

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting

02 October 2019



Present: David Scholes (**DS**), Dee Levitt (**DL**), Hannah Sweetman (**HS**), Emma Jellis (**EJ**), Kerry Shorrocks (**KS**), Lea Ellis (**LE**), Caitlin Bruce (**CB - notes**)

Circulation: Global

1. Apologies

Anthony Roche, Christina Corr, Ian Couper, Ben Glover, Toby LeSage, Rebecca Webb

2. Matters Arising

LE Mentioned that there are still issues with the toilets on floor two not getting toilet paper replaced – **If members of staff notice there is little or no toilet paper they should email property services to bring it to their attention**

LE to speak to Helen Bylett and Keith Crampton about promoting ‘working in a political environment training’ and the opportunity for staff members to go to a council meeting.

Going forward a note will be placed on the front of the agendas at council meetings in an attempt to stop careline staff being blocked in to or not being able to find a parking space. The multi-storey car park opposite the district council office is also open during evening meetings and reminders of this and that the car park will not close before the committee meetings end will be given to councillors/public.

KS Gave an update on the cycle to work salary sacrifice saying that we would be remaining with our current provider, Halfords but there will also be a list of other local retailers that are available. The window open so people can join the scheme will also remain open so they can opt in at any time. More information will be available soon.

3. NHDC Update

KS went to the regional pay briefing on 16/09/19. The Unions pay claim is 10% or £10 per hour, whichever is the greater. Harry Honnor. The Principal Negotiating Officer on the Employers side led the event that started with a presentation of the pay claim by the trade unions. This event is a regular one as part of the work done on national pay bargaining and a number of these regional events had already happened by 16th. Ahead of these events those attending were asked to come prepared with answers to some questions including:-

- *How much have you assumed in budget for 2020 pay award?*
- *How do you view an appropriate level of settlement in the context of other increases in the public sector, in particular schoolteachers’ award of 2.75%?*

We confirmed that our budget assumed a 2% pay increase. However we also confirmed that at some point it is expected that pay increases will return to those being similar to

other public sector partners. The overwhelming feedback from Councils was that everyone had budgeted for 2%. The Employers side explained that due to the Brexit uncertainties and the possibility of a general election a pay offer was unlikely to be made in the near future. Updates to SCF will be made when more details are known.

KS Gave update on the payroll project – we will be working with Liberata using the iTrent system, we have a number of payroll champions lined up and have had the kick off meeting with Liberata to begin working on the blueprint for what our service will look like, there is work going on with Serco regarding parallel runs and extracting data. What we are hoping to do is get a demo of iTrent to show at staff briefings. The system will be a great improvement on the one we currently have.

KS and **EJ** will attend the 3 October JSCC meeting as the SCF representatives.

DS Gave an update on the budget for next year, a few announcements about local government settlement were made in September – negative Revenue Support Grant (we pay the government money as opposed to us getting a grant) is not happening for next year. The news homes bonus announcements have been postponed for now. The amount that councils can increase council tax was capped at 3% this is now 2%. Overall for the forthcoming year it is slightly positive in terms of what we thought we were going to get and what we are going to get, however these are the current government's intentions and they will not be locked down until January

DS Stated that there was work being done on the new council plan and will hopefully be agreed by full council ahead of the budget process

There is the potential that there will be another general election, if this is the case help from as many staff as possible will be greatly appreciated

4. Employee Queries

Frustrations around the manager self service issue was raised.

KS apologised that a permanent solution had not been found but confirmed in the interim the system will work normally following these two quick steps.

- 1 Log in as normal and remove the 's' from the 'https' in the web address bar
2. Press enter and click show all content and all outstanding tasks will be available as normal.

Return to 'https' to use other self service facilities.

The SAP Support IT team is continuing work on resolving this issue.

A query around vacancies being advertised internally only before they are advertised externally to allow for more development opportunities was raised.

KS replied that whether to advertise internally and externally is a manager's decision and as a small organisation it may be difficult to find any candidates for more specialist roles without advertising externally some roles are advertised internally only and when posts are advertised externally internal candidates are able to apply.

An employee queried if the stat days for the Christmas shutdown had been allocated –

KS replied that the days had already been added to annual leave balances and are now on SAP ready for employees to book off. A reminder of the note sent out about booking these is below.

“As you will be aware the Council have agreed to shutdown the Council Offices for the Christmas period this year from 4pm on Christmas Eve, reopening on 2 January. There are 3 Statutory Days over this period: 27 December, 30 December and 31 December. The additional annual leave for the extra Stat Day has now been added to leave allocations on SAP. Please remind employees that all Stat Days must be booked as leave on SAP (where they fall on normal working days) This should be done by 1st December.”

It was raised that signs in the car park opposite the district council offices directing people to the shops may be useful for members of the public – This will be raised with the parking team

LE acknowledged all of the good work the social group are currently doing

HS thanked members of SCF as this will be her last meeting before leaving NHDC – the members of the SCF wished **HS** luck for the future.

The SCF are currently looking for a new rep, if you are interested please email the SCF inbox: SCF@north-herts.gov.uk

5. Chair of next meeting

Dee Levitt

Have something to say?

If you have an issue 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 extension):

Lea Ellis #4830 - Community Engagement team based on Floor 3

Ben Glover #4248 - Planning team based on Floor 3

Emma Jellis #4312 - MSU team based on Floor 4

James Watson #4209 - Commercial team based on Floor 4

Christina Corr #4325 - Senior Technical Officer R&B team based on Floor 5

The SCF are currently looking for a new rep, if you are interested please email the SCF inbox: SCF@north-herts.gov.uk