

## **SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

### **SLA WORKING GROUP HELD AT LIVESEY HOUSE**

**13 FEBRUARY 2024**

#### **PRESENT**

Councillors Pam Moseley, Alan Mosley & Alex Wagner

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Operations Manager)

#### **APOLOGIES**

Councillors Julian Dean & Rob Wilson; Andy Watkin (Head of Resources) & Danny Powell (Operations Manager)

#### **1 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

It was reported that the Working Group was convened as a result of discussions from Full Council. Members discussed the scope of works required.

#### **AGREED**

That the following Terms of Reference be set:

1. Councillors Dean, Moseley, Mosley, Wagner & Wilson make up the SLA Working Group
2. The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Head of Resources and two Acting Operations Managers support the delivery of the SLA Working Group
3. Notes of the SLA Working Group be presented and considered by Finance & General Purpose Committee
4. The SLA Working Group is designed to be a two-way process between members and officers in the negotiation of a future SLA
5. The SLA Working Group shall investigate how a collective approach to the management of horticultural services within the town can continue
6. The SLA Working Group shall explore other options of ensuring that wider public services are continued within the town

#### **2 UPDATE ON CURRENT SLA ARRANGEMENTS**

The Town Clerk gave an overview and rationale on how the Horticultural SLA was set in 2010. This was on the backdrop that SABC had always undertook Highways work for the County Council since the overall responsibilities for Highways were transferred to the County Council in the early 1970s. The Unitary Council Implementation Executive had discussed what the service delivery functions of the Town Council would be in 2008 and that partnership arrangements on managing horticultural practices was the best route to take. Costs of the SLA were taken from the Borough Council budget book 2008/2009 and the

overall plan was that the collective Town & Unitary Precept would be no different to the County/Borough Council Precept.

### **3 PLANS FOR NEGOTIATION OF SLA EFFECTIVE 1 APRIL 2025**

The Town Clerk & RFO had met with the Assistant Directors of Highways & Communities to discuss the way forward and it was acknowledged that there were no officers within Shropshire Council who were around at the time of the preparation of the SLA and did not know the reasoning for the arrangements. The Town Clerk, RFO & Contracts & Arb Officer in the Town Council were involved in that process during 2010 as well as the discussions on reducing the requirements of the SLA in 2015.

The Director of Highways advised that there were queries raised through Audit & Procurement regarding the contract and value of money evaluation. He had spoken with the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) about undertaking a piece of work to better understand the contractual relationship between Unitary & Town Council. It was however recognised that this was a unique relationship where an upper tier authority contracted with a lower tier authority.

APSE were due to start the work in early March and can work at pace. Details of our timeline for considering the future of the SLA has been shared with the Director of Highways.

The need to provide a rich data source of work undertaken has been discussed with the Director of Highways and Officers were currently working with the Confirm System at Shropshire Council to see how SLA work could be captured in the same way their other contractors did.

### **4 OTHER SERVICES**

Members discussed the financial situation that Shropshire Council found itself in and the potential threat of non-statutory service being reduced or even deleted. It was noted that there were a number of high profile non-statutory services in the town. These had been discussed at both the Visioning Exercise and also by an officer group and it would be worth having further discussion about the Town Council's future involvement in such,

### **5 ACTIONS**

- (i) Prepare a report on progress in negotiations for the next meeting**
- (ii) Prepare a report on what other services/functions the Town Council might have an interest in for the next meeting**

### **6 FUTURE MEETING DATES**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 5pm at Livesey House**