

Outcome of consultation for the Review of Park Services

INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the outcome of the formal consultation for the proposed changes to the Parks Service. Formal consultation took place with affected staff and Trade Unions between Monday 7th October 2019 and Tuesday 5th November 2019.

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

The proposals consulted on were:

1. Post deletions

Building Maintenance Assistant
Gardener Grounds person
Charge Hand

2. New posts

Skilled Gardener
Skilled Grounds person/ Greenkeeper
Team Leader

3. Revised job descriptions

Assistant Operations Support Officer - Buildings & Events
Assistant Operations Support Officer - Sports & Concessions
Gardener Grounds person
Grounds Maintenance Supervisor
Grounds Maintenance Operative
Parks Infrastructure Maintenance Technician
Specialist Machine Operator

4. Skilled posts to be introduced to provide better progression opportunities and address the loss of core horticultural/sector skills.

5. A dedicated team to be introduced specifically for grass cutting within the public realm (highway verges & open space) which will be programmed to maximize productivity at times of high grass vigor by the introduction of a 48hr working week for sixteen weeks March – June, With longer breaks to minimize staff fatigue.

6. Compliance testing of parks buildings will be procured through the newly awarded corporate contract.

7. The use of Parks employees undertaking games attendants and cleaning duties on overtime will no longer be permitted.

8. A dedicated parks litter crew will be reintroduced Monday – Friday to ensure that parks remain at an acceptable standard. Litter picking of

APPENDIX C

parks at weekends/bank holidays during the busy summer months will be commissioned via Street cleansing.

9. Safety inspections of the council's play facilities will be commissioned via a third party provider.

Consultation comments and questions were received from members of staff at both the staff briefing (see below) and the 1 to 1 individual meetings, held in October 2019. All questions were responded to by the Greenspace Manager and, where appropriate, HR was consulted before a full response to questions could be made.

Staff briefing questions:

1. We still finish off early on a Friday so I can't see the point of having an hour off for lunch as the work is being done presently, it will cause disruption. People are pulled off their work to do other jobs. The extra workers need to be in early to get the grass cut. There is not enough time to cut the grass in the time that is available.

Answer

Employees will be given the opportunity to vote on whether they would like to retain the half hour lunch break or return to an hour break. The majority consensus will be implemented.

2. What support will there be on Saturdays? How will we access the office to get keys?

Answer

Team Leaders required to work will be given access as required and contact details of callout officers and the out of hour's mechanic.

3. The verges group, will their holidays be restricted during March – June?

Answer

Yes, dependant on the needs of the service.

Alternative proposals were considered being:

1. Retaining the current half hour lunch break.

A ballot was conducted during the consultation period with the current work force. In the questionnaire, the workforce were given the choice between retaining their 30 minute lunch break or change to a 1 hour lunch break. Thirty four Questionnaires were sent out either in person or by post, and twenty-seven of them were returned. The results are as follows;

Twenty six members of the workforce voted to retain their 30-minute lunch break.

One member of the workforce voted to change to a 1-hour lunch break.

So from the results, it is clear that the vast majority of the workforce would like to retain their 30 minute lunch break.

2. Retain the Playground inspections in house by providing appropriate IT equipment and software.

We will not look to outsource the playground inspections until we have completed a full cost/benefit analysis, which will include the possibility of changing our current software provider and also our current mobile tablet solution.

PROPOSAL TO COMMITTEE

Having given meaningful consideration to the consultation comments received, the proposal to Administration & Regulation Committee will be as set out in the OCA, which was distributed on Thursdays 3rd October 2019 with the two above amendments.

NEXT STEPS

Following the publication of the Committee decision on Wednesday 18th December 2019, implementation of the proposals will commence immediately.

A finalised Implementation Plan will be issued the week commencing 23rd December 2019.

Employees may be required to attend a meeting, week beginning Monday 6th January 2020, to confirm that their posts are at risk of redundancy.

Slotting-in

Slotting will be used where a new post is between 70% and 100% the same as the current post. Slotting-in will be detailed in the implementation plan.

Ring fencing

Employees may be given the opportunity to apply for and interview for posts up to a maximum of two grades higher. Ring fencing arrangements will be detailed in the implementation plan.

Job Matching

Job matching is a comparison exercise based on the content of a job description, enhanced by supporting information in both the 'context' and 'person specification'.

Implementation will be completed and the new structure will be in place from 31 March 2020 (subject to the respective employees' contractual notice periods).