Notes from the Clerk regarding the Communications Report
8 February 2024

Thank you for allowing me to look over the Communications Report prior to you presenting it to the Policy and Finance Committee.

Unfortunately, I am away on the date of the extra meeting convened to discuss this report which is unfortunate as I would have liked to be involved in the discussion and offer my input as the Clerk and someone who has worked in communications for most of my career before entering the world of local government.

As you will know, I had a few concerns about some of the content most of which I have discussed with Lesley and she may have fed back to you. My primary concern about the report is that it regularly references the council's aims and objectives (or value pillars) although the council has not established what these are. I am pleased to see that the second and third recommendations are to consider these and to think about a strategy for the council based on them. I believe that until that is done we cannot endorse or adopt policies that refer to them.

I must admit that on first reading it felt a little like an attack on how we have been working but I am assured that was not its intention and I have now read the report many times and appreciate the enormous amount of work that has gone into it. There are some inaccuracies and I have been asked by Lesley and David to point these out and make my comments which I have done on the attached. Some of the comments are merely my opinion but as I won't have the opportunity to raise them at the meeting I am doing so here.

I felt there was a section missing on the report about the regular daily engagement officers have with residents and other stakeholders. To most residents the council is simply the council and whether they deal with an officer or a member is irrelevant to them.

I also wanted to make you aware of what is already in motion, in part due to your recommendations.

Rec 7 - Jo and I attended training with Vision ICT this morning and plan to do more.
Rec 9 - Photos taken and ID cards ordered for members and officers to use when out and about.
Rec 8 – We have applied to Vision ICT to have an SSL certificate which I believe will answer your concerns regarding security and encryption. David R has done an excellent job of updating the website but we are keen to take this back in house so that it is clear who is responsible for updating its content and ensuring accessibility is checked scrupulously.

I hope that you will feel able to include me in future meetings of the Communications Group as it is vital we work together to improve our interactions with residents.