

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting Minutes – 6 November 2024

Present: Anthony Roche
Ian Couper
Rebecca Webb
Louis Franklin
Tiranan Straughan
Katie Thomas
Claire Bernard
Mark Robinson
Reina Gendle
Dee Levett
Geri Goodwin (item 2 only)
Michelle Bell - notes

Circulation: Global

Chair for Meeting: Tiranan Straughan

1. Apologies

Christina Corr, Andrew Betts

Welcome to Reina, our new SCF rep.

2. Restructure Notices

Revenues - Geri Goodwin presented the proposed restructure for the Revenues and Systems team following the retirement of the Systems Technical Manager. The team have already been working under a temporary structure which will now be formally consulted upon.

The Systems Technical Manager role will be deleted with the key tasks being redistributed between the Senior Revenues Officers. These Officers will have a change of job title and their roles will go to a job evaluation panel (18 November) due to the significant changes. The Revenues Inspector role will also be re-evaluated due to significant changes. A new part time Revenues Project Manager role (fixed term contract up to two years) will be created.

Formal consultation opened on 23 October and will close on 21 November. Those directly impacted have been provided with the proposed amended job profiles.

TUPE – (update provided by Rebecca Webb in the absence of Chris Jeffery). Formal consultation has opened to transfer three members of Urbaser staff to NHC on 1 December. CSC staff have already been consulted as part of Digital Services restructure that has previously been to SCF. Crossover training will be arranged so that all staff can answer all queries. The Urbaser staff have visited DCO and have met with CJ.

3. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

4. NHC Update

HR and Employee Wellbeing Update (RW)

Pay award – has been agreed and processed for November pay to include back pay to 1 April 2024. Negotiations will now commence for 2025 and SCF will be kept up to date.

Neurodiversity in the Workplace Network – this will be a space for staff to share experiences or information and has been set up by the Inclusion Group. If you are interested, please respond to the poll here [Viva Engage - Conversation](#).

Q - is this just for staff who identify as having a neurodiversity? A – we would like to understand what format would work best by looking at the results of the poll. AR would encourage the new network to be as broad as possible.

Wellbeing – there will be articles in this month's Insight around financial wellbeing and how our benefit platforms can help you save money this Xmas and a reminder about the fitness plans available via Be-Well – linked below:

[Looking to get fit?](#)

[Discounts on Xmas food, presents & outfits!](#)

Prevention of Sexual Harassment – following a recent change in legislation, the [Bullying & Harassment](#) policy has been updated and new mandatory e-learning has been launched [Preventing sexual harassment training](#). It is vital that all employees know what they should do if they feel they are experiencing SH.

General NHC Update (IC)

NI increase – there is an indication from Government that they will fund the increase for public sector organisations so there will be no direct impact on next year's pay negotiations. We will need to ensure that the lower end of our pay scales remain above NML wage.

By election (Royston) – Cllr Sarah Lucas of the Labour and Co-operative Party was duly elected. There is still no overall control of the Council.

Local Plan – a new video has been launched on the website featuring Anthony Roche and Councillor Daniel Allen, click [here](#) to watch.

Technology One – the final stage of the new finance system has been implemented. A minor teething problem regarding payments has been rectified.

Peer review – a big thank you to all those involved with interviews and focus groups.

5. Employee Queries

Q: Vending and coffee machines are often running low, especially at weekends.

A: IC will discuss with Property Services.

Q: Why is the hot water turned off over the Xmas shut down as there are still staff working 24/7?

A: IC will discuss with Property Services.

Q: Disinfectant sprays – label says professional use only and not suitable for certain surfaces - should staff be using them?

A: IC will discuss with Property Services.

Q: Can a list of examples be provided to clarify what is permitted during a personal development morning?

A: It would be difficult to provide a list of examples but the L&D team are working on some communications. SMG will be encouraged to have open conversations with their teams around personal aspirations and learning and development needs.

Q: MSU member off staff is interested in becoming SCF rep.

A: LF will check inbox.

6. IT Update (MR)

UK wide cyber-attack last week – NHC services unaffected at present. ICT will continue to monitor and mitigate risk where possible.

The emails sent out by MR to highlight Cyber Awareness month have received positive feedback. Stats show that 50% of these emails were opened with an average 15 second read time. Did you know that the Viva Insights button on your Outlook tool bar can tell you:

- How many people opened your email.
- The average time people spent reading your email.
- How many email recipients opened a document that you shared in the email as a link or as an attachment.

Last month's Drop-In session focussed on Personal Cyber Awareness and was attended by 19 people.

December's Drop-In session takes place on 6 December and focuses on applications and software that you already have at your disposal, book your place [here](#).

Staff – Kev Abbiss will take flexible retirement in the New Year and the new Senior Technical Officer starts in January.

Power outage last Monday – no problems caused from an IT point of view but has highlighted some issues around comms as IT staff on call were unable to get any mobile signal. The car park barrier would not open during the power cut and MR will investigate whether this can be added to the emergency generator back up.

Q – How long will the generator run for and who is responsible for topping up the fuel?

A – The generator holds 1000 litres of fuel which would last approx. one week and the Contractor is responsible for refuelling. In addition, the UPS would provide a further 9 hours back up in an emergency.



MR is aware that staff are reporting sound issues with their laptops although no calls have been logged with the Helpdesk. Staff are encouraged to raise a ticket if they are experiencing any issues.

7. Building and Facilities Update

None

8. Green Update

This month's Environment Briefing which be read in full [here](#).

A dedicated page for [Sustainability Development Sessions](#) has been created on the Hub with the next session taking place on 11 November.

9. Ideas / Suggestions

None

10. AOB

None

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

Claire Bernard #4323 - MSU Admin Support Officer

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

Louis Franklin #4262 – Digital Services Officer

Tiranan Straughan #4842 – Housing Policy Officer

Katie Thomas #5021 – Digital and Customer Service Apprentice

Reina Gendle #4188 – Careline Technical Administrator