



**COUNCIL MANAGER'S REPORT  
FOR CONSIDERATION AT  
COUNCIL MEETING ON 25.01.2022  
FC7/69**

### **Market Officer Role**

I prepared a task paper and a job description in preparation to making the offer of employment to our newly recruited market officer. After due consideration this offer was not accepted.

### **Councillor vacancies and induction**

The new councillor welcome packs were prepared by our Senior Market & Support Co-ordinator (SM&SC). I have issued a new councillor welcome letter and conducted a new councillor introduction meeting.

The new vacancies for Neston and Little Neston Ward have been advertised and issued to CWaC. CWaC have notified that no elections were called. Council is now able to co-opt members to these wards.

### **External Consultant for Strategic and Staff Reviews**

I have drafted with assistance, and put together specifications. Committee Chairs were consulted. I have had a positive meeting with the chairs. I have researched for suitable consultants and contractors to undertake this task and sent out invitations to five consultants inviting them to quote.

### **Covid 19 and Omicron**

Reading implementing and disseminating the latest government information to our councillors and staff. I have kept everyone up to date as the latest guidance arrives.

### **Data Protection**

I have received and read the post Brexit Data Protection Autumn 2021 update. A 100-page data protection consultation ended in November 2021; the results of the feedback remain undetermined. The proposals will change how we identify which FOI requests we need should respond to. Some policies and procedures can be taken now. The most significant change if implemented, will be with requirement to implement a privacy management programme. Tool kits and templates are expected. Our DPO anticipates that it will be very time-consuming to implement the new rules. The Data Protection Action amendments will have implications for other adopted policies, such as the privacy policy. With our Data Protection Officer JDH, I have updated and reviewed the council's Data Protection action plan, and undertaken a full review in line with the known updates, of the council's current data protection policies and procedures. New policies for subject access complaints and a council recording (to cover SO 3.13 & 3.14) along with appropriate signage has been prepared. The DPO advised that Neston are ahead of most other councils and was 'very good' with their actions and commented on the professionalism of our IT contractor. Data protection and cyber security refresher training will be arranged for our staff at a total cost of £200 (£25 each) and cyber training for all of our councillors is to be arranged via our IT consultant.

In brief, there are Government proposals to change the Data Protection Act 2018 - a review of those items of most relevance to local councils has taken place including:  
1) Proposal for introducing Privacy Management Programmes (PMPs).

- 2) Introducing a 'vexatious' clause for Subject Access Requests (SARs), as is currently the case for the FOI regime.
- 3) Proposals for fees to be charged for relevant SARs (as is currently the case with FOI regime).
- 4) Amendments to data breach reporting.
- 5) Proposal for complainants to attempt to resolve their issues with the council using a new mandatory council SAR complaints process, BEFORE the data subject complains to the ICO.

Freedom of Information Requests:

- 1.) How to identify and deal with vexatious FOI requests including retaining evidence.
- 2.) How to identify when a fee can be charged and how to evidence the fee calculations.
- 3.) How to deal with unusual personal data categories e.g.) drone footage.

Data protection issues regarding virtual meetings, 3<sup>rd</sup> party recordings and council recordings.

### **Health and Safety**

I received a phone call from the Health and Safety Executive who conducted over the phone with me a 'spot check'. They were satisfied with our procedures and advised they were happy to sign us off.

Staff health and safety training; fire risk, manual handling and working at height has been arranged for 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (FOC).

### **HR Matters**

I have researched and received quotations for an HR matter and a prepared table of quotations for members to consider at the Resources and Policy committee. Following on from this, I have made arrangements for the appointments and completed forms.

I have conducted and recorded a number of welfare meetings with staff, these are scheduled at regular intervals.

I have dealt with the resignation of the temporary Market Officer and conducted an exit interview.

I have completed lengthy confidential reports and meetings.

### **Council and Local information**

*SLCC:* I have read the November editions of The Clerk magazine and the Clerks & Council Direct publications. And via email, membership updates and guidance.

*CWaC Public-i Updates:* I have overviewed the webcasts and shared the webcast where the decision regarding the reduction in the special expenses for Neston residents was agreed as a result of NTC taking over the Christmas Lights in the town.

*Surveys:* I have completed a number of T&PC related surveys received via emails and bulletins.

*About My Area:* I read the weekly newsletters and the regular bulletins that are sent out.

### **Volunteering Support Event**

I have attended at a Cheshire Community Action facilitated event. Resources and information were shared and an overview of how best to recruit and keep volunteers was provided. Draft templates for adaptation were shared. The mental health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering was strongly emphasised.

## **Future Communities 2021 - NALC**

I attended at this event. The event plenary sessions were; 'inspiring communities', 'levelling up through speaking up' and 'local council's looking forward'. Workshops attended; creating sustainable communities using neighbourhood plans, and encouraging community led action in coming together (Eden project and Big Lunch representatives). Sue Baxter, the outgoing NALC Chair presented inspirational speeches; civility and public life and another regarding councillor standards and how she sees that accountability in public life as critical.

## **IT system**

I have made some assessments and general enquiries with our IT consultant regarding our telephone systems, licences and apps following a viewing of the mini-Cloudy IT summit. Our current telephone systems meet our needs and are within our budget.

## **General information and updates**

Committee and sub-committee agendas and supporting papers: Details have been overviewed and discussed with our Governance & Operations Manager (G&OM). Agendas have been signed and distributed. I have discussed and helped to guide our SM&SC with town hall and market and trader issues. I have discussed issues with the senior agency staff.

Our Governance & Operations Manager has had discussions with The Mersey Forest regarding local projects and potential future council support, and updated our website with the latest information.

With some support from HR Go agency staff, our G&OM has relocated all staging parts from the vault which took a considerable amount of time.

Our G&OM has gathered the Christmas decorations from various locations over to receptions ready for decorating with support from our SM&SC. I took down all of the decorations at the town hall. Following discussion with IT consultant our G&OM agreed a timescale for website update, and she has worked with him to prepare a ghost page.

Our Finance Manager (FM) has prepared an analysis of the year end and project year-end figures. He has prepared draft precept figures, and met with the Precept Task and Finish Group. He is now preparing for the internal audit.

I cover respond to the council@ emails and telephone calls when our SM&SC is absent and our G&OM covers these when both myself and the SM&SC are absent.

## **Staff Matters**

Health and Safety; fire training and manual lifting training is being provided free of charge to our staff via our health & safety experts Terrain.

Weekly staff meetings continue to be conducted via zoom.

A request has been made to our G&OM and SM&SC, to add to their 'clerk's reports' details of strategic tasks that have taken place and matters that are of interest to councillors, not just routine matters.

**A Kunaj**  
**Council Manager**