

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD AT DARWIN CENTRE MANAGEMENT SUITE  
ON 5 OCTOBER 2022**

**PRESENT**

**Councillors** Mosley (Chairman) J Dean, Mrs P Moseley & A Phillips  
**Staff** M Cox, A Davies, A Hall, M Harris, M Preece & M Pugh

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Head of Operations) & Andy Watkin (Head of Finance); Clare Osborne & Ash Silverstone (Unison Representatives)

**01/22 APOLOGIES**

Ahead of the meeting both Councillors Vasmer & Wagner gave their apologies and requested that alternative representation be sought as they had difficulties attending meetings at this time. The Town Clerk would raise this with the Liberal Democrat Group Leader.

**02/22 INTRODUCTIONS**

All those present introduced themselves.

**03/22 NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was noted that the last meeting had been inquorate, therefore only informal notes were taken; these had been circulated, but no actions had been progressed.

**04/44 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**4.1 Policies**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on progress of the first tranche of policies; these had been presented to the JCC, circulated to staff and Unions ahead of review and recommendations for approval by the Personnel Committee before final ratification to Full Council.

The Deputy Town Clerk now presented the second tranche of policies for review by the JCC; these included:

- Disciplinary Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy Statement
- Job Evaluation Policy
- Menopause Policy
- Pensions and Retirement Policy
- Training and Development Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Policy
- Lone Worker Policy
- Flexi-time Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Paternity Leave

Councillor Mrs Moseley enquired whether Paternity Leave dealt with adoption leave; the Deputy Town Clerk reported that this had been dealt with in the Adoption Policy.

The Deputy Town Clerk detailed the timetable for approval. Once these had been adopted the Staff Handbook would be updated.

#### **4.2 Annual Performance Appraisal**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that formal appraisals had not taken place over the last couple of years due to COVID but it was time to review arrangements. She had circulated a draft appraisal document that was hoped to reflect all staff within the organisation. The process would involve a briefing for all line managers who undertake appraisals.

Unison Representatives asked for the process to be put on hold until such time that they could have a discussion with the Deputy Town Clerk as they had a few comments about the framing of some questions following comments from their members. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to make contact and arrange a convenient time to meet.

#### **4.3 Review of Staff Mileage, Allowances & Car Parking Arrangements**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on the proposed review of staff mileage and those receiving allowances, the provision of pool cars and the review of any contracts that have free parking in light of the Council's move to St Johns Hill. The Senior Management Team would shortly be meeting to discuss staff related issues in association with the office move. It was envisaged that there would be a number of reviews but would help develop an overall Travel Plan for the Town Council.

#### **4.4 JCC Representation**

The Town Clerk enquired whether the staff representatives had managed to consider how they will address the lack of representation of both women and admin staff and the representation was somewhat biased towards the male operational staff. It wasn't the fact that the representatives weren't approachable, more that female staff did not feel comfortable in approaching them with any female issues.

Councillor Dean suggested that maybe there could be a female representative with observer status if female issues arose. Unison suggested that representation needed to reflect the demographics of the workforce. It was agreed a more detailed discussion take place at the next meeting so that any amendments to the Terms of Reference could be amended ahead of next year's voting.

#### **4.5 Staff Security Alarms**

The Town Clerk reported that following on from the last meeting the Health & Safety Officer had reviewed options and presented costs for Personal Alarms. Only one option was suggested and given there were 50 members of staff on the list costs were high. There needed to be a realistic plan of usage that not only included operational staff but also some admin staff and the senior management team who too were often loan workers attending council meetings and there needed to be assurances that any alarms would be used and taken on site as Council had previously purchased other personal security measures which were not readily used.

The Unison Rep reported Shropshire Council's proposals to issue ID badges that have a panic alarm mechanism built in; he would provide details. It was agreed that the Health & Safety Officer undertake further research and come back to the next Committee.

