Eastleigh Town Council

Meeting Book: Personnel Committee

Date: 04 June 2025

Location: Community Room
Cable Works
83 Tinning Way
Eastleigh
SO50 9QH

townclerk@eastleigh-tc.gov.uk

29 MAY 2025
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: Cllr K O'Neill (Chair) Cllr W Irish, Cllr M Ashton, Cllr J Constable, Cllr G Richardson

Notice is hereby given that the **MEETING OF EASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** will be held at **4:30 pm** on **WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 2025** at **THE CABLEWORKS BUILDING, TINNING WAY, EASTLEIGH** which you are hereby summoned for the transaction of the business specified below.

Ruth Davies
Clerk to the Council

Admission of the Public and Media
Members of the Public and Media are welcome to attend in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting) Act 1960 Section 1 and to report on the meeting in accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

AGENDA

1 / 25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
To receive and approve apologies for absence.

2 / 25 REGISTER OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS
To receive any Declarations of Interest or Dispensations regarding any items the agenda.
(*Dispensation requests must be received in writing by the Clerk prior to the meeting)*

3 / 25 TO ELECT A VICE CHAIR FOR THE COMMITTEE
To receive nominations and appoint a committee Vice Chair

4 / 25 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS
To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 19 March 2025.
To receive an update from the Chair on matters arising from the minutes which are not included in the agenda.

5 / 25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
To open the meeting to allow members of the public to make comment on matters included in the agenda.

6 / 25 TO RECEIVE THE OFFICER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE FOR 2025 26

6 / 25 / 1 To **receive** for information the agreed programme of training and professional development put in place for 25 26 for the Council Officers.

6 / 25 / 2 To **note** the access to Council Hive and receive a quick demonstration of the information available via the training included subscription

7 / 25 TO REVIEW THE POLICIES DELEGATED TO THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

7 / 25 /1 To receive a schedule of policies to be reviewed and approved under the delegated authority of the committee and agree a timeline and process to complete the work associated

7 / 22 / 2 To review for approval the following policies in this meeting:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Sickness and Absence Policy

7 / 25 7 3 To confirm the effectiveness of the Employee Handbook in relation to the policies

8 / 25 TO RECEIVE THE RECRUITMENT FOR THE ASSET AND OPEN SPACE OFFICER

8 / 25 / 1 To **receive** and **note** the recruitment pack for the Asset and Open Space Officer and the associated recruitment timeline

8 / 25 / 2 To appoint the interview panel for the 15th July

9 / 25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for the 4 September 2025

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TownClerk@Eastleigh-TC.gov.uk

MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING OF EASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2025 AT 3:30 PM AT THE CABLEWORKS BUILDING, TINNING WAY, EASTLEIGH

Those Present: Cllr K O'Neill (Chair), Cllr W Irish (Vice Chair) Cllr T Campbell and Cllr G Richardson

In Attendance: Ruth Davies, Town Clerk

32 / 24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED: That the apologies for Cllr Constable and Cllr Ashton are approved.

33 / 24 REGISTER OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no interests declared

34 / 24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 5 February are **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.

The action carried by the Town Clerk to provide information on the Cycle to Work scheme was deferred.

35 / 24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

36 / 24 TO REVIEW FOR APPROVAL THE RECRUITMENT PROPOSAL FOR ASSET AND OPEN SPACE OFFICER

RESOLVED: That the committee **approved** the proposal and costs associated with re appointing the external recruiter for the role of Asset and Open Space Officer at a cost of **£1,740** plus advertising and interview travel costs and the indicative timeline

37 / 24 RECRUITMENT UPDATE ON ADMIN AND FINANCE ROLES

The committee received an update on the response to the job advertisement and confirmation of the interview process and timelines

38 / 24 VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

RESOLVED: That the committee **approved** the volunteer agreement with the following amends:

- Part 2: The Volunteer - Amend to say:
  "and abide by the council's equality, diversity and inclusivity policy"
  "Including appropriate safety wear as advised. To ensure your speech respects …"
  Replace representative with volunteer

39 / 24 / DATE OF NEXT MEETING

That the next meeting is scheduled for the 18 June 2024 and will be held at 4:30pm.
The meeting closed at 4:25pm.

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chair _____

Date _____

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Staff Training and Personal Development Support Package for Eastleigh Town Council

Supporting Eastleigh Town Council's staff to grow and develop as the council itself embarks on a journey of transformation to become one of the largest councils in England.

Proposal created on 27th May 2025

BREAKTHROUGH COMMUNICATIONS

SPECIALISTS IN CONNECTING COUNCILS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES

Hi there, it's great to meet you! We're Breakthrough Communications



We're passionate about connecting councils with their communities

Who we are and how we support local councils

We're Breakthrough Communications, a specialist communications company that helps local councils communicate and engage with their communities.

Our team have decades of combined professional experience in the world of communications and engagement - *and many of us have been councillors and clerks too.*

That means we really understand the importance of effective communication and engagement - as well as having unique insight into the world of parish and town councils. In short, our mission is to help supercharge your council's communications and engagement.

We're also proud be a NALC national partner for council communications and compliance advice, services and support.

Our work supporting local councils includes:

- Workshops and training courses in a range of technical and soft skill subjects covering all aspects of communications, community engagement and compliance.
- Tools and toolkits for local councils, providing on-demand access to a range of professional advice, support, guidance and resources that adds value to their work.
- We work directly with councils to enhance their community engagement work, and support them on specific projects.
- Together with our legal and professional partners, we provide local councils with GDPR and FOI training, advice, support and done-with-you services.

We're proud to be NALC's national partner for local council communications and compliance

nalc

Please note that this proposal and details contained herein is valid for 14 days. It is also subject to our Terms & Conditions, as well as a final plan of work being agreed.

Training and Development Support Proposal for Eastleigh Town Council: Staff Professional Development

Eastleigh Town Council stands at the threshold of a significant transformation. With devolution and asset transfer set to reshape its scale, scope, and responsibilities, staff are expected to take on greater leadership, coordination and strategic delivery roles.

Breakthrough Communications proposes a structured yet flexible training and development programme for officers, focused on strengthening team leadership capabilities across the organisation. This programme is designed to:

- Equip staff with the leadership, communication and inter-personal skills needed to support the council's evolving strategic objectives.
- Develop confidence in managing change and complexity.
- Foster even more collaborative working relationships between officers, with stakeholders and with elected members.
- Prepare teams to take ownership of service delivery in a more demanding operational environment.

Leadership and Personal Development Themes

To help with planning, we will be able to adapt the following areas of personal and professional development into both plenary/group sessions and for 1-2-1 personal development coaching sessions:

Area of Focus: Confident, Strategic Leadership

- Clarifying the distinction between leadership and management in a council context, and what this means for individual roles
- Building personal leadership identity and resilience
- Leading with authenticity through change and complexity
- Understanding the officer's leadership role within a member-led authority

Area of Focus: High-Performance Team Culture

- Creating team alignment and shared purpose
- Fostering accountability and initiative across all levels
- Supporting others through clear expectations and constructive feedback
- Managing performance in a supportive, proactive way

Area of Focus: Communication and Collaboration

- Enhancing internal communication across teams and tiers
- Communicating strategically with councillors, colleagues, and partners
- Building confidence in upward communication and speaking truth to power
- Strengthening cross-functional working and shared decision-making

Area of Focus: Leading Operational Delivery Through Growth

- Understanding the evolving officer role in a larger council structure
- Operationalising strategic objectives while maintaining service excellence
- Balancing service pressures with leadership responsibilities
- Working effectively with councillors in a growing employer organisation

Area of Focus: Innovation and Continuous Improvement

- Developing a mindset of ownership and learning
- Encouraging reflective practice and adaptive thinking
- Identifying opportunities for service and process improvement
- Creating space for innovation, even during 'business as usual'

Area of Focus: Dealing with Difficult People and Situations

- Recognising and addressing challenging behaviours early
- Managing tension and emotional responses constructively
- Having difficult conversations with professionalism and confidence
- Resolving conflict with councillors, colleagues or the public
- Maintaining personal resilience under pressure

Area of Focus: Personal Growth and Professional Development

- Developing self-awareness and emotional intelligence
- Owning your leadership journey and setting personal goals
- Identifying growth opportunities within your current role
- Building a long-term career pathway in local government

Summary of deliverables:

- 4x In-Person Training and Development Sessions on dates to be mutually agreed between the Clerk and Breakthrough Communications, the focus and content for each to be agreed according to the council's specific needs.
- 8x 1-2-1 personal development and coaching sessions (90 minutes each), to enable follow-up and professional development following in-person sessions

Bonus components (if this proposal is processed in May 2025)

- One additional in-person session in 2025/6
- Complimentary Council Hive membership for 12 months (value: £1,997), giving all staff access to self-paced personal development learning and live masterclass events throughout the year

Investment required

- £4997+vat

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- Safeguarding Policy
- Sickness and Absence Policy

7 / 25 7 3 To confirm the effectiveness of the Employee Handbook in relation to the policies

Document Notated for Policy and Financy Committee 28 May 2025

Committee: Full Council
Date: 21 May 2025
Agenda Item: 10 / 25
Author: N Barfield - Deputy Town Clerk

Policies and Procedures Review

At the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 23 April 25, the following resolution was agreed:

60 / 24 COUNCIL POLICIES

RESOLVED: Councillors received the policies and procedures review timetable and agreed that the working group will review the following policies: Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Accessibility Statement, Co-option, Equality and Diversity, and Internet Banking. Policies that fall under the Personnel Committee will be referred to them. The remaining policies will be reviewed and approved throughout the year to ensure all are in place by December 2025.

The working group met on 14 May to review the policies listed above and now brings them to Full Council for approval. The table below outlines the remaining policies scheduled for review by December 2025.

