



Staff Consultation Meeting

04 July 2018

Present: Anthony Roche, Kerry Shorrocks, Dee Levett (Chair), Emma Jellis, Christina Corr, Maggie Williams, Rebecca Webb, Vic Godfrey

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1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Scholes, Ian Couper, Ben Glover, Sue Collett and James Watson.

2. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

7. Employee Queries – The issues at Careline were noted by the JSCC at the meeting on 27 June and concern was expressed regarding these.

The previous Minutes from 6 June were agreed.

3. NHDC Update

The new Senior Management structure is now settling in and seems to be working well with few problems. Staff who are moving to different Directorates are doing so as their current workload allows and there has been some flexibility in the timings of these moves to accommodate this. The Service Directors are now reviewing their areas of responsibility and this might lead to further changes in structures and roles.

In an article in this month's Insight, Steve Crowley gives a fuller explanation of what commercialisation will mean for the Council. In a nutshell it involves NHDC "being more business like" and has three key elements: Structure, Strategy and Culture. It was emphasised that both Members and staff had to fully buy into the process in order for it to be successful. The emphasis on growth of income rather than expenditure cuts was a positive one. The idea of having targets for new income generation each year for each Directorate was discussed, but it was recognised that the opportunities for achieving such year on year new income generation were limited in certain services.

SCF was reminded that this was the last month for the current round of the RPR process to be completed and that signed Employee Annual Declarations also had to be submitted by 31 July.

Negotiations are reaching a peak regarding main entrance access at North Hertfordshire Museum. The Cabinet met in June and agreed to take the question of a compulsory purchase order to full Council if there is no deal by July 31.

The initial public consultation on the plans for the Hitchin Churchgate Regeneration received 578 responses. These were generally supportive of the planned changes and the comments made have been taken into account. The full results of the consultation will be published shortly.

4. IT Restructure

VG presented a paper which outlined the need for a restructure within IT to ensure the service was fit for purpose and fully able to make the most of internal and external opportunities. The service was previously restructured in 2014 and this had led to a significant increase in performance, but it was now time to review the structure once more to ensure it could meet its priorities.

A SIAS audit had suggested that the service should increase the amount of resource available to monitor and manage the increase in Cyber Security and Anti Virus threats that had been recorded over the past 18 months. In addition there has been an increased in the last 3 years in the numbers of Subject Access Requests (SAR) and FOI submissions and these were expected to increase further now that the GDPR had come into force.

It was therefore proposed to remove the 2 x Senior Technical Support Officers posts and create 2 new posts: I.T. Network Infrastructure Manager and Senior Technical Development & Cyber Security Support Officer. The IT Helpdesk Team who currently report to the IT Business Manager will then move under the new proposed Network Infrastructure Manager, which will release the IT Business Manager who has a new job title, IT Business & Information Manager to manage and work with service departments/teams to ensure information compliance is being met.

Consultation with affected staff started on 2 July. There has been little comment so far as considerable work was undertaken ahead of proposing the restructure to ensure buy in from those affected.

AR asked if this restructure would help to reduce the large amounts of overtime historically worked by those in IT. VG responded that there will always be a need for overtime as there are regular patches and updates which have to be undertaken outside office hours, but the very high levels of overtime in recent years were due to a number of office moves and the need to prepare the IT in various of the Council's buildings. The option of employing staff with a regular working pattern which covered evening and weekend working was suggested, but VG stated that there was a need for the skill sets of current staff to be used for these activities and this therefore led to considerable overtime being worked. There had also been significant absences in the management team in the period which needed to be covered using overtime. It was envisaged that the amount of overtime would now reduce as the programme of building moves had been completed.

5. HR Service Transfer Work

Historically HR has always undertaken its own administration and this work has not previously passed to the CSC or MSU in the same way as it has for other services. A number of changes over recent years has led to this situation being reviewed. The reduction in the need for hard copy files through the introduction of a DMS for employee records, the on line recruitment system and the increase in the use of e-forms as part of a move to a paperless HR, together with changes in the First Day Welcome programme and the use of HR Help, have all meant that it is now appropriate to consider a transfer of routine HR admin outside the department. The CSC has been identified as an appropriate vehicle to manage HR admin going forward as its customer facing, call centre, nature is a good fit with the relevant HR processes.

Detailed process mapping has been undertaken and CSC have provided valuable advice on how the work could be undertaken. With regard to confidentiality of information, the Council's policies and procedures in respect of confidentiality agreements, conflicts of interest and disclosing of relationships will be adhered to.

The proposed changes have been discussed with affected members of staff as they put the current 2 x part time HR Support Officers at risk of redundancy. Due to absences for leave the consultation period has been prolonged to 31 July.

A restructure for HR is planned for the Autumn.

6. SCF Meeting Administration

Following their move to Commercial the Project Support Team will no longer be supporting SCF. Karen Pulham who currently supports the Health and Safety Forum has been asked to do the same for SCF. As she works part time, it has been requested that future SCF meetings be held at 2.00. It was agreed to do this on a trial basis starting with the September meeting.

7. Employee Queries

Statutory Days

There was some confusion as to whether the unallocated days had been added to annual holiday entitlement for this year. It was confirmed that they had, but if there were any individual queries, these should be referred to Serco using the contacts detailed on the intranet.

<http://intranet.north-herts.gov.uk/home/human-resources/serco-hr-payroll-system/support-serco-payroll-system>

NHDC Staff Benefits

It was asked if NHDC staff benefits could be accessed by any employee of the public sector. It was confirmed that NHDC benefits could only be accessed by employees of the Council or their partners and families in certain cases.

8. Chair for next meeting

The Chair for the next meeting which will be held on 5 September at 2.00 is CC.