

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

01 May 2019



DRAFT Minutes

Present: Rebecca Web (**RW**), Christina Corr (**CC**), Debbie Hiscock (**DH**), Emma Jellis (**EJ**), Kerry Shorrocks (**KS**), Ben Glover (**BG**), Andrew Mills (**AM**), Antonella Di Maria (**AD**), Howard Crompton (**HC**) Caitlin Bruce (**CB - notes**)

Circulation: Global

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from James Watson, Ian Couper and Sue Colette

2. Matters Arising

DH – The screens in the small meeting rooms have been moved down to a reasonable level

EJ – Some people still have to strain their necks to see

3. Building Services Update

CC – The lift has been out of service for about a week now, when will it be up and running again?

DH – The lift has been out of service since last week – they have taken a part away to be repaired, it was supposed to come back on Tuesday (30/04/2019) with the lift specialists coming to fit it today (01/05/2019) – that was the last I heard but they have not been yet

AM – The Gents toilets on the 5th floor are always either blocked or not flushing

DH – Has this been raised with property services?

AM – No

DH – If you come across things like this just put a request through to property services and we will get it fixed. We also have a monitoring schedule so if it happens regularly we can get the contractors in to have a look.

DL – There was quite a bad smell in the lift lobby on Tuesday afternoon

DH – As these things happen please report them to property services

DL – Are there any updates on window cleaning?

DH – There aren't any updates as of yet, we have a new cleaning contractor (from the 1st April) the previous contractor was going to be cleaning the external windows before the end of the contract but they weren't able to in time. We will probably give the new contractor a few weeks before we start implementing the ad hoc schedule where every quarter it will list what they need to do

KS – What is the anticipated timetable for office moves?

DH – That is still with me at the moment, all moves have been approved. I am working on a project plan and am meeting with Vic Godfrey soon in order to fit both of our project plans together. No dates yet

DH – There is now a bookshelf down in the canteen and while this was primarily for the learning and development books is also being used for book swap

4. MSU Restructure

AD – The MSU restructure will involve creating a team leader post (Grade 7) and a 12 month Grade 3 post, this has come about because of under resourcing in the team, the fact that the current structure was only ever meant to be an interim structure, the increasing demand for MSU staff in Careline, and 16 staff reporting to one Team Leader being too much. I have had the open consultation meeting with the MSU staff, no feedback has been received yet but they will have until the 10th May to send it

CC – Are these posts open to all of the team?

AD – Yes, potentially anyone could apply not only in MSU but in the whole council, it has not been ring-fenced

5. Careline Restructure

HC – We also had an issue with too many reports to one manager in Careline with essentially 30 reports for one person which was not sustainable. There are already 2 senior officer posts but they are not taking on the full supervisory role, they are more involved in working out rotas etc. rather than 1:1s, RPRs, training etc. The two senior operators that we currently have do part of their hours as a senior operator and part of their hours as a careline operator so what we want to do is make 3 senior operators with none of them doing operational duties unless there is an emergency. The two existing senior operators currently slot in to two of the new roles. All three will have around 10 members of staff reporting to them. The hours that they are giving up will be backfilled

KS – Will the individuals stepping up to manager roles require training before they do so?

HC – Yes they will, I have discussed that with them and they are up for it

6. Greenspace Proposal

AM – The Greenspace proposal is not a restructure in the truest terms, as you may know the grounds team went through a restructure that was implemented at the end of March with the leaving of Steve Geach, this also acted as the catalyst for Michael McCarthy and Keith Gayner to leave at the same time. In effect we had three people leave the new structure with Steve being the redundancy/ retirement – this has created a number of vacancies. Michael was working 3 days a week and the proposal is that we keep that as the saving, Keith Gaynor was on a Grade 9 post focusing predominantly on project management but unfortunately we don't have the work capital project wise or external funding wise to actually support that post however due to the merge of Steve's role and his team and my previous team there is the need for a role in the middle between the area monitoring officers and myself to actually carry operation day to day running of the service area. The idea being that I would be more focused on the strategic issues that Steve would have looked at in the past. It was also noted that there were 6 grades between the area monitoring officer and myself which is an awfully big step leaving no opportunity for succession planning within the team. The plan was to create a person in the

middle who would be the Greenspace Manager making the Greenspace Manager and Karl Wilkins my direct reports. The saving which was offered up was Michaels post; the new role will have to go through job evaluation which also has the potential to fluctuate the saving

