April pay increase for staff was paid in May salaries which also contained arrears for April. There has been no change in the position regarding the Chief Officers pay negotiations, an offer for a 1% increase has been made and rejected.

SCF was reminded that with the approach of the peak summer holiday season, staff should book leave early to enable conflicting demands to be managed effectively.

IC advised that the Council's financial position was improved in the short term, but another significant round of budget squeeze was expected in 2020/2021.

### **4. Employee Expenses and Tax Reporting**

The following expenses are being looked at to align them with HMRC allowances:

Mileage rates – a review of these has been on the cards for some considerable time. The Council currently still pay Green Book mileage rates which is becoming increasingly out of line with other

councils who only pay HMRC maximum allowances. At NHDC Councillors currently receive HMRC rates and it is likely the rates for staff will be moved in line with these. The green agenda will also be promoted with the proposed removal of higher payment rates for bigger engine cars. Car allowances will also be reviewed. Those most affected by the proposed changes have been identified and discussions are underway with them and their line managers. A phased implementation over 3 years is being considered to mitigate the negative impact of the proposed changes.

Long service and retirement awards – again these are being reviewed in line with HMRC guidelines and a revised scheme for long service awards is likely to be announced shortly. Unfortunately HMRC do not recognise retirement awards so the current recognition for retirement policy is being reviewed.

Subsistence – it is recognised that there is a lack of clarity regarding the existing arrangements. The HMRC dispensation regarding the current rates paid expires in August 2018, so there is some urgency in revising the present arrangements. Under the revised rules the amount that can be claimed will reduce to a maximum of £10 per meal and this will only be repaid if it is incurred away from the individual's normal place of work. Although this is a reduction in the present amount that can be claimed, it is still believed an adequate meal can be purchased for this.

Incidental overnight expenses – a maximum of £5.12 can currently be claimed for these. Reimbursement of expenses under this category have never been claimed so it proposed to remove this.

Clothing and protective equipment – across the Council a variety of equipment and personal protective equipment is issued for a number of reasons. Going forward this will only be free of liability for tax for the employees receiving it if it is issued for health and safety reasons, is protective equipment or it is branded with the Council's logo.

A report has been discussed at SMT and work is continuing on planning the implementation of proposed changes.

## **5. SCF Representation – New DCO Floors**

Following the move back to DCO, representation at SCF was discussed and the following proposed:

Ground Floor – Careline – SC

Ground Floor – CM

1<sup>st</sup> Floor – JW

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor – BG

4<sup>th</sup> Floor – EJ

5<sup>th</sup> Floor – CC

This proposal will be circulated to all staff for comment and a reminder will be issued that all staff are encouraged to raise matters and this can occur with any representative.

**Action: Message Board message to be issued publicising the realignment of SCF representation and asking if any groups of staff not covered by the above arrangements would like to propose their own representative - KS**

## **6. IT Update**

JG said that IT were aware of slow running in a number of systems and encouraged all staff to report issues via IT Help as this would then help to build the background picture as to the extent of the

problem and the possible solutions. A large update will occur over the coming weekend and it is hoped that this will lead to improvements.

It was suggested that where a problem was known to be occurring a message should be issued by IT so users were aware.

## **7. Employee Queries**

Careline - SC reported that Careline staff felt there were a lot of positives about their new location in DCO, with the ability to use a separate break out area away from the phones being particularly appreciated. However there had also been a number of upsetting incidents regarding anti-social behaviour and harassment of staff going to and from their cars which had led to the police being involved on several occasions. There had also been issues regarding car parking which had been very distressing for staff.

Careline management were aware that these issues were going to be raised at SCF. As a result of the incidents the police and Arena Security were patrolling more frequently and all Careline staff were given permission to park in the car park adjacent to DCO as long as they did not use the spaces reserved for the Leader and Chief Executive. Unfortunately this change in approved car parking arrangements, and the reasons behind it, had not been fully communicated which had led to further recent incidents.

**Action: Further communication of the new arrangements, including via MIS, would occur - IC**

Stairs in the multi-storey car park – these were reported to be smelling very unpleasant and the past practice of these being washed down every evening did not seem to be occurring. IC responded that there had been no change in the cleaning arrangements, but he was aware of issues with the signage which had been set on fire. Property Services were considering what action should now be taken.

Eating at desks – there seems to be some confusion about what can and cannot be eaten at desks in DCO. It was agreed that a pragmatic approach should be taken based on consideration of others. The important point was to be clean and tidy and not to negatively affect others by what was being eaten, e.g. hot smelly meals. Pots of cereal, yoghurts etc. were not seen to be an issue.

Heating/Cooling System in DCO – a number of complaints had been raised with SCF reps across the various floors of DCO regarding cold air coming from ceiling vents making unpleasant working conditions. IC reminded SCF that hot desking meant that in many cases individuals could move away from areas particularly affected, but he would raise the matter with Property services to ensure all vents were set up correctly.

**Action: Property services be made aware of issues with heating/cooling vents - IC**

## **8. Chair for next meeting**

The chair for the next meeting is DL.