

## **COUNCIL 19 October 2022**

### **Item 5 – Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

**Mr Richard Slater**

#### **Question**

With many officers working from home and others self-isolating from work, is the Council considering selling-off the Westfields office or Macclesfield Town Hall?

With changed working arrangements for staff, what guarantees can you offer that public money is being used well, and what measures do you have in place to ensure appropriate productivity? I do have concerns that working from home might lead to staff not being well supervised, with this potentially leading to them becoming unproductive

#### **Written Response**

The Council is currently reviewing its office accommodation needs. No decisions have been made on disposals.

The Covid pandemic required many businesses and organisations, including Cheshire East Council, to make immediate changes to how and where some staff work. However, many of our front-line staff continued to operate as they did before the pandemic. We are looking into more hybrid ways of working, which is necessary given the recruitment and retention challenges we are dealing with. Regular supervision between staff and their line managers is routine, irrespective of where and how staff work, and we have policies for dealing with performance.

**Mr Dave Poole**

#### **Question**

My questions relate to agenda item 12 – Member Code of Conduct

Can anyone confirm that members will still be able to talk to the press about decisions they don't agree with i.e. the winter gritting routes and can they be negative about the Council.

In a document by the Department for Communities and Local Government it clearly states what Cllr's must do about registering your personal interests. "Holders of the public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work". With this in mind, is it a good idea for potential Cllr's to have their nomination papers signed by a member of an organisation, when you know the organization has already lobbied the Council you are hoping to win a council seat, for support either financially or committed to promoting their event.

Is this reportable to the monitoring officer or higher authority?

## **Written Response**

Elected members can express their genuinely held views regarding council services, positive or negative, provided that these views are expressed in an appropriate manner and in accordance with relevant protocols, including the Members Code of Conduct.

The process for the declaration of interests by elected members, and the content of those declarations, is prescribed in legislation and the Members Code of Conduct. The appropriate course of action in any particular situation is very much dependent on the exact circumstances, therefore a hypothetical answer cannot be provided. If it is believed that an elected member has not correctly declared their interests, recourse is by way of a complaint to the Monitoring Officer.