

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 5th August 2026

Via Teams

Present:

Director- Resources: Ian Couper

HR Services Manager: Rebecca Webb

Staff representatives: Tiranah Straughan, Louis Franklin, Christina Corr, Christine Howe, Melanie Ferdaous

Technical Operations Manager: Mark Robinson (for IT update)

Union representative: Dee Levett

Notes: Shareese Smith

Circulation: Global

Chair for Meeting: Christina Corr

1 Apologies

Katie Thomas

2 IT update

Ongoing work on the LGR programme, with changes to the technical workstream. MR will be taking on additional responsibilities within LGR related work. Cyber improvements implemented following Microsoft recommendations. Updates to Microsoft teams meeting access, only invited attendees can now automatically join meetings. Future update expected on staff phishing awareness training.

3 Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

No matters raised from previous meeting notes.

4 NHC Update (including HR and Staff Wellbeing Update)

- **Pay Negotiations:** There has been no further progress regarding the pay award. Trade Unions are currently balloting members on potential industrial action.
- [HolidayFlex](#): Now open for applications until 31st August
- **Personal Development Morning:** Scheduled for Friday 7th August – this is a generic session, with no focus, to allow staff to catch up on mandatory or other learning.
- **All staff Event:** Save the date notifications have been published (10th Sept - AM, 22nd Sept - AM, 28th Sept - PM) more details on how to book on a session will follow soon – staff only need to attend one session.
- [RPR](#): We are re-introducing a collection window for RPR's – initial information has already been communicated to managers, with further

information to follow shortly – there will be transition period once the collection window is introduced. The window will be September to November for returning those RPR's. The form has now been updated to link directly to the priorities, vision, and values, and the questions have been revised to better facilitate productive career and development discussions.

- **LGR Update:** A new [staff hub](#) (microsite) has been launched. Upcoming there will be a LGR workforce staff survey coming mid-August. Change ambassadors are now active, more information will follow.

Inclusion Group Update

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A proposal was discussed to introduce an Inclusion Flag at Hitchin Town Hall, as it is considered more representative than the flags currently in use. As the flag is not government approved, planning permission would be required before implementation. Consideration is also being given to potential public perception and the impact on staff.

Questions: Have you had any new members in the inclusion group?

Response: There is still a core group of members and then the others are more fluid attendance can depend on people's availability and topic due to be covered.,

6 Employee Queries

- **LGR Updates and Representation:** Request for LGR to be included as a standing agenda item at future SCF meetings. Clarification is also sought on current LGR representation, including whether an appointed ambassador attends SCF meetings and if there is an agreed deputy or alternative representative when they are unavailable.

Action: MF will act as the representative between both the LGR ambassadors and SCF ensuring ongoing communication and consistent representations at meetings. Including LGR as a standing agenda item is supported; however, LGR updates should primarily be communicated through Staff Briefings.

- **Safeguarding training feedback:** Concerns were raised again that the six-hour training session can feel lengthy and intensive. Some staff felt the content was not always relevant to their role, while others noted that sensitive topics were not clearly signposted in advance. The requirement to attend in person was also highlighted as potentially inconvenient for some employees.

Action: IC will seek further information and raise these issues for consideration.

7 Green Update

7 Sustainability Briefing July 2026

8 Ideas/Suggestions

- **Future of SCF:** Aim to recruit 4-6 new members, but current terms of reference state 8 reps' total. May need review before expanding. Focus on improving

representation across departments. Updating SCF webpage, recruitment posters and insight articles to help with this.

- **SCF/LGR Updates:** Meetings will be moved to the first Tuesday of each month at 11:00am, effective from 6 October, to accommodate AR's attendance
- **New Starter Meetings:** a standard script or set of key discussion points be developed for representatives attending new starter meetings, ensuring a consistent approach and message regardless of who is attending.

Any other business

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None

Next Meeting

Chair: 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

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

