

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD AT LIVESEY HOUSE, 7 ST JOHNS HILL
ON 9 APRIL 2025

PRESENT

Councillors Elisabeth Addams, Julian Dean, Pam Moseley & Alan Mosley
Staff Adam Clifford, Andy Hall (Chair), Sally Nicholson, Mike Pugh and Ian Thorpe
Union David Burton (Unison)

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Clare Turner (Deputy Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager) Danny Powell (Acting Operations Manager) and Andy Watkin (Head of Resources)

09/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Those twin-hatted Councillors declared an interest in Shropshire Council.

10/24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Notes of the meeting held on 2 October 2024 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee held on 2 October 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

11/24 MATTERS ARISING

Union Recognition

The Town Clerk reported that amendments to the draft Recognition agreement were still outstanding and suggested that she and the Unison Rep meet to discuss amendments. David was happy to meet up.

12/24 ITEMS RAISED BY THE COUNCIL

(i) Implementation of Electronic Payslips

The RFO reported that he and the Office Manager had been implementing the rollout of electronic payslips from the April pay. They had held sessions to support staff in accessing

their payslips on-line. The majority of staff were sorted. It was reported that one member of staff hadn't access to emails so support was being provided and if necessary, paper payslips would be arranged. There was a member of the admin team who was struggling accessing the system; this was being looked at by the Office Manager.

(ii) Health & Safety

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that she had been tasked by the Town Clerk to look into the Council's Health & Safety Policies and Procedures. She was working with the H&S Officer and Operations Manager to develop a work programme, and discussions were taking place about how this could be disseminated to staff. From now on Health & Safety will be a standing item on JCC and Operational Team Manager Meetings.

(iii) Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that new legislation was enacted in October 2024 and there was a requirement to develop a Policy; this would be brought to a future JCC Meeting.

(iv) SLA

The Leader asked the Town Clerk to give an overview of the renewal of the Horticultural Service Contract. The Town Clerk reported that staff had been working with Shropshire Council Officers over the last 12-18 months about renewal plans. A Cabinet Resolution determined a new delegation agreement to be established for all existing services except for the Golf Course. Work had been ongoing in reviewing Shropshire Council's mapping system, developing a new Operational Specification and agreeing a formalised Delegation Agreement. Officers were becoming frustrated by the lack of progress. It had been suggested that the Leader of the main groups write to the Leader & Chief Executive about lack of progress; the Town Clerk had drafted a letter for them to consider.

13/24 ITEMS RAISED FROM STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

(i) Complementary Tickets

Mike Pugh raised a request from the Weeping Cross Depot that there needed to be an agreed process to the fair and agreed allocation of any complimentary tickets to events that relates to all staff employed by STC, not just given to the chosen few and nobody else knowing anything about them. Mike reported that he had received the most grief he had in his working career from staff that this was unfair, and tickets were only given to a clique.

The Town Clerk reported on the allocation of Pantomime Tickets. Traditionally she received ten tickets for the Mayor and Town Clerk for the Press Night evening. The purpose of the ticket allocation was to become ambassadors for the Town Council, network with those present and promote the panto; this was crucial in ensuring the panto was a success and converted the theatre from being a subsidy requiring service to one that washes its face. These had been allocated to members of the administration team to attend the Press Night evening of the Pantomime; these were members of the team who undertook the responsibility for the Council's various social media platforms.

The Town Clerk reported that all ticket allocations had been registered under the Council's Interests and Gifts Policy.

Mike Pugh had raised this a few years ago and all names were put in a ballot, feedback had been received that those operational staff who attended were not willing to engage with other Town Council Staff and did not wish to network with partners and others.

The Town Clerk also raised the fact that a number of operational staff received Angling Passes for the fisheries and was not aware of any registrations of interest. She also detailed a number of requests she had authorised for travel and accommodation for operational staff to attend Contractor Away Days. She also reported on the many invitations she received to attend cultural activities and dinners to represent the Council; all of which had been declared on the Gifts Register.

Councillor Addams felt it was not fair to suggest that Weeping Cross staff would know how to be ambassadors.

Councillor Mosley expressed concerns about (i) the perceived dissonance between Weeping Cross Staff and Livesey House Staff and (ii) the need for a report as to who gets invites to what and where in the interests of openness and transparency and that a report should go to the Finance & General-Purpose Committee.

The Town Clerk reported that she had worked hard to address this perceived dissonance between Weeping Cross Staff and Livesey House Staff, ensuring that all Weeping Cross Staff had been invited to activities that Livesey House Staff had organised; engagement remained poor. She attended quarterly staff meetings at all depots and had continued to operate an open-door policy should staff wish to raise anything. She sought suggestions from Weeping Cross Representatives on how relations could be improved.

The Operations Manager stressed that only 50% of the operational workforce worked from Weeping Cross and there were other Depots where those staff needed a voice. The Town Clerk reported that Livesey House Staff had good engagement with the Quarry & Sports Village Depots and there had not been any issues raised.

The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to undertake a piece of work around staff engagement.

(ii) Adherence to Policy

Mike Pugh asked whether anybody had the authority not to follow the Council Policy on any issue and if they do is there a clear and published process that needs to be followed?

The Chairman asked whether this related to a certain person and a specific policy. Mike reported that this was not his question; it was from two members of staff at Weeping Cross and he did not know the content.

The Town Clerk advised that nobody had the authority to not follow Council Policy.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had Whistleblowing and Grievance Policies should staff wish to raise anything with the Council; this would assist in the review of policies. Without any specifics to the question, it was difficult to give an informed

answer. She also informed that if anything related to a personnel matter and any individual the JCC was definitely not the route to raise this and it would be inappropriate to discuss individuals as part of this meeting.

The Unison Representative reported that no one policy is set in stone and there was always room for flexibility as long as the spirit of the Policy is maintained. He advised that Health & Safety Law trumped Employment Law every time.

(iii) Invitation to the Leader

Mike Pugh asked that the Leader visit Weeping Cross as he had previously promised. Councillor Mosley advised that he was happy to attend any depot if they sent him an invitation. He did however advise that during the pre-election period in the run up to elections, the invitation would also have to be extended to the Leaders of the Conservative, Green and Liberal Democrat Groups plus other parties so as not to be seen to giving an unfair advantage to any one party.

General Commentary

The Town Clerk raised concern about the format of the questions raised. Legislation required any item on an agenda had to detail business to be transacted so that members were clear on what they were asked to consider; these requests didn't. It had previously been established that any item raised had to be specific with a suggested solution to consider. The Office Manager had requested further information for the items raised but there was a reluctance on behalf of the Representative to expand with any detail. Future Items raised would not be put onto the agenda unless they followed the established practice.

Councillor Dean felt that the role of the JCC was to review the organisation in a general way and not relate to individual related matters; these items were borderline individual related.

14/24 NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be 2 July 2025