

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD AT LIVESEY HOUSE, 7 ST JOHNS HILL
ON 12 JULY 2023

PRESENT

Councillors A Mosley, R Dartnall, J Dean, P Moseley, & A Phillips

Staff M Cox, A Davies, A Hall, M Harris, M Preece

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager) Danny Powell (Acting Operations Manager) Andy Watkin (Head of Resources) and Claire Osborne (Unison)

01/23 APOLOGIES

Resolved:

That apologies be accepted from Councillor Pardy; Amanda Spencer & Mike Pugh and Ash Silverstone

02/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

03/23 NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Notes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023 had been circulated prior to the meeting and agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

04/23 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Review of staff mileage including allowances and provision of pool cars

The Deputy Town Clerk had not had an opportunity to begin the review of Mileage Allowances and Pool Cars due to conflicting priorities.

(ii) Staff Security Alarms

The Operations Managers had been reviewing a potential panic alarm which operated by blue-toothing to a mobile phone. This would allow a series of mobile numbers to be contacted detailing the exact location of where the alarm was triggered. The thoughts of the Team Managers would be considered.

(iii) **Visioning Exercise**

A survey around the visioning exercise had been circulated to all staff to complete. The Survey also offered the opportunity to be involved in staff sessions. Staff representatives reported that staff felt involved in the process and every member of staff had the opportunity to feed into the process.

(iv) **Union Recognition**

The Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk had met with Unison Representatives regarding their wish to seek formal recognition status; they had presented a draft agreement. This was however principal council specific and Town Council officers had highlighted areas that required amendment. The current arrangements of the JCC also needed to be reflected in the agreement rather than a suggestion of a Committee which was purely represented by Union personnel. Unison Representatives agreed to take the agreement away and review ahead of any formal presentation to the JCC and Council.

05/23 ITEMS RAISED BY THE COUNCIL

It was reported that the following policies had been forwarded to Unison for review ahead of presentation to the JCC in Autumn:

- Capability Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Flexi-time Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Job Evaluation Policy
- No-Smoking Policy
- Pensions and Retirement Policy

This represented the final group of policies for review before the whole process of regular review commenced.

Mike Cox requested that the Deputy Town Clerk meet with the representatives ahead of the next meeting to go through any areas of concern or requests for amendment that the representatives had.

Representatives asked that the following areas be considered:

- The inclusion of Vapes in the smoking policy;
- Amendments to the starting time to 7am in the Flexi-time policy.

06/23 ITEMS RAISED FROM STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

- (i) **Quarry Depot Update** – staff sought an update as to long-term improvements. It was reported that the Working Group had met and considered broader matters relating to the park. This had now been included in the Visioning Exercise for prioritisation. Staff will be involved in any redevelopment plans.

(ii) **Update on Policies** – Representative asked for a review on the following policies:

a) **Lone Working** – Lone working had already been reviewed;

b) **Staff Appraisal** – Staff Appraisals was an employment process and as such did not require a policy. The Deputy Town Clerk had already issued guidance on the preparation and review process to all staff and Line Managers.

(iii) **“Emergency Cover”**

Mark Harris reported that on Saturday 1st July the Cleansing Operative had the Electric Mule breakdown in the Quarry. He tried to call a number of individuals – but this didn’t prevent the mule (value £16,000) being left in the open for two nights. He questioned what the process was if a member of staff had such an emergency.

Operations Managers reiterated instructions which had been sent out by the Head of Operations in November 2022 about such an emergency. This would be re-issued to all operational staff.

(iv) **General Communication following the Head of Operation’s retirement**

Andy Davies reported that the Wardens felt there was no-one available to answer any queries they had or voice their concerns to since he had retired.

It was pointed out that pre-COVID there had never been a senior manager based at the Weeping Cross Depot and the purpose of the Team Managers was to be the conduit between the staff in their responsibility and the senior managers.

(v) **Project Communication**

Andy Davies expressed concern about the poor levels of communication with senior officers and staff particularly around projects. He referenced projects on Kynaston Road Recreation Ground and the fact that the Community Centre knew more about Council activity than they did.

The Projects Manager reported on progress of various projects which have previously been reported at Team Managers meetings. Staff would be updated once projects were likely to be transferred into core management and maintenance.

(vi) **Recent Consultants Visit**

Andy Davies asked why the Wardens’ Vehicle Tracker Information had been supplied to the Consultant and why this request for information had not been consistently applied across other Teams within the organisation.

The Town Clerk advised that the Consultant had asked for various parcels of information about various teams to assist him in his understanding of the organisation; this request had not been unique to the Wardens.

The Leader of the Council asked what the collective view of the staff had been regarding the Consultant's visit. All advised that they had found him very knowledgeable of the sector and grounds maintenance in particular. He had been willing to listen to anyone who had anything to say and they all felt involved in the process.

07/23 STAFF ELECTIONS

It was reported that this would be Mark Harris, Mark Preece and Mike Cox's last meetings as their 2-year term had finished. The process would commence to recruit three new members of staff for a 2-year term. It was hoped that representation might reflect the gender balance as well as representation across all departments without the need to create some forced representations. The Town Clerk would commence the process and report back any areas of concern.

08/23 NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 4th October 2023