Policy	**Action Required**
Accessibility Statement	Proposed by the Policy Working Group to Full Council 21/05/25 Approved FC 21.5.26 10/25/1
Continuity Plan	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Biodiversity Policy	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Community Engagement Policy	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Co-Option	Proposed by the Policy Working Group to Full Council 21/05/25 Approved FC 21.5.26 10/25/1
Dignity at Work	To be reviewed and adopted by the Personnel Committee
Equality and Diversity	Proposed by the Policy Working Group to Full Council 21/05/25 Approved FC 21.5.26 10/25/1
Financial Regulations	Proposed by the Policy Working Group to Full Council 21/05/25 Approved FC 21.5.26 10/25/1
Grievance and Disciplinary Policy & Procedure	To be reviewed and adopted by the Personnel Committee
Health and Safety	To be reviewed and adopted by the Personnel Committee
Lone Worker Policy	To be reviewed and adopted by the Personnel Committee
Media Policy	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Member and Officer Protocol	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Privacy Policy	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Publication under Freedom of Information Act	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Recording meetings	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Risk Assessment Policy	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Safeguarding	To be reviewed and adopted by the Personnel Committee
Scheme of Delegation and Extension	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group Approved FC 21.5.26 10/25/1
Standing Orders	Proposed by the Policy Working Group to Full Council 21/05/25
Training and Development Policy	To be reviewed and adopted by the Personnel Committee
Treasury Management and Investment	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Vexatious Complaints	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group
Whistle Blower Policy	To be reviewed by the Policy Working Group Personnel

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Statement

Eastleigh Town Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This policy outlines our commitment to good practice in safeguarding for those using the Council's facilities and services. We will review this policy annually to ensure it remains up to date and reflects best practice.

Definitions

- **Children and Young People:** Anyone under the age of 18 years.
- **Vulnerable Adult:** Anyone over 18 who is:
    - Unable to care for themselves.
    - Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.
    - In need of community care services.

To Whom This Policy Applies

This policy applies to anyone working for or on behalf of Eastleigh Town Council, whether in a paid, voluntary, or commissioned capacity. It also applies to any individual hiring, leasing, or using the Council's facilities to deliver services to children, young people, or vulnerable adults.

Promoting a Safe Environment

To promote a safe environment for children, young people, and vulnerable adults, Eastleigh Town Council will:

- Provide safe facilities and conduct regular safety assessments.
- Ensure that employees, Councillors, and leaders of activities are aware of safeguarding expectations.
- Ensure that any staff or volunteers with regular unsupervised contact with children, young people, or vulnerable adults undergo appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks before commencing duties.
- Display safeguarding contact information on the Council's website to provide advice and help.

Expectations of Behaviour

All users of Eastleigh Town Council facilities, organisers of events, and volunteers should:

- Ensure that communications, behaviour, and interactions are appropriate and professional.

- Treat all individuals with respect and show consideration for others using the Council's facilities.
- Refrain from discriminatory behaviour, including racism, sexism, homophobia, bullying, and report any such instances to the Chair of the Council, the Clerk, or to parents/carers as appropriate.

Safe Working Practices

All users of Eastleigh Town Council facilities must adhere to the following guidelines to ensure safety:

- Never leave children, young people, or vulnerable adults unattended with adults who have not undergone a DBS check.
- Plan activities so that more than one person is present or at least within sight or hearing of others. If this is not possible, inform others of your whereabouts and intended actions.
- Where possible, ensure that male and female leaders work with mixed groups.
- Ensure registers are completed, and attendees are marked in and signed out (under 8's must be collected by a parent/carer).
- Obtain written consent from parents/carers before taking photos or videos of individuals.
- Ensure access to a first aid kit, a telephone, and knowledge of fire procedures.
- When conducting outdoor activities, ensure that conditions, breaks, and clothing are appropriate for the weather, and shelter is available when necessary.

Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

Eastleigh Town Council will follow the procedures for managing allegations against staff or volunteers in accordance with the Hampshire County Council Safeguarding website. No investigation or action should be taken before consulting the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Whistleblowing

All Town Councillors, staff, and volunteers must raise any concerns regarding the actions or attitudes of colleagues. The LADO or Safeguarding Team will provide guidance on handling such allegations. Eastleigh Town Council will not make judgments about the validity of allegations; that decision must rest with the LADO team.

What Should Be a Cause for Concern

Staff and volunteers should be concerned about any action or inaction that significantly harms the physical or emotional development of a child. Abuse can fall into the following categories, including child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation (FGM):

1. Physical Abuse

2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect
5. Financial Abuse/Manipulation

Commitment to Safeguarding

Eastleigh Town Council is committed to the safety and well-being of all users of our services and facilities. We regularly collaborate with other agencies, including Hampshire County Council, to ensure compliance with changing laws and guidelines concerning safeguarding.

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually or whenever there are changes to legislation or best practices.

Contact Information for Safeguarding Concerns

For any safeguarding concerns, please contact:

- **Eastleigh Town Council Safeguarding Lead:** Ruth Davies, Contact: 023 8212 1595
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** Melvin Harley, Eastleigh Borough Council

Sickness and Absence Policy

Employee Handbook 3.4

Introduction

Eastleigh Town Council is committed to supporting the health, wellbeing, and attendance of its employees. We value the positive impact our staff make and recognise that absence due to ill health may sometimes be unavoidable. This policy sets out:

- The responsibilities of both employees and managers in relation to sickness and absence.
- The council's approach to supporting employees and managing attendance.
- Our aim to support good attendance and to maintain average absence levels at no more than 6.5 days per employee per year.

Key Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

1. Eastleigh Town Council, as a responsible employer, will provide sick pay in line with the council's sick pay scheme.
2. Regular and punctual attendance is expected of all employees as an implied term of their employment contract.
3. The Council will provide appropriate support to employees with genuine health-related absences. This may include:
    - Special leave for necessary absences not related to sickness.
    - Flexibility in the use of annual leave.
    - Access to additional support, such as counselling where required.
    - Return-to-work support plans after long-term absence.
4. Any advice given by a GP on a "Statement of Fitness for Work" will be considered and discussed with the employee.
5. The Council may seek advice from an occupational health provider, where appropriate, to:
    - Clarify the nature of the employee's health condition.
    - Assist both the employee and their manager in identifying suitable steps to support a return to work.
6. Where appropriate, the Council's disciplinary procedures may be used in cases where absence reporting is not followed, or explanations are not satisfactory.
7. All sickness-related information will be handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

Notification of Absence

Employees must notify their line manager (or the Deputy Clerk if unavailable) of their absence within one hour of their normal start time. They should provide:

- A clear indication of the nature of the illness.
- The expected return date.
- Notification of any meetings, appointments, or diary actions that may be affected.

If contact is not made within the required time, the line manager will attempt to make contact with the employee. Managers will take a sensitive approach where employees may feel uncomfortable discussing their health and, where appropriate, may arrange for an alternative point of contact.

Evidence of Incapacity

Employees may self-certify for the first seven calendar days of absence (including weekends). From the eighth calendar day onwards, a GP-issued "Statement of Fitness for Work" is required to cover every subsequent day of absence.

In cases of long-term absence (more than four weeks), the employee and the Council will agree to maintain regular contact at appropriate intervals.

Statements Indicating "May Be Fit for Work"

Where a GP indicates that an employee may be fit for work subject to certain adjustments, the Council will discuss options with the employee. This might include:

- Temporary amendments to duties.
- Phased return to work.
- Adjusted working hours.

Where the Council is unable to make the necessary adjustments, or if the employee is not ready to return, the statement will be treated as indicating that the employee is not fit for work.

Return to Work Discussions

On their return, employees may be required to meet with their line manager to discuss:

- The reason for their absence.
- Whether any support is needed.
- Confirmation that they are fit to return.
- A review of any work missed and the plan to address it.

This meeting may also be used to plan adjustments where a "may be fit for work" statement has been issued.

Absence Reviews

A formal review will take place if:

- Frequent short-term absences exceed 6.5 days in a rolling 12-month period.
- An absence extends beyond four consecutive weeks.

The review will consider further support or reasonable adjustments, and whether an occupational health referral is appropriate.

Disability and Maternity-Related Absence

Absence due to pregnancy or an employee's disability will be recorded separately from general sickness absence and considered accordingly under the Equality Act 2010.

Sickness Self-Certification and Return to Work Form

Form SC2

Employee Name: _____

Line Manager: _____

1st Day of Absence: _____

Reason for Absence: _____

Date of Return to Work: _____

Total days of Absence: _____

Was a GP consulted during this absence? YES / NO

Declaration

"I, _____, certify that I am fit to return to work on this day, _____"

Signed: _____

EASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Employee Handbook

Welcome and introduction

Welcome to Eastleigh Town Council. Our strength as a Council is due to the skills and abilities of colleagues like you. We look forward to a long and successful working relationship with you and sincerely hope that your time with us is enjoyable and rewarding.

This handbook

This handbook is designed to explain the way in which we work and to set out the key procedures, rules and policies designed to ensure an efficient workplace and a safe and supportive environment for all employees. The contents of this handbook do not form part of the terms of your contract of employment unless otherwise stated. The Council may need to alter or amend any policy or procedure contained in this handbook to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with the needs of the business. Any such change will be notified to all employees.

The Council recognises the 'Green Book' which includes enhancements above the statutory minimum to certain employee benefits. These additional benefits are mainly detailed within your contract of employment, however if detailed within this handbook, they will be clearly identifiable.

We do expect you to comply with the requirements set out in this handbook and failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action; in appropriate cases, up to and including dismissal.

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1 KEY PRINCIPLES

This section sets out some of the key commitments made by the Council to its employees – and the key commitments expected from employees in return.

1.1 Council Code of Conduct

The behaviour of employees is central to the continued success of the Council. This handbook sets out a number of requirements aimed at ensuring the smooth running of the Council and the fair treatment of all employees. A number of these are so important that any breach of them will amount to gross misconduct and these are clearly identified throughout the handbook. Your attention is drawn in particular to the following:

- The rules on gifts and hospitality;
- The policy on smoking;
- The policy on alcohol and drugs;
- The policies on driving and the use of Council vehicles;
- The policy regarding social media; and
- The rules concerning the use of computers, the internet and email;

Dishonesty
It is important to stress that any form of dishonesty, however minor, will be regarded as gross misconduct. This includes theft of property, whether belonging to the Council, colleagues or any third party. However it also includes an employee seeking to gain any advantage through deception - such as making a false claim for expenses or overtime, falsely claiming to be sick or falsely claiming to have completed a particular task.