#### **4.6 Vexatious Complaints Policy & Land Disposal Policy**

Staff Representatives asked for an update on Council adopting a Vexatious Complaints Policy and a Land Disposal Policy. They had made reference to the Greenfields Issue and in particular a radio interview by a Councillor in which the question was asked about a demand for a Vote of Confidence in the Town Clerk and Leader to be put and the Councillor not dismissing the fact. Staff Representatives reported on the demoralising effect this has on the whole of the workforce and the lack of proactivity of the Council in doing more to protect staff.

Unison Representatives reported on representations they had received from their members; the buck didn't stop with officers as they didn't have the final say; members did.

The Leader reported on recent events relating to Greenfields. There had been a number of references on social media which were libellous and fundamentally untrue. Members were fair game in criticism, but staff were not. There was a meeting with

the Greenfields Community Group the following week; this would be addressed. Unison Representatives suggested a form of words that could be used should public instances happened again. It was agreed that the Group Leaders would come up with a form of words to be used.

The Town Clerk reported that the policies mentioned were to be reviewed by a Working Party with a view to them being adopted by Full Council in November.

## **05/22 ITEMS RAISED BY STAFF REPRESENTATIVES**

### **5.1 Security in the Park**

The Town Clerk reported that Security staff had been patrolling the park since the middle of April and feedback had been excellent from staff, users of the park and local residents. The Team was providing weekly updates on activity. There were still serious issues that were having to be addressed but overall, the engagement had been good.

Since the beginning of August, the level of security had been increased and activity expanded to include Taxi Marshalling on Friday and Saturdays as the Safer Streets Bid to the Home Office had been successful. The Town Clerk had been working on a programme of monitoring progress and developing a form of cost benefit analysis to inform an Exit Strategy for the initiative. This wasn't something that could be addressed completely but it was how to create a situation that was managed.

The Leader of the Council was keen that this shouldn't just displace the problems into outlying residential areas; this was something that the Town Clerk had been looking at and the additional funding had allowed for expansion of locations to address potential displacement.

Staff Representatives reported on the staff morale of both Quarry and Toilet Staff as a result of the Security staff being in the area; they engaged well with staff and were able to address issues that arose quickly. The Health & Safety Officer had also noticed a reduction in Repair & Maintenance Budgets as there had been less ASB and vandalism in the park.

### **5.2 Horticultural Service Level Agreement**

Staff Representatives asked whether there had been any further discussions with Shropshire Council about the SLA which ends in 2025. The Town Clerk had advised that there had not been any further discussions than those that had been reported on.

### **5.3 Winter Maintenance**

Staff Representatives asked whether there had been any discussions about the Town Council being involved in Winter Maintenance. The Town Clerk reported on discussions with the Head of Highways about possible joint working, but nothing had come of it and they had subsequently reported that all Winter Maintenance was being undertaken by their Highways Contractor. Both Staff Representatives and Members reported on various anomalies to winter maintenance in the town; namely the salting of pedestrian bridges over the River Severn which needed to be done when primary gritting routes were done and not secondary routes due to the micro-climate on the river. Officers reported that these routes were once done by the Town Council at rates reported to be less than the primary Highways Contractor. The Town Clerk would speak to the Head of Highways again.

### **06/22 SANITARY PRODUCTS IN PUBLIC TOILETS**

It was reported that Councillor Dartnall was to propose the provision of free sanitary ware in all Town Council owned toilets (both public & private) and the matter was likely to be debated. Staff Representatives detailed the concerns of toilet cleansing operatives and the behaviour and habits of some patrons of public toilets who took to hiding drugs paraphernalia in sanitary ware within the toilets; this posed a risk to both the public and staff. The Unison Representatives advised that conversations with Stoke Council might be useful as they provided sanitary products in all of their public toilets and contacting the Period Power Charity might be helpful.

### **07/22 MOVE TO ST JOHNS HILL**

The Town Clerk reported that following discussions with a Councillor Working Group, improvement plans were drawn up and these have gone out to tender and proposals received. Council discussed a preferred tenderer and a budget, and it is hoped that the Working Group can be reconvened with a view to commissioning works and moving in by early February. The Working Group had looked at a number of green initiatives including lining the walls, installing insulation and secondary glazing to make the building as energy efficient as possible

### **08/22 NEXT MEETING DATE**

25<sup>th</sup> January 2023