

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting Minutes – 5th November 2025

Present:

Director- Resources: Ian Couper
HR Services Manager: Rebecca Webb
Staff representatives: Louis Franklin, Tiranan Straughan, Melanie Ferdaous
Union representative: Dee Levett
Notes: Ruby Lewis

Circulation: Global

Chair for Meeting: Louis Franklin

1 Apologies

Debbie Hiscock
Christina Corr
Anthony Roche
Katie Thomas
Mark Robinson

2 Restructure Notices

None

3 Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

None

4 NHC Update (including HR and Staff Wellbeing Update)

[Annual Leave](#)– We are now into the second half of the leave year. Reminders will be sent regarding the importance of planning and booking leave, and the positive impact this can have on wellbeing, mental health and productivity. The carry forward process will return to normal at the end of March 2026, meaning up to 1 week can be carried forward into the next leave year (pro rata for part time employees).

[Lunchtime mental health walks](#) - We received positive feedback on the first lunchtime mental health walk in support of world mental health day. We have asked the social group to consider setting this up as a regular event. All ideas or feedback on length, location and how often are welcome to be sent to Hrhelph or the social group.

[Menopause Awareness Month](#) – The next Menopause network is on the 13th November. There will be a guest speaker, everyone is welcome to attend.

[Men's Health](#) – Men's health awareness month is November. The Insight article and Hub page highlight the different types of support available.



Sexual Harassment reporting form – We are looking to launch an anonymous sexual harassment reporting form. As an employer, we have a duty to prevent sexual harassment, and this form will sit alongside other mechanisms for reporting issues. We appreciate there can be barriers to reporting, and having an anonymous form should help identify issues early and establish if there are any issues.

Q: Do we have many incidents of sexual harassment?

A: No, but an option to report anonymously will help us ensure we have a full picture allows appropriate action to prevent.

[Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution](#) – Anthony is attending an LGR meeting this afternoon.. The final proposal document will be going to Government by the end of November. Cabinet will make a decision on the North Herts Council preference for the 2,3,4 unitary options before it is sent to Government. We will then have to wait for Government to come back to us.

Peer Review – We have the corporate peer review on Monday 15th December. A request for staff volunteers will be put out soon.

Budget – The budget process for next year has started, we are currently uncertain of funding. There are no big changes planned but some changes need to happen due to the impact of LGR.

Q: Is the peer review meeting in-person?

A: Yes, most meetings are in person. Wait for the email to come out and there may be a hybrid option.

5 Employee Queries

Q: There has recently been a reminder sent out to managers about the Conflict of Interest forms, but there is a lot of confusion about the questions. The shares question is causing the most confusion, why would certain shares be a conflict of interest?

A: Technically speaking any organisation or outside business may have an impact. The questions are there to identify any potential conflicts of interest. If you declare something, it does not mean something will immediately happen. Everything is confidential, and they are stored in safe and secure place.

Q: There was some feedback that came as a result of the bystander video that went out last month for inclusion week. There was one section, where someone with first aid knowledge was able to help someone. Some people in my team do not know any first aid, and although the council has first aiders, it may be beneficial to run a general first aid session, so they know what do to if these situations were to ever arise.

A: It was unclear in the video whether the person was trained in first aid. The video was to highlight bystander effect, which is where individuals are less likely to step forward when others are present. Agreed more messaging around this could be arranged and the recorded webinar can be accessed [here](#)

We are on the look out for anyone who is based in the office that would be willing to be a first aid volunteer. Anyone who wants to volunteer should email Hrhelp.

Q: Is there a specific number of first aiders we have to have?

A: Yes, it is in proportion with the average number of people in the building on one day.

6 Green Update

[10 Sustainability Briefing October 2025.pdf](#)

7 Ideas/Suggestions

Q: I wanted to ask about the expectations of an SCF representative when joining committee meetings?

A: The Councillors welcome your input, you are welcome to attend and make comments if you wish. Contributions are welcome.

8 Any other business

None

10 Chair of next meeting.

Melanie Ferdaous

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

Louis Franklin #4262 – Digital Services Officer

Tiranan Straughan #4842 – Housing Policy Officer

Katie Thomas #5021 – Digital and Customer Service Apprentice

Martin Trotter #4541 - Shared Service Contract Officer – Waste

Christine Howe #4832 - Client Services Support Officer

Melanie Ferdaous #4324 – Admin Support Officer