It does not matter if any amount of money at issue is small. The Council regards any dishonesty by employees as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

Refusal to carry out instructions
The Council expects employees to work in a spirit of cooperation with their colleagues and managers for the good of the business as a whole. Employees are required to carry out their managers' instructions and a deliberate and wilful refusal to do so will be gross misconduct.

If you believe that you have been instructed to do something that does not fall within your duties or which is in some other way unreasonable then the appropriate way of dealing with this is to raise a grievance under the grievance procedure (see Section 4). However doing so will not prevent a refusal to carry out an instruction from amounting to gross misconduct if it is found to have been a reasonable one in all the circumstances.

1.2 Health and Safety

The primary duty owed to you by the Council is to ensure that you are safe while you are at work. Similarly all employees are obliged to carry out their duties in a safe and

responsible manner that does not risk harm to either themselves, their colleagues or any other person.

A detailed health and safety policy/handbook identifying the roles and responsibilities of key staff members for ensuring that the Council meets its commitment to health and safety is available from the town clerk In addition there is information on health and safety displayed throughout our premises.

Detailed risk assessments have been carried out on all aspects of the Council's activities and steps have been taken to ensure that all work can be done safely. Any employee who is concerned that any aspect of the Council's activities poses a risk to health and safety should report this to the nearest available manager immediately. Genuine concerns about health and safety will always be treated with the utmost seriousness and be thoroughly investigated.

Employees are required to comply with all instructions rules and procedures concerning matters of health and safety. Failure to do so may amount to gross misconduct. In particular, where employees are required to wear personal protective equipment then failure to do so will be treated as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

1.3 Ethical Conduct

The Council aims for the highest possible standards of ethical conduct in all of its activities and expects the conduct of individual employees to reflect this. Dishonesty of any kind will be treated as a serious matter, which may amount to gross misconduct and therefore to dismissal without notice.

Gifts and Hospitality

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality from clients/customers, suppliers and potential suppliers must not give the appearance that employees or the Council may be unduly influenced in the decisions that they make in respect of clients/customers, suppliers or in any other aspect of their work.

All gifts and hospitality given or received, of whatever value, must be entered in the Register kept by the management team.

No personal gifts of a value in excess of £10 should be accepted from a client/customer, supplier or potential supplier without express permission from the town clerk.

Acceptance of hospitality, such as lunch or drinks receptions, should be kept within common sense limits and should always be authorised by your manager. Offers of hospitality must always be authorised by your manager.

You may also be instructed to return any gifts which your manager considers to be inappropriate, or to refuse to accept hospitality from a particular supplier or potential supplier. Failing to obey such an instruction will be treated as misconduct.

Allowing gifts or hospitality to influence any purchasing/business decisions that you may make on behalf of the Council or to otherwise influence the way in which you perform your duties is an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

It is also an act of gross misconduct to seek to influence any other person to behave in an improper way or to confer a business advantage on you or the Council through the giving of any gift or hospitality.

1.4 Whistleblowing

The Council encourages employees to raise any concerns that they may have about any wrongdoing at any level within the business. Wrongdoing in this context means any breach of a legal obligation, risk to health and safety, a criminal offence being committed, a miscarriage of justice occurring or likely to occur, damage to the environment, or an attempt to conceal any of the above.

Any initial concern should be raised with the town clerk. However, if this is not appropriate then you should contact another member of the management team who will ensure that your concern is properly addressed.

Employees who raise a concern which is in the public interest under this policy are entitled not to be subjected to any detriment as a result, however the employee must reasonably believe that the disclosure they are making is true.

Even if your concern proves to be unfounded you will be protected against any reprisals from your manager, colleagues or any other employee of the business. Making a deliberately false allegation, however, against the Council, a fellow employee or any other person will be treated as an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

If you are the subject of an allegation of wrongdoing then you will be informed of the allegation and given every opportunity to explain the situation and put your side of the story. Disciplinary action will only be taken following a full investigation in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

1.5 Good Faith and Loyalty

The employment relationship is one built on trust and we all have a mutual interest in making the relationship a success. The Council has a duty to provide reasonable support to employees and employees have a duty of good faith towards the Council.

In practice this means not doing anything that undermines the Council's standing with members of the public and fellow employees. In practice this means not doing anything that undermines the Council's position by acting in competition with it, providing information to competitors or undermining the Council's standing with clients, customers and fellow employees.

1.6 Data Protection

We will process personal data and sensitive personal data (also known as 'special categories of personal data') relating to you in accordance with our Data Protection

Policy and our Data Protection Privacy Notice (provided to you separately), as well as in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

We may monitor staff in accordance with our policies relating to email, internet and communications systems and monitoring at work, as detailed in this Employee Handbook and in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

You will comply with your obligations under our Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies as directed.

1.7 Environmental Statement

In the undertaking of their daily duties, we accept that all staff associated with Council will have an influence on the environment. We will commit to adopting working practices that will help to have a positive effect, assist towards continued environmental improvement, prevent pollution and reduce unavoidable negative influences caused by our working practices.

The Council therefore maintains a policy of 'minimum waste' which is essential to the cost effective and efficient running of all our operations. Every employee has a responsibility to promote this policy by taking extra care when carrying out normal duties to avoid unnecessary or extravagant use of services, materials, lights, heating, water etc.

2 HOW WE DO THINGS

This section deals with some important administrative requirements to do with your employment and sets out the standards the Council expects of employees in various situations.

2.1 Proof of Identity

The Council is legally obliged to ensure that all employees are permitted to work in the UK. It is a condition of your employment that you comply with all reasonable requests to provide details of your identity, right to work in the UK and place of residence. This will include allowing the Council to take copies of your passport or other appropriate documents and to check their authenticity. Copies of any such documents will be kept in your personnel file for such a period as is deemed necessary in compliance with current data protection laws.

The Council may dismiss any employee who cannot demonstrate that they are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom.

2.2 Dress Code

All employees should dress in a manner appropriate to the work that they do. Key factors include whether or not the employee meets clients or customers and whether the requirements of health and safety require particular clothing. How you dress is largely a matter of common sense. If your manager feels that you are dressing in an inappropriate way they may ask you to dress differently the next time you come into work. A persistent refusal to comply with a reasonable standard set by a manager will amount to misconduct.

Where an employee dresses in a completely inappropriate way, for example by wearing clothing with offensive images or slogans, then they may be sent home to change. Any time taken to go home and change will be unpaid.

Personal Protective Equipment

If you are provided with any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you must ensure you wear this at all times, especially in any designated area which may pose additional risk. Failure to do so is likely to result in disciplinary action.

2.3 Timekeeping

Good timekeeping is essential in any team; however we recognise the commitment that staff dedicate to their duties and therefore are happy to show some flexibility in terms of time keeping. This having been said, any employee who is seen to abuse this goodwill, will be spoken to. Persistent abuse of this goodwill will likely result in disciplinary action.

Where it is clear that you are going to be late for work you must contact the town clerk as soon as possible to explain the situation and give an estimate of your arrival time. You must make every effort to talk to your manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

If personal or domestic circumstances make it difficult for you to attend work on time then you should discuss this with the town clerk. In some cases, the Council may be able to accommodate a reasonable need for flexibility, but this will be subject to the needs of the business and the need to avoid placing an unfair burden on your colleagues (see Section 4).

2.4 Adverse Weather and Traffic Disruption

Adverse Weather

Adverse weather conditions can cause road closures and public transport disruption.

The Council's primary duty is to provide a safe place of work. If adverse weather means that this cannot be achieved, and the workplace needs to close then all employees will be sent home or told not to come in. In these circumstances, where possible, employees may be required to work from home and will be paid as normal. If home working is not a suitable alternative arrangement, employees will be paid in full for any working time that they have lost.

If the need to close the workplace persists, the Council may invoke the lay-off clause in employees' contracts.

Traffic Disruption

We understand that events such as industrial action, road traffic accidents and road works can cause difficulties for employees attempting to travel into the workplace. In these circumstances we are prepared to take a flexible approach to working arrangements while still keeping the business running as effectively as possible.

You must make a genuine effort to report for work at your normal start time. You may need to leave home earlier to give yourself extra time for the journey or taking an alternative route. Travel on foot or by bicycle should be considered where appropriate and safe.

If you are unable to get into work, you should check the situation throughout the day in case it improves. Information may be available from local radio stations, the police, transport providers or the internet. If conditions improve sufficiently to allow you to travel in to work, you should report this to your manager and attend work unless told otherwise.

Delayed Return from holidays

You should make every effort to return to work as planned at the end of any period of authorised annual leave and should ensure that travel arrangements are made that would best ensure this is possible. However, we recognise that employees may be delayed when returning from holidays due to flight cancellations/ delays.

If you are unable to travel into work

If the workplace is open, it is the responsibility of employees to attend work if they possibly can.

Employees who are absent from work due to adverse weather or other travel disruptions are not entitled to be paid for the time lost.

Where it is clear that you are not going to be able to get to work you must contact your line manager as soon as possible to explain the situation. You must make every effort to talk to your manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

If you are unable to attend work due to severe weather or other travel difficulties, then you will be required to take time from your annual leave allowance to cover any absence or to take unpaid time off by agreement with your manager.

There may be circumstances in which employees are able to work at home or from an alternative place of work, if available, but this will be entirely at the discretion of the Council If you do this, you will receive your normal pay.

If travel disruption or adverse weather causes you to arrive at work late or requires you to leave work early you will usually be expected to make up any lost time.

2.5 Rest Breaks

The Council encourages all employees to take full advantage of scheduled rest breaks. These are provided not only for comfort, but also to protect the health of employees and prevent excessive fatigue from causing accidents.

A rest break should be taken away from your workstation wherever possible. If you leave the premises you should bear in mind the time that it will take you to return from the break so that you can ensure that you begin work again on time.

Different areas of the business may have different arrangements for ad hoc breaks such as to make a cup of tea or coffee. These arrangements are in place to ensure the smooth running of the business and to prevent putting unfair pressure on colleagues. You are required to comply with any requirements relating to such breaks as may be in place from time to time.

