

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD AT DARWIN CENTRE MANAGEMENT SUITE & VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON 6 OCTOBER 2021**

PRESENT

Councillors Dean, Mrs Moseley & Mosley (Chairman)

Staff M Cox, M Harris, R Jones, A Purnell, M Preece & M Pugh

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Andy Watkin (Responsible Financial Officer); Sam Warburton (GMB Representative), Ash Silverstone (Unison Representative)

APOLOGIES

Councillors Vasmer & Wagner; Gary Farmer (Head of Operations)

01/21 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in Shropshire Council should any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council arise.

02/21 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 28th January 2020 were submitted as circulated and read.

It was AGREED that:

The Minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 28th January 2020 be signed as a true and accurate record

03/21 MATTERS ARISING

Mike Pugh raised the fact that staff did not receive a response to the questions raised by Gary Farmer at the meeting. The Chairman felt he could not comment on further but instead wished to reiterate a willingness for the committee to work more collaboratively together.

04/21 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference of the Joint Consultative Committee had been circulated to all new members of the Committee. These had been agreed by Council on the 17th May 2021

A number of queries were raised:

- Staff wished to look to staying on for a 2-year term with three out of the six changing annually; this would allow for some element of continuity;
- A request was made for reference to health and well-being to be included in the Terms of Reference;
- Senior Management Team wished to emphasise the need to consult with them in good time of a meeting rather than at the meeting expecting them to know the answer.

The Town Clerk would look to amending the Terms of Reference in consultation with staff and refer them back to Council for ratification.

05/21 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

It was noted that Councillors Dean, Moseley, Mosley, Phillips, Vasmer & Wagner had been appointed to represent the elected members with Mike Cox, Mark Harris, Ruth Jones, Mark Preece, Adam Purnell and Mike Pugh representing the work force. GMB & Unison representatives would form the remainder of the Committee with the Senior Management Team in attendance to advise the Council.

06/21 CHAIRMANSHIP

It was noted that in accordance with the Terms of Reference, chairmanship rotated between Council employees and Council members. This municipal year was the turn of the Council members and Council had already agreed that Councillor Mosley would act as Chairman.

07/21 GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Chairman expressed his desire to involve staff for the good of all and there had been a change in outlook for members to garner a spirit of co-operation and transparency. There was the ability to have a true and frank discussion on any matter.

The Town Clerk reported on her meeting with the staff representatives stressing that any matters could be discussed but it was important for the committee to be informed on what was to be discussed rather than past experiences where matters for discussion had not been

clear on the agenda or had been tabled on the day. Members of the Senior Management Team were happy to help shape any items for the agenda to maximise the opportunity for discussion.

Additionally the Town Clerk stressed that the Joint Consultative Committee did not have any powers to make decision; therefore any potential action arising from this would have to be referred back to Council for ratification.

Staff members recognised that there was a need for them to communicate broadly with other members of staff. Line Managers would receive the minutes as of course so that they can cascade information to their teams.

08/21 ITEMS RAISED BY COUNCIL

- (i) **Visioning Exercise** – The Council had agreed to undertake a visioning exercise which would include both members and staff. Due to continued COVID pressures Council had agreed to postpone it until the Spring. It was however possible for the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to start to engage with staff on their vision for the Council ahead of the Councillor Visioning exercise in the Spring. Mike Cox saw this as a good opportunity for staff to really understand members' Corporate Plan and they were best placed to help with a SWOT Analysis of the organisation.
- (ii) **Review of Mileage and Staff Travel** – The Personnel Committee and the Climate Emergency Committee were keen to review the current arrangements for staff travel in the course of their work. Mileage claims formed part of the Council's Carbon calculations and ways that the Council can take to encourage more active forms of travel was necessary, including provision of electric vehicles including electric bikes, salary sacrifice schemes and the necessary infrastructure for storage and charging was essential. The Deputy Town Clerk stressed that there would be full consultation if there was a likelihood of any changes to terms and conditions; this would include engagement with the unions. The Head of Resources asked that consideration of different technology in work programmes should also be explored; why drive somewhere for the sake of it when there might be a more appropriate route. The Chairman was in agreement with such an approach and he had highlighted this meeting; the first hybrid meeting of the Council as an example.

09/21 ITEMS RAISED BY STAFF

Use of Social Media by Staff & Members – Mark Harris raised matters relating to Council Members and Staff communicating on social media and the potential public perception that this constituted a decision of Council. The Head of Resources also raised this as he had recently received an insurance claim in which it was stated that a Councillor had publicly deemed an item of play equipment as unsafe. The Chairman reported that a number of

Councillors did actively use social media and they had a responsibility to talk on social media with the public they served. The Town Clerk also enforced the need for good Council engagement; she had a large social media following and was often asked by followers to comment. On the whole the Council had a well-respected presence on social media. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that she was currently undertaking a review of policies and would look to developing guidelines for the use of social media for both staff and members; both union representatives were happy to help give commentary on any new or changed policies.

10/21 MEETING DATES

12th January 2022

6th April 2022