7. NHDC Update

KS - Elections are being held this week with several people being involved in one way or another. There is a very real possibility that we could see some changes to the political management and direction of the organisation which will inevitably filter down through the organisation, so just to make you aware that we are expecting some changes.

KS – SMT have spent a lot of time on service planning which changed last year to create one overall action plan with each of the services having their own action plans. These are all saved on the G: Drive so I would urge people to have a look

KS – We have also been looking at the gender pay gap – there is a gap, it has narrowed since last year but is still there. We plan to create a survey for all staff to ask how happy people are with career development within the organisation. In terms of the gender pay gap it is a profile of the organisation. We are going to be doing some unconscious bias training

8. SCF Representation – New DCO Floors

KS – There were a couple of suggestions last time including: a rep for every directorate, we currently have 3 for customers, 1 in commercial and 2 regulatory, we don't have resources or place covered so I don't think that will necessarily work. There are some floor moves that may change things. We should tell people that if they want something raised at SCF they can contact any one of you

CM – We should also remind people that there is the SCF inbox

KS – We could have a drop in session

CM – At a lunchtime we could hang around in the canteen, can I action CB to drop a note to the SCF members so we can organise something

CB – Yes

CM – We could also put something in insight publicising who the reps are as well as the SCF inbox (scf@north-herts.gov.uk)

KS – CM wants to stand down from the Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC) so we will be looking for someone to join taking CM's place. It is a quarterly meeting where HR, councillors, Unison and SCF reps come together. It is held on a Wednesday afternoon – we are looking for a volunteer from the current SCF reps

CC – Once a replacement is found for CM I will be looking for someone to replace myself

9. IT Update

KS – We have developed a glitch which affects mainly managers authorising leave and expense claims and so they have had to send them manually to Serco. We now seem to have a way around it

EJ – Someone mentioned that they would like more information and more updates about SAP (payroll system) when issues occur

RW – Is this an employee having problems or a manager

EJ – An employee

RW – We don't have that down as an issue just yet, they may need to send an enquiry to sap.support@hertfordshire.gov.uk, if they have done this and not received a

response then they can send an email to Hrhelp@north-herts.gov.uk but they should try SAP support first

EJ – The employee would also like more updates on the issues

RW – There is a monthly update because the only running issue we are aware of is managers being unable to approve leave and expenses easily and even this is not all managers

10. Employee Queries

EJ – An employee recently went to pension's advice seminar and they said they found it was run by financial advisors so it was quite a lot of jargon and they got quite a lot of follow up advertisement afterwards

KS – As an employer we cannot give financial advice so we tell people they will need to seek external advice. I will pass that back to Learning and Development

CC – Have the statutory days been decided

KS – This has been put back because of elections, and it is being tied in with some other suggestions around the staff survey

BG – rooms 1 and 2 do not have any glass panels on the doors so someone had some concerns about the possibility of staff being put in difficult situations and not being seen

KS – Human Resources are not currently aware of anyone raising any issues of that sort at the moment

RW – There is also a privacy aspect there say, for example, someone is in an 1:1 and discussing a sensitive issue they may get upset and so having glass on that door wouldn't make it as private as you might want it to be and I would hope if there were any issues of a bullying and harassment nature that they would be raised either with the line manager or with us

BG – There have been a few queues forming to get printing done and employees were wondering about the possibility of getting a second printer

KS – I am sure I have seen something saying we can't have anymore printers, the only advice we can give is try a different floor

DL – I asked about the first aider process and it is as follows: call the switchboard and on certain phones we can put through calls to the first aiders

KS – We have been speculating as to whether we ought to have mental health first aiders

11. Chair of Next Meeting

Christina Corr