2.6 Smoking

The Council operates a smoke-free workplace. Smoking (which includes the use of e-cigarettes and personal vaporisers) is therefore strictly prohibited throughout all Council premises, including any Council vehicle.

Smoking is only permitted during designated break times and in the designated outside areas.

2.7 Computer Use - Including the use of email/Internet

It is very important that the Council is able to keep its data secure. To assist with this, all employees are required to comply with instructions that may be issued from time to time regarding the use of Council-owned IT or communication systems.

You should ensure that when leaving your workstation for any lengthy period, that you lock your IT devices or log off if appropriate.

You must not attach any device to Council IT equipment without authorisation from the town clerk and you must not open attachments or click on links unless you know you can trust the source. Council portable IT devices must be kept secure and password protected at all times.

Your computer password is an important piece of confidential information and you should treat it that way. Do not share it with others, and make sure that it is not written down anywhere where an unauthorised person can find it.

Unauthorised access to any of the Council's IT and communication systems will amount to gross misconduct.

Internet Use

Employees with access to the internet on Council-owned IT devices should use that access responsibly.

Personal use during working hours will be treated as misconduct. From time to time the Council may block access to sites which it considers inappropriate but whether or not a specific site has been blocked, employees must not use the internet to view or download offensive or sexually explicit material. Any attempt to do so may, depending on the circumstances, amount to gross misconduct leading to dismissal.

Employees must not download any software, plugins or extensions on to Council-owned IT devices unless this is first cleared by an appropriate manager. Employees should also refrain from downloading music, video or any other entertainment content on any Council-owned IT device.

Firewalls and anti-virus software may be used to protect the Council's IT and communication systems. These must not be disabled or switched off without express permission from management.

Email

All email correspondence should be dealt with in the same professional and diligent manner as any other form of correspondence.

If you have a Council email account you should be mindful of the fact that any email that you send will be identifiable as coming from the Council. You should therefore take care not to send anything via email that may reflect badly on the Council. In particular, you must not send content of a sexual, racist or discriminatory nature, junk mail, chain letters, cartoons or jokes from any email address associated with work.

Using a Council/work email address to send inappropriate material, including content of a sexual, racist or discriminatory nature, is strictly prohibited and may amount to gross misconduct. Should you receive any offensive or inappropriate content via email you should inform a member of management of this as soon as possible so that they can ensure that it is removed from the system.

You should also take care that emails will be seen only by the person intended. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential information that the email has been correctly addressed, marked 'private' /'confidential' and not copied in to those not authorised to see the information. Sending confidential information via email without proper authorisation or without taking sufficient care to ensure that it is properly protected will be treated as misconduct.

Privacy

Monitoring of email usage takes place without notice. You should have no expectation of privacy in respect of personal and business use of email and the internet whilst at work.

Your email remains the property of the Council and therefore you should not use your Council email to send or receive any information that you regard as private. The Council may, in the course of its business, read emails that you have sent or received - although in the absence of evidence of wrongdoing the Council will try to avoid reading personal emails if possible.

2.8 Social Media

An employee's behaviour on any social networking or other internet site must be consistent with the behaviour required of employees generally. Where it is possible for users of a social media site to ascertain who you work for, then you should take particular care not to behave in a way which reflects badly on the Council.

Inappropriate or disparaging comments about the Council, colleagues or clients will be treated as misconduct. Because social media interactions can be copied and widely disseminated in a way that you may not be able to control, the Council will take a particularly serious view of any misconduct that occurs through the use of social media.

You must not operate a social media account or profile that purports to be operated on or on behalf of the Council without express permission to do so from your manager.

You should not attempt to access social networking sites, such as Facebook/Twitter or similar on Council IT and communication systems. This includes during break times.

2.9 Telephones

Reasonable personal use of Council telephones is permitted. However calls should be kept short and no calls should be made to premium rate numbers or abroad.

Calls and texts on personal mobile phones should wherever possible be restricted to formal rest breaks.

2.10 Alcohol and Drugs

The Council's approach to the consumption of alcohol, drugs and other substances (including new psychoactive substances) that have intoxicating and/or behaviour-altering effects or impair judgement (referred to in this policy as "other substances") is based on the need to ensure a safe and productive working environment. Because of the serious nature of the risks posed by the abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances in the workplace, any breach of the rules in this area will be treated as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

An employee will be regarded as 'under the influence' of alcohol, drugs or other substances if their behaviour, speech, ability to concentrate or otherwise perform their duties is in any way affected. An employee will also be regarded as under the influence if they fail a drug, other substance or alcohol test.

Dependency

Employees who have a dependency on alcohol, drugs or other substances may be offered support and encouraged to seek appropriate counselling or medical help. Absence arising from treatment or counselling related to drug, alcohol or other substance abuse will be treated as sickness absence under the Council's absence management policy. However, while the Council will always try to be supportive toward employees with a drug, alcohol or other substance problem, this will not prevent disciplinary action being taken when employees act in breach of the rules laid out in this policy.

Wherever an employee informs the Council that they have a drug, alcohol or other substance problem this will, as far as possible, be treated in the utmost confidence. However the Council may need to disclose particular circumstances to managers, regulatory authorities or others should this be necessary to ensure safety or compliance with legal requirements.

Drugs

The consumption, storage, distribution or sale of illegal drugs or any other behaviour-altering and/or intoxicating substance, including new psychoactive substances, on Council premises or during working time is strictly prohibited. The Council will report any illegal activities to the police or other relevant authorities.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of illegal drugs or any other substance taken for non-medical purposes.

Medicines and Prescription Drugs

If you are taking prescription drugs or any other medicine that may affect your performance at work or your ability to carry out any of your duties, then you must inform the town clerk of this so that steps can be taken to ensure that the work can be done safely. It is your responsibility, when beginning any course of medication, to check whether it may adversely affect your ability to work.

Alcohol

Consumption of even a small amount of alcohol may be sufficient to adversely affect the work of an employee and could pose a risk to health and safety. Remember that alcohol remains in the bloodstream for up to 24 hours following consumption and that the consumption of a significant amount of alcohol in the evening may leave you unfit to work in the morning.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of alcohol.

You must not consume any alcohol during working time, lunchtime or during any break unless this has been specifically authorised by your manager.

Where alcohol is available at Council organised events or occasions when you are representing the Council – even outside working hours - it is important to behave responsibly and not drink to excess. Behaviour that reflects badly on the Council will be a disciplinary matter and in serious cases may amount to gross misconduct.

2.11 Driving

Where driving is required as part of your job, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are legally qualified to drive.

Licences will go through the Council inspection procedure which requires us to check individual licences once a year with the DVLA, or as otherwise requested. The Council will require you to share your driving licence information by supplying it with your driving licence number and a check code provided by the DVLA. If you receive any points on your licence you must inform the Council of this immediately.

If you use your own vehicle to drive on Council/work-related business, it is your responsibility to arrange to be insured for that business use. The Council may require you at any time/annually to allow a copy of your insurance and any MOT test certificate to be made and kept in our records.

You are responsible for any driving offences committed while driving as part of your duties, including any parking fines. Dangerous, careless, inconsiderate or aggressive driving as well as causing a risk to others can be damaging to the Council's reputation and can amount to gross misconduct. If you are banned from driving for any reason, the Council is not obliged to find alternative work for you and may choose to dismiss you if the ban renders you incapable of performing your duties as required.

It is illegal to use your mobile phone whilst driving. This includes texting etc.

Employees should **never** use their mobile phone whilst driving on Council business unless they do so on a properly installed hands-free system and traffic conditions mean that it is safe to do so. In most cases, it would be preferable to make any calls when the vehicle is stationary.

Any journey carried out on Council business must be scheduled in such a way as to allow adequate rest breaks – usually one break of 15 minutes for two hours of driving. Where possible, driving on Council business should be avoided either late at night or very early in the morning.

Safety is the Council's prime responsibility and you should not be required to compromise safety in any way when driving on Council business. If you are concerned about any driving requirements you may have, then you should discuss these with the town clerk and appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure that any work-related journey can be completed safely.

2.12 Expenses

You will be reimbursed for authorised and legitimate expenditure reasonably incurred in the course of the proper performance of your duties, i.e. travel, accommodation, agreed out-of-pocket expenditure.

In order to claim expenses you must complete an expense claim form and support the claim by submitting valid receipts.

2.13 Council Property

You are not permitted to use Council property for any purpose other than its intended use. Council property must not be removed from the premises unless with prior approval.

Damage to Council Property

Any damage to or loss of Council property must be immediately reported to your manager.

If, following an investigation, it is found that as a result of your carelessness, negligence or failure to comply with Council procedures, or by wilful act, the Council suffers loss or damage of cash, stock, fixtures and fittings or property (including vehicles) , this will be construed as serious breach of the rules, which could result in your summary dismissal on grounds of gross misconduct.

You may also be liable to pay the full, or part, cost of making good the Council's loss in respect of cash, stock, fixtures and fittings, or property (including vehicles).

In the event that the Council makes a claim to its insurers, for repair or replacement, or other losses incurred, it reserves the right to require you to pay any insurance excess that may accrue.

It is an express term of your contract of employment that if Council property is damaged, lost or stolen through your negligence or fault, then the Council may deduct the cost of repair or replacement from your salary.

Before any decision is made to deduct, the matter will be fully investigated and you will be given an opportunity to state your case and appeal any decision.

Return of Council Property

Upon termination of employment for whatever reason, you must return to the Council all property belonging to the Council including Council vehicle, computer, equipment, keys, records and documents within your possession or control belonging or relating to the affairs and business of the Council and its customers.

The Council may deduct the cost of replacement of any items not returned, or repair of items that are returned damaged, on termination of your employment from your salary or any monies owed to you.

Employees' Property

The Council does not accept liability for any loss of, or damage to, property that you bring onto the premises. You are requested not to bring personal items of value onto the premises, and in particular, not to leave any items overnight.

Any loss or theft of items must be reported to your manager.

Lost Property

If you find any items of lost property they should be handed to your immediate Manager, who will retain the items for three weeks. The property will either be handed over to the police or disposed of accordingly.

2.14 General

Statements to the Media

Any statements to reporters from newspapers, radio, television etc. in relation to our business will be given only by Management.

Parking

If parking is provided by the Council, all cars parked in such parking areas are parked at the owner's risk and must be parked so as not to obstruct access. It is your responsibility to ensure that your vehicle is parked in a safe area.

3 ABSENCE

This section sets out the approach the* Council *takes when you are unable to attend work, are taking annual leave or need time off.

3.1 Unauthorised Absence

Employees who deliberately fail to attend work without proper excuse or in breach of management instructions will be committing gross misconduct which could result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu.

3.2 Medical Appointments

In general, appointments to see a GP, dentist or optician should be made for outside working hours. Paid leave will not normally be granted for non-emergency visits.

The Council appreciates that it is not always possible to avoid appointments during the working day and will judge each case individually in deciding whether any paid time off should be granted. In most cases, employees will be required either to use part of their annual holiday entitlement or to make up any lost time.

Employees who have a medical condition which will require regular appointments during the working day should discuss their situation with their manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

You may be required to provide evidence of any appointment for which time off is needed.

Necessary paid time off will be granted for cancer screening.

3.3 Ante-natal Care/Adoption Appointments

Pregnancy Related Appointments

Employees who are pregnant are entitled to paid-time off to attend ante-natal appointments provided that attendance is based on medical advice. For second and subsequent appointments you may be required to produce an appointment card or similar evidence of the date and time of the appointment.

While there is no limit on the number of appointments that an employee can attend, the Council does have the right to refuse time off where it is reasonable to do so. Employees are therefore expected to take reasonable steps to arrange antenatal appointments at a time that will require the minimum amount of time off. Part-time workers should attempt to arrange appointments for days when they are not required to work and all employees should try to avoid appointments in the middle of the working day in order to minimise disruption.

If your partner is pregnant, you are entitled to unpaid time off for up to two antenatal appointments. If you wish to exercise this right you should notify your manager of the date and time of the appointment. You may be asked to provide written evidence that an appropriate appointment has in fact been made.

Adoption Appointments

Employees who are adopting on their own, or have elected to be the primary adopter may take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments in certain circumstances.

If you are the partner of the primary adopter, you may take unpaid time off on up to two occasions to attend an adoption appointment.

3.4 Sickness Absence

Regular and reliable attendance at work is an important commitment that the Council asks all employees to make. Unjustified or excessive absence can put unfair pressure on colleagues and seriously damage the Council's business, to everybody's detriment.

Nevertheless the Council will always try to be supportive when an employee is genuinely too ill to attend work. This policy sets out the Council's approach and the steps that you need to take if you are off sick.

Infectious Disease

An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease shall be entitled to receive normal pay whilst absent from work in consequence of this. The period of absence on this account shall not be reckoned against the employee's entitlements under this scheme.

If an employee contracts an industrial disease, or is involved in an accident or assault arising out of, or in the normal course of their employment, this will be considered entirely separately from normal sickness absence and therefore will not be off set against an employee's sick pay entitlement under the sick pay scheme.

Reporting Sickness Absence

If you are too ill to come into work you should personally inform the town clerk of this fact as soon as possible and in any event by no later than midday on the first day of your absence. When you phone in sick you must make every effort to speak to your manager directly. Do not simply leave a message with a colleague or send an email or text. If you need to leave a message for your manager then they may contact you during the day to discuss your absence with you.

It is important that you keep in touch with your manager about the likely length of your absence so that appropriate arrangements can be made for cover and you should phone in sick on every day of your absence unless either you have previously informed your manager that you will be off sick for a particular period of time or your absence is certified by a 'Fit Note' (Form Med 3).

Hangovers are not regarded as legitimate reasons to take sickness absence. Absence by reason of hangovers will be regarded as a disciplinary offence which may result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu. You should also be aware of the rules governing the consumption of alcohol set out in the Alcohol and Drugs Policy.

The Council requires any absence of more than 4 days to be certified by a 'self-certification form' (Form SC2). Any absence of more than a week must be certified by a 'Fit Note' (Forms Med 3 or Med 10). Uncertified absence may be treated as misconduct and will not be paid.

Where any period of sickness absence occurs immediately before or immediately after a period of annual leave then the Council may require such absence to be certified by a Fit Note at your own expense.

Where you are absent for an extended period of time (three weeks or more) the Council may refer you to an occupational health professional or seek a medical report from your GP. The purpose of this will be to ascertain when you are likely to be able to return to work and to identify any measures that can be taken to help you return as soon as possible.

Employees who are off sick should not undertake any activities likely to be detrimental to their recovery and should cooperate with the appropriate medical professionals in taking steps to ensure that their recovery is as swift as possible.

The Council will maintain regular contact with employees who are off sick for an extended period.

Employees will be required to attend a return to work meeting after any period of sickness absence. The purpose of the meeting is to check on the employee's general health and wellbeing, to catch up with regards to anything that the employee may have missed, and to discuss whether there are any concerns in respect of absence levels.

Annual Leave and Sickness Absence

Employees may request annual leave during any period of sickness absence in the normal way. If you intend to spend any time away from home during your sickness absence you should inform your manager of this fact in advance and provide contact details. The Council does not expect employees to take holidays while off sick. In exceptional cases only, where this may assist in an employee's recovery, the Council may agree to holidays being taken during sick leave. It is essential however that any such holidays are agreed in advance with the Council following the normal holiday request procedure.

Phased Return to Work

As an employee recovers from illness or injury it may be possible for them to undertake a limited range of duties as a preparation for returning to normal work. The Council will try whenever appropriate in light of medical advice to allow for a phased return to work from any long-term illness. This may involve reducing the employee's hours, or the scope of their duties or both. The purpose of a phased return, however, is to provide a bridge between sickness absence and normal working and so any such arrangements will be time-limited and will not normally extend over more than three months.

Alternative Work

The Council may consider agreeing changes to an employee's duties or other working arrangements when it becomes clear that due to sickness or injury they will not be able to return to normal working. Any such changes will be subject to the needs of the business and there is no guarantee that permanent arrangements of this sort will be possible.

Where duties or working hours are varied in this way then the job being done by the employee will need to be reassessed to determine the appropriate level of remuneration. This will then need to be agreed with the employee. If an agreement is not reached then the Council may proceed to dismiss the employee in accordance with the procedure for long-term sickness absence.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments to an employee's duties or working arrangements where they would otherwise suffer a disadvantage arising from any disability.

In order to make appropriate adjustments the Council needs to know about any disability the employee may have. Employees who feel that they may require an adjustment should discuss their situation with their line manager. Any such discussions will be in the strictest confidence although when an adjustment is made it may be necessary to inform other employees of the reason for this. The extent to which details of any disability will be discussed with other employees will be agreed as part of the process of making the adjustment itself.

The purpose of any adjustment will be to ensure that the employee can work effectively in an appropriate role and on appropriate terms and conditions. The Council is not obliged to maintain an employee's level of pay if hours are reduced or the employee is moved to a less senior role as a result of any adjustment. Nor will the Council agree to an adjustment which will not result in a commercially practicable working arrangement.

Contractual Sick Pay

In addition to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) the Council also offers an enhanced Sick pay scheme in line with the Green book provisions. An employee's entitlement under this scheme is linked to their length of service, and will be as follows:

- During 1st year of service: 1 month's full pay, which after having completed 4 months continuous service, also increases by 2 months' half pay;
- During 2nd year of continuous service: 2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay;
- During 3rd year of continuous service, 4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay;
- During 4th and 5th years of continuous service, 5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay; and
- After 5 years' continuous service, an employee would be entitled to 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay.

NB: **'Full Pay'** period = Sick Pay shall include SSP and any Incapacity Benefit

'Half Pay' period = Half pay plus SSP and Incapacity Benefit, so long as this total does not exceed an employee's normal pay.

Statutory Sick Pay

If you are sick the Council will pay you Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), if you are eligible. Further details of this are contained within your contract of employment.

3.5 Jury Service/Other Time Off

There are a number of circumstances in which employees have a right to time off from work either with or without pay. These include jury service and certain public duties such as serving as a local councillor, magistrate or school governor. Where a need for

such time off arises you should discuss the matter with the town clerk who will consider what arrangements should be put in place.

While the Council will do its best to accommodate time off in these circumstances, the requirements of an employee's role may mean that the amount of time off granted may be limited.

Where serving on a jury would lead to a level of absence that would be detrimental to the business, the Council may require you to seek a deferment.

Employees undertaking jury service or serving on public bodies, or undertaking public duties, will be entitled to paid time off. Where an allowance is available for loss of earnings, the employee should claim and pay the allowance to the employing authority.

3.6 Compassionate/Bereavement Leave

In the event an employee suffers a bereavement in their family, the Council will exercise its discretion to allow reasonable time off to attend a funeral. What is reasonable will be determined on a case by case basis and the type of leave, whether paid or unpaid, will depend on the circumstances and the relationship the employee had with the individual.

In addition, there may be occasions where it may be necessary for an employee to take compassionate leave. Again, this will be considered on a case by case basis and dependant on circumstances, may be paid or unpaid.

An employee will not be eligible to receive paid bereavement or compassionate time-off benefits while off, or absent from work because of holiday, sickness (paid or unpaid) or for any other reason.

3.7 Parental Bereavement Leave

Employees are entitled to statutory parental bereavement leave (SPBL) if a child for whom they have or were due to have parental responsibility has died or been stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, on or after 6 April 2020.

Leave can be taken as one week, two consecutive weeks, or two separate weeks, at any time within the first 56 weeks after the child's death.

Notification

During the first eight weeks after a child has died, you, or someone on your behalf as necessary, need only give notice to the Council to take SPBL before you are due to start work on the first day of leave. If you have already started work, then officially your SPBL period will start on the following day. If you want to cancel it at any time during the first seven weeks you can do so as long as it has not started.

After eight weeks, you need to give at least a week's notice to the Council to take SPBL. You can cancel it with a week's notice, or re-book it by giving a week's notice.

When giving notice to take SPBL, you must tell the Council: the date of the child's death; when you want your leave to begin; and whether you want to take 1 or 2 weeks leave). You can give notice by telephone or by email or by letter.

Parental Bereavement Pay

To qualify for statutory parental bereavement pay (SPBP) during such leave you must have at least six months' continuous employment and normal weekly earnings of at least the lower earnings limit. It is paid at the same rate as other statutory family leave pay, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with your line manager.

To claim SPBP, you must confirm the following information in writing within 28 days of starting any period of SPBL: your name; your entitlement to SPBP; the dates of SPBL you want to claim the pay for; the date of the child's death; and your relationship to the child. You can provide this information at the same time as giving notice to take SPBL, as set out above, so long as it is in writing.

Other leave entitlements

In addition to parental bereavement leave, if you qualified for:

- maternity or paternity leave and pay and your child has died or been stillborn, you are still entitled to such leave and pay.

- adoption leave and pay, then the adoption leave entitlement runs for another eight weeks from the end of the week in which the child died (unless it would already have ended sooner).

If your planned period of SPBL coincides with another statutory family leave right, your SPBL will end at the start of that other leave. If you wish to take SPBL at the end of the other statutory family leave period, then a fresh notice to take the leave will be required, as per the above notice requirements.

Compassionate or Dependants leave may be available under our Compassionate or Dependants Leave Policy at our discretion. Please speak to your manager if you require time off in addition to parental bereavement leave.

3.8 Emergency Time Off for Dependants

The Council recognises that situations arise where you need to take time off work to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on you. Your husband, wife or partner, child or parent, or someone living with you as part of your family can all be considered as depending on you. Others who rely solely on you for help in an emergency may also qualify. For further detail as to who counts as depending on you and guidance on individual circumstances, please speak to your Manager.

Provided the reasons for such a request are genuine and you inform the Council as soon as possible that you need this time off, you will be allowed reasonable unpaid time off work to deal with such emergencies.

The right to time off only covers emergencies. If you know in advance that you are going to need time off, you will not qualify for this type of leave and you therefore should arrange this with the Council by taking another form of leave, such as annual leave, parental leave etc.

If an emergency occurs and it is not possible for you to inform your manager in advance of any absence you should contact your manager as soon as possible to inform them of the situation. Appropriate arrangements may then be put in place.

If you suffer some other personal emergency you should talk to the town clerk who will discuss what arrangements can be made to grant you compassionate leave. These

arrangements will always be at the discretion of the Council and will depend on the circumstances of the case and the impact that any absence on your part may have on the business. However, the Council will be sympathetic to your need for time off (which may be paid or unpaid at our discretion) to deal with the situation and make any arrangements that may be necessary.

3.9 Annual Leave

Your individual holiday entitlement, including the calculation of any holiday pay, is set out in your contract of employment. This section of the handbook outlines the general approach taken by the Council to requests for annual leave.

All annual leave must be agreed in advance with the town clerk. You should not make firm travel plans or commitments until a request for leave has been granted and the Council will not take such plans into account when dealing with conflicting holiday requests.

Further, no more than two consecutive weeks' holiday can be taken at one time. In certain circumstances, and at the discretion of the business, a longer period may be permitted. If this is required, you should discuss this with the town clerk, to establish whether this can be accommodated.

What notice do I need to give?

All requests for leave should be made at least one week in advance. The means of requesting leave may change from time to time and you should comply with whatever procedure is in place at the time of the request.

Your manager may refuse any request for leave if it would result in the workplace being understaffed or otherwise prejudice the business. Leave is likely to be refused if it is requested for a particularly busy period or a time when other employees have already had leave approved.

Certain times of year are particularly popular times for requesting holiday. Generally, subject to the needs of the business, leave will be granted on a first come first served basis, but exceptions may be made in the interests of ensuring that holiday is spread through the year on a fair and equitable basis.

Our Holiday Year

All employees are encouraged to take their full holiday entitlement during the holiday year which runs from 01 April to 31 March. However it is your responsibility to schedule your holiday so that it can be taken at an appropriate time.

Employees will not usually be permitted to carry over holiday entitlement into the following holiday year.

In certain circumstances, at the Council's discretion and subject to certain rules, the carrying over of a proportion of annual leave may be allowed.

Employees who leave their employment during the course of a holiday year will be entitled to a pro-rata payment reflecting leave accrued but not taken. Where an employee has, at the time their employment ends, taken a larger proportion of their leave entitlement than the proportion of the holiday year that has expired, then a deduction will be made from the final payment of salary to reflect the holiday which has been taken but not accrued.

The Council may insist on annual leave being taken at particular times depending on the needs of the business and these are set out in your contract of employment. We will give reasonable notice of any such requirement (the length of the notice given will be at least twice the duration of the leave the Council requires the employee to take).

The Council may require annual leave to be taken during the notice period of any employee who has resigned or been dismissed.

3.10 Reserve Forces

The Council supports employees who are also member of the reserve forces. Such employees have specific entitlements relating to time off including arrangements for them returning to work after a period of deployment. Employees who are members of the reserve forces or who are considering joining should discuss the implications with their line manager.

4 FLEXIBLE WORKING AND FAMILY RELATED LEAVE

The Council understands the particular issues faced by employees trying to balance their work and family life. This section sets out the Council's policies in this area and the specific rights given to new parents.

4.1 Flexible Working

The Council will try, subject to the needs of the business, to accommodate requests from employees who wish to make changes to their working hours or place of work.

Requests for a change in working arrangements can be made by any employee with at least 26 weeks' continuous service with the Council at the time the request is made. Further, only one request per employee may be made in any 12 month period. The request should:

1. be made in writing and state this is a flexible working request;
2. set out the change requested; and
3. describe the impact that the change will have on the operation of the business and how any difficulties caused by the change may be addressed.

When a request is received, the employee will be invited to a meeting to discuss the potential change.

The meeting will normally be conducted by the employee's line manager.

The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee to assist in making any representations that may be appropriate.

The application may be refused on one or more of several grounds, these being that the proposed changes will result in:

- a burden of additional cost;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- an inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental effect on quality;
- a detrimental effect on performance;
- an insufficiency of work during the periods you propose to work;
- a planned structural change; and
- any other ground allowed by regulations.

In refusing any request the Council will explain the reasons for the refusal in writing and may make an offer of an alternative arrangement. Discussions may then take

place to try to agree a way forward. If no agreement is reached then the employee's terms and conditions will remain unchanged, subject to the right of the employee to appeal the decision.

Any meetings should take place in a spirit of cooperation with both sides seeking to reach agreement on an appropriate way forward.

Any change in working arrangements which results from this process will be confirmed to you in writing.

This policy will not prevent managers agreeing to ad hoc arrangements from time to time. However, any such arrangement will not amount to a variation in your terms and conditions of employment unless specifically agreed to the contrary and confirmed in writing. The Council may terminate any such ad hoc agreement at any time and require you to revert to your agreed working arrangements.

As there will inevitably be a limit to the amount of flexibility the Council can tolerate without detriment to its interests, employees must accept that the fact that a particular working arrangement has been granted to one employee does not oblige the Council to grant it to another.

4.2 Maternity Leave

All employees who give birth are entitled to take maternity leave which lasts for a maximum of 52 weeks. Employees with at least six months' service immediately before the 15th week prior to the expected week of childbirth will also be entitled to be paid Statutory Maternity pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks of their absence. Because this is a statutory payment there are a number of procedural requirements that must be met in order to make sure that an employee qualifies. The most important requirements are set out below, but if you have any doubts about the rules that apply you should speak to a member of the management team who will make sure that you have all the appropriate information.

Notification

To qualify for maternity leave you must provide the Council, no later than the end of the 15th week before your EWC (when you are approximately 6 months' pregnant) with the following information:

1. that you are pregnant;
2. the date of the week your baby is due (your expected week of childbirth or EWC);
3. when you intend your maternity leave to start (this date can be changed later – see below); and
4. you must also provide the Council with the original Maternity Certificate (MAT B1) issued by your doctor.

In some circumstances the Council may be able to accept other medical evidence of when your baby is due, so if there is any difficulty in providing the MATB1 certificate you should discuss this with your manager.

If you intend to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave, you should inform the Council of this fact at the same time as you notify the intended start date of your leave.

Start of Maternity Leave

Generally it is up to you to decide when to start your maternity leave. However, your leave cannot begin any earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before your EWC.

Where it is safe to do so, you may choose to continue working right up to your child's birth. However, your maternity leave will begin automatically if you are off sick for a pregnancy-related reason at any stage in the four weeks immediately before your EWC.

If your baby is born before the date that you have notified as the start date for your maternity leave then your maternity leave will begin on the day following the birth.

You may change the date on which you intend to start your maternity leave, but you must notify the Council of your new start date at least 28 days before the original date given (or the new date, if that is sooner). If there is a reason why you cannot give this notice then you should explain the situation to an appropriate manager and the Council will attempt to accommodate your changed circumstances. However, the Council may need to insist on delaying the start of your leave until at least 28 days have passed since your notification of a changed date.

When your baby is born you should inform the Council of this fact as soon as is reasonable practicable.

Duration of Maternity Leave

The standard length of maternity leave is 52 weeks. Once you indicate the intended start date of your leave, the Council will send you a written notification of your expected date of return.

Unless you give due notice to the Council of an earlier date of return, it will be assumed that you intend to take your full 52-week entitlement and you will not be expected back at work before your leave ends. You do not then have to give any notice of your return although it would be sensible to contact your manager some time in advance to discuss any arrangements that may need to be made.

At the end of your maternity leave you are generally entitled to return to the same job as you had before your leave began. If you are away for more than 26 weeks, however, there may be circumstances in which that is not reasonably practicable. In that case, the Council will provide you with a suitable and appropriate role at the same level of seniority and on no-less favourable terms and conditions.

Dismissal or Resignation

While on maternity leave you remain employed by the Council and bound by your contract of employment. If you decide that you want to leave your employment you will need to submit your resignation in the normal way.

The Council will not dismiss you for any reason related to your pregnancy or your exercise of any right which arises from it. However, if separate circumstances require your dismissal (for instance, because of redundancy) then that will bring your maternity leave to an end.

If your position becomes redundant during your maternity leave then you will be offered any suitable alternative work that is available.

Enhanced Maternity Pay

Commented [RH1]: I have included Green Book enhanced maternity pay. Let me know if you don't pay this.

The Council offers enhanced maternity pay in line with the provisions of the Green book. An employee who meets the other qualifying criteria listed in this policy, and who have more than one year's continuous service at the point of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth will be entitled to enhanced Maternity pay as follows:

- 6 weeks' leave payable at 90% of normal pay;
- 12 weeks' leave payable at 50% of normal pay, plus Statutory Maternity Pay at the relevant rate; (capped at 100% of normal pay) and
- 21 weeks' leave payable at the relevant rate of SMP

NB: Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid to employees who have at least 26 weeks' service immediately before the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and whose pay is above the Lower Earnings Limit for paying National Insurance Contributions (this changes each year). Employees who earn below that amount may be entitled to a state benefit called Maternity Allowance. The Council will provide you with an appropriate form to help you claim this, where appropriate.

To pay SMP, the Council needs to be given at least 28 days' notice that you intend to claim it. This will normally be given when you inform the Council of your intended start date for maternity leave. If it is not possible to give 28 days' notice, you should give as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

SMP is paid for a maximum total of 39 weeks. The first 6 weeks are paid at 90 per cent of your normal weekly earnings (this is based on an average of your total earnings in the eight weeks immediately preceding the 14th week before your expected week of childbirth) and the remaining 33 weeks are paid at a flat rate specified in legislation (this changes each year).

Your entitlement to SMP will be affected if you undertake any paid work (other than 'Keeping in Touch' days, described below) or are taken into legal custody at any time during your period of SMP entitlement. You should inform the Council immediately of any such change in your circumstances.

Returning to Work Early

Not every employee will want to take the full 52 weeks of maternity leave. Some may simply want to return to work early and others may wish (with their partner) to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave (see below).

In order to make arrangements to accommodate an early return the Council is entitled to ask for 8 weeks' notice of the new date, and if that is not given may delay your return until 8 weeks have passed since your notification.

In any event the law requires that you must not be permitted to return to work during the two weeks immediately following the birth.

Returning to Work Late

Following your maternity leave, you are required to return to work on the date notified to you as your expected date of return. If you are unwell on that date then you should follow the sickness absence procedure set out in Section 5.2 of this handbook.

If you are entitled to begin some other period of leave (such as annual leave or parental leave) then you should ensure that you have followed the appropriate procedure for taking such leave as set out in this handbook.

Maternity Suspension (Health and Safety Reasons)

Depending on the nature of your job, there may be circumstances in which it is unsafe for you to continue working while you are pregnant. In some circumstances the law requires a pregnant employee to be suspended on full pay or transferred to alternative duties. Jobs which may come under this category are identified in the risk assessments that the Council has carried out under its health and safety policy. If you are affected by any health and safety issues connected with your pregnancy then the Council will discuss any detailed arrangements that need to be made until it is safe for you to return to your original duties.

Maternity Support Leave

Paid Maternity support leave of 5 days will also be granted to the child's father or the partner or the nominated carer of the expectant mother at or around the time of the birth. A nominated carer is the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of the birth.

4.3 Adoption Leave

Employees who are matched with a child for adoption may be entitled to take up to 52 weeks' adoption leave.

Adoption leave is also available to individuals fostering a child under the "Fostering for Adoption" scheme.

Where two parents are adopting a child, only one of them may take adoption leave, and the other (regardless of gender) is entitled to take paternity leave. If both adoptive parents qualify, they may each take shared parental leave.

The arrangements for taking adoption leave are similar to the arrangements for taking maternity leave, but there are several important differences. The key ones are set out below, but if you believe you are entitled to adoption leave you should discuss the situation with an appropriate manager who will ensure that you have all the necessary information.

Notification

If you intend to take adoption leave you should notify the Council of this within seven days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption (or as soon as is reasonably practicable).

Your notification should set out:

- the date when the child is expected to be placed with you; and

- the date when you want to start your adoption leave.

As with maternity leave, you can change your mind about the start date provided the Council is given at least 28 days – or as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

The Council is entitled to require proof of the adoption which usually takes the form of a matching certificate provided by the agency placing the child.

Adoption leave is the same in duration as that of maternity leave and will last for 52 weeks unless you choose to return early or take advantage of shared parental leave. You may choose to start the leave from the date when the child is placed with you or at any time in the preceding two weeks.

If, for any reason, the placement is brought to an end – for example because the match turns out to be unsuitable – then adoption leave will continue for 8 weeks beyond the end of the placement. After that period you will be expected to return to work as normal.

Adoption Pay

The arrangements for statutory adoption pay are similar to those for SMP (set out above).

Enhanced Adoption Pay

Commented [RH2]: I have included Green Book enhanced adoption pay. Let me know if you don't pay this.

The Council offers enhanced Adoption pay in line with the provisions of the Green book. An employee who meets the other qualifying criteria listed in this policy, and who have more than one year's continuous service at the point of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth will be entitled to enhanced Adoption pay as follows:

- 6 weeks' leave payable at 90% of normal weekly earnings;
- 12 weeks' leave payable at 50% of normal weekly earnings, plus Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) at the relevant rate (capped at 100% of normal pay); and
- 21 weeks' leave payable at the relevant rate of SAP

NB: Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

Returning to Work Following Adoption Leave

Your return to work at the end of your adoption leave is on the same basis as for the end of maternity leave (set out above).

4.4 Paternity Leave

Employees with 26 weeks' continuous service as at the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth will be entitled to take paternity leave if they expect to have parental responsibility for a child and they are either the mother's partner or one of the adoptive parents. The purpose of the leave must be either to care for the child or to provide support for the child's mother or adoptive parent.

There are a number of administrative requirements that must be met in relation to taking paternity leave and employees should discuss their plans with their line manager at as early a stage as possible. The following paragraphs set out the basic requirements, but there are additional requirements that must be met when adopting

a child from overseas and employees in this position should talk to their manager who will make sure that full information is provided.

Employees entitled to take paternity leave are entitled to take either one or two weeks of leave. If two weeks are taken they must be consecutive and no individual days can be taken except with the agreement of the Council.

Paternity leave cannot start before a child is born and must be taken at some stage within the first eight weeks following birth (except when the child is born prematurely in which case the leave must be taken within the eight weeks following the expected week of childbirth).

Most new parents choose to begin paternity leave on the date their child is born, but you may if you wish begin the leave at any time you choose provided that the whole of the leave is taken by the end of those eight weeks.

In order to qualify for paternity leave you must notify the Council at least 15 weeks before the expected week of your child's birth or within 7 days of having been notified that a child will be placed for adoption. Your notification should specify how much leave you intend to take and when you intend the leave to begin. Should your plans change, you will need to give the Council 28 days' notice of any revision.

Paternity leave is payable at the statutory rate, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with the town clerk.

4.5 Parental Leave

Parental leave is a flexible form of unpaid leave designed to help employees spend time caring for their children. Parental leave can be taken up until the child's 18th birthday and is available to employees who have at least one year's service and who have formal parental responsibility for a child.

The basic entitlement is to 18 weeks of unpaid leave in respect of each child.

Parental leave must usually be taken in blocks of one week or more and no more than four weeks' leave will be granted in a single year. However, more flexibility is available in respect of disabled children and you should discuss your requirements with the town clerk if this applies to you.

A request to take parental leave should be submitted 21 days in advance. While the Council will always try to accommodate requests for parental leave, it has the right to postpone any leave for up to six months in order to accommodate business need.

No postponement will be required if you choose to take your first instalment of leave immediately after the birth or adoption of your child. In such circumstances you need only inform the Council of your intention 21 days before the expected date of birth or placement. The leave will then begin automatically when your child is born or placed with you.

Parental leave is an entitlement that can be transferred from one employment to another. You may therefore join the Council with some outstanding parental leave attaching to a particular child. In such circumstances you should be aware that the qualifying period for taking parental leave still applies and you will need to have been employed for at least one year before you can resume taking parental leave.

4.6 Shared Parental Leave

Shared parental leave is a flexible form of leave available to both parents designed to encourage shared parenting in the first year of a child's life. It allows a more flexible pattern of leave than the traditional arrangement under which the mother takes extensive maternity leave and the father takes a short period of paternity leave.

Employees who give birth or adopt remain entitled to take the full 52 weeks of leave if they choose to do so and the arrangements described above for maternity and adoption leave continue to apply. However, an employee may choose to share part of that leave with their partner provided that certain qualifying conditions are met. When leave is shared in this way, there is no need for the 'primary' leave taker to have returned to work. Both parents can be on leave at the same time, provided that the combined amount of leave taken by the parents does not exceed 52 weeks and provided that all of the leave is taken before the end of 52 weeks following the birth of the child or its placement for adoption.

Generally, parents will qualify for shared parental leave provided that both are working and that each has at least 26 weeks' service with their respective employers. To exercise the right, both parents must inform their employer that they intend to take shared parental leave – usually at the same time as the employer is notified that an employee is pregnant or plans to adopt. They must also give an indication of the pattern of leave that they propose to take.

A parent proposing to take a period of shared parental leave must give the Council 8 weeks' notice of any such leave. Depending on the circumstances, it may be possible for the Shared Parental Leave to be taken in intermittent blocks, with one parent returning to work for a time before taking another period of shared parental leave. Such an arrangement can only be made with the agreement of the Council. While every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of individual employees, the Council may insist on shared parental leave being taken in a single instalment. Any decision as to whether to permit intermittent periods of leave is entirely at the Council's discretion.

An employee absent on shared parental leave will be entitled to a weekly payment equivalent to the lower fixed rate of SMP. The number of weeks for which payment will be made will vary depending on the amount of SMP paid to the mother while on maternity leave. Essentially, if the mother ends (or proposes to end) her leave with 10 weeks of SMP entitlement remaining, the parent taking shared parental leave will be entitled to be paid for the first 10 weeks of leave.

Because of the number of options available, shared parental leave can be quite a complicated entitlement. If you want to take advantage of shared parental leave you should discuss this with the town clerk who will check that you qualify and help guide you through the procedure.

4.7 Keeping in Touch Days

Employees during a period of maternity, adoption or shared parental leave are entitled to 10 keeping in touch days (KIT days). These allow the employee to attend work to catch up on the latest developments, undergo training or some other development activity, or to take part in important meetings without losing their right to subsequent pay entitlements. Employees on shared parental leave are entitled to a further 20 KIT days.

These ‘keeping in touch days’ are entirely voluntary and employees will not be required to take part, nor is the Council under any obligation to arrange for keeping in touch days.

Any payment for attending work on such days will be agreed between the Council and the employee at the time the keeping in touch day is arranged.

There is no legal requirement to receive pay for these days.

4.8 During Maternity/Adoption or Shared Parental Leave

The Council is keen to keep in touch with employees who are on extended periods of leave, to inform them of any news and consult them over any changes which may take place in the business. However, we appreciate that many employees would prefer to be left alone at this very important time in their lives. In order to get the balance right, your manager may, before your leave begins, discuss with you how best we can keep in touch while you are away.

Please be aware, however, that if an important issue arises on which you need to be consulted, the Council may have a legal obligation to discuss the issue with you and keep you informed.

5 HOW WE RESOLVE ISSUES

When problems arise in the employment relationship it is important that they are dealt with fairly and promptly. This section sets out the procedures that the Council will follow in such cases.

Recording of meetings: Due to the confidential nature of disciplinary and grievance proceedings you must not make electronic or audio recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under the procedures set out in section 5. You should ensure that any companion you may bring with you to such meetings is also aware of this rule.

5.1 Performance Improvement Procedure

It is in everybody's interest for employees to perform well at their jobs and the Council aims to ensure that all employees are given the support needed to ensure that they do so. Where there are issues with performance then the employee should receive feedback from their manager setting out any concerns. Discussions should take place about how that performance can be improved. This procedure is designed to be used when such informal discussions do not lead to the employee's performance improving to an acceptable level.

Where an employee's poor performance is believed to be the result of deliberate neglect, or where serious errors have been made to the detriment of the Council then it may be more appropriate to use the disciplinary procedure. Which procedure to use shall be at the discretion of the Council.

The Council also reserves the right not to follow this procedure in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

The Right to be Accompanied

Employees are entitled to be accompanied at any formal meeting held under this procedure by a fellow employee or trade union official of their choice. The Council will provide any chosen companions with appropriate paid time off to allow them to attend the meeting. It is, however, up to the employee in question to arrange for a companion to attend the meeting.

If your chosen companion cannot attend on the day scheduled for the meeting then the Council will agree a new date. This will usually be within 5 working days of the date originally scheduled. If your companion is not available within that timescale then you may need to find someone else to take their place.

The Companion's role is to advise you during the meeting and make representations on your behalf. However, both you and your companion are required to cooperate in ensuring a fair and efficient meeting. The companion is not entitled to answer questions on your behalf.

Stage One

The employee's manager will inform them of the nature of the problem and confirm this in writing. The employee will be invited to a meeting to discuss the issues raised by the manager's concerns. The meeting will be conducted by the employee's line

manager and will consider any representations the employee may make about their performance, whether it needs to be improved, and if so what steps can be taken to help the employee reach the appropriate level.

Following discussion of the problem, the line manager may choose to take no further action; to refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure or to issue a written warning and Performance Improvement Plan which will remain current for a period of 12 months.

Performance Improvement Plan

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a series of measures designed to help improve the employee's performance. Each measure will ideally be agreed with the employee, though the Council reserves the right to insist on any aspect of the PIP in the absence of such agreement.

Each PIP will be tailored to the particular situation, but will contain the following elements:

Timescale: the overall timescale in which the necessary improvement must be achieved will be set out, together with the timescale for reaching individual milestones where appropriate.

Targets: The PIP will specify the particular areas in which improvement is needed and set out how and on what criteria the employee's performance will be assessed. Where appropriate, specific targets will be set which will need to be achieved either by the end of the plan or at identifiable stages within it.

Measures: The PIP will specify what measures will be taken by the Council to support the employee in improving their performance. Such measures may include training, additional supervision, the reallocation of other duties, or the provision of additional support from colleagues.

Feedback: As part of the PIP the employee will be given regular feedback from their line manager indicating the extent to which the employee is on track to deliver the improvements set out in the plan

If at any stage the Council feels that the PIP is not progressing in a satisfactory way, a further meeting may be held with the employee to discuss the issue. As a result of such a meeting the employer may amend or extend any part of the plan.

Review

At the end of the PIP the employee's performance will be reviewed. If satisfactory progress has been made the employee will be notified of this fact in writing. If the manager feels that progress has been insufficient then they may decide to extend and/or amend the PIP to such extent as seems appropriate. Alternatively the manager may refer the matter to a meeting under Stage Two of this procedure.

Following the successful completion of a PIP the employee's performance will continue to be monitored. If at any stage during the lifetime of the first written warning the employee's performance again starts to fall short of an acceptable standard, their line manager may decide to institute stage two of this procedure.

Stage Two

If a PIP has not led to sufficient improvement in the employee's performance, the employee will be invited to attend a formal performance management hearing. The invitation will set out the respects in which the line manager believes that the employee's performance still falls short of an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by a member of the senior management team.

At the hearing, the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to any criticism of their performance and to make representations about any aspect of the way in which the process has been managed.

If the hearing concludes that reasonable steps have been taken which should have allowed the employee to perform to an acceptable standard but that these measures have not worked then a **formal final warning** may be issued. The warning will explain the nature of the improvement which is required in the employee's performance and state that the improvement must be immediate and sustained. It will also explain that if this improvement does not take place then the employee may be dismissed. Where it is appropriate, the warning may be accompanied by an extended or revised PIP.

The warning will remain current for a period of 12 months, after which time it will cease to have effect.

Stage Three

If an employee has been issued with a warning under Stage Two which remains current, and the appropriate manager believes that the employee's performance is still not acceptable then the matter may be referred to a further performance management hearing.

The employee will be informed in writing of the grounds of which the hearing is being convened and in particular will be told of the respects in which their performance continues to fall below an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by an appropriate manager.

At the meeting the employee will be able to respond to any criticisms made of their performance and make representations about how the situation should be treated.

The manager conducting the meeting may take such action as is judged appropriate up to and including a decision to dismiss the employee.

Any dismissal under this procedure will be with notice or payment in lieu of notice and the decision to dismiss together with the reasons for dismissal will be set out in writing and sent to the employee.

Appeals

An employee may appeal against any decision taken under this procedure. The appeal should be submitted in writing stating your full grounds of appeal within one week of the action complained of. An appeal hearing will then be convened to consider the matter. Any PIP that is in force, together with any measures or objectives included within it, will continue in place during the appeal process.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed to the employee in writing explaining the grounds of which the decision was reached. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Redeployment

There may be circumstances in which it becomes clear that an employee would be better suited to a different role within the Council. However, any offer to redeploy the employee will be entirely at the Council's discretion and will only be made when the Council is confident that the employee will be able to perform well in the redeployed role and where there is a suitable available vacancy.

Redeployment may be offered as an alternative to dismissal where the Council is satisfied that the employee should no longer be allowed to continue to work in their current role. While the employee is free to refuse any offer of redeployment, the only alternative available in these circumstances will usually be dismissal.

5.2 Sickness Absence Procedure

The Council may need to dismiss an employee whose attendance does not meet an acceptable standard either because of a long-term absence or because of a series of short-term absences. Such dismissals do not depend on any wrongdoing on the employee's part and do not mean that the Council does not accept that their absences are genuinely due to illness or injury. Rather, dismissal is recognition that unfortunately the employee is no longer able to perform their role, or attend work on a sufficiently regular basis to make their continued employment a viable option.

Short-term Absence

An employee who the Council considers to have an excessive sickness absence record will be spoken to informally and usually have specific attendance targets set and be advised if these are breached, they will be invited to a meeting to discuss their attendance. The meeting will usually be conducted by the employee's line manager and the employee will have a right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official on the same basis as set out in the performance management procedure.

At the meeting the employee will be asked to explain the level of their absence. Where there is any indication that the absences are caused by an underlying medical condition then the matter may be dealt with under the procedure for long-term absence set out below. The Council may also seek medical evidence from either the employee's doctor or an occupational health specialist in which case the meeting will be adjourned for a report to be obtained

Subject to any medical evidence, the manager conducting this first-stage meeting may decide to issue a warning to the employee setting out the Council's expectations regarding attendance and indicating the level of improvement needed. A review period will normally be set which may range from one month to 12 months depending on the circumstances.

If the employee's attendance does not improve to the extent required they may at any stage in the review period be invited to attend a second-stage meeting to discuss the matter. The meeting will again be conducted by the line manager and the employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official. This meeting may result in an extension of the review period or the issuing of a final written warning requiring the employee's attendance to improve and setting out the level of improvement required over a specified period of up to one year.

If the employee does not meet this standard and there is no underlying condition where reasonable adjustments would assist the employee to attend then they may be

dismissed. A final meeting will be convened which shall be conducted by a manager with appropriate authority to dismiss and will consider any representations made by or on behalf of the employee who will once again have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official.

Any dismissal arising out of this meeting will be with notice.

There is a right of appeal against a decision to dismiss which must be exercised within five working days of the decision being communicated.

Long-term Sickness Absence

Where an employee is absent for an extended period – or it is clear that their absence is likely to continue for some time – then the Council will want to investigate the prospects for their return and consider what actions can be taken to facilitate this. The extent to which the Council can continue to accommodate an employee's absence will depend on a range of factors, including the role of the employee and the prevailing circumstances of the business.

The Council may seek medical advice as to the employee's condition either from the appropriate professionals caring for the employee or from a specialist occupational health practitioner. The focus will be on ascertaining when the employee will be able to return to work and what steps the Council can take to facilitate this.

An employee is not obliged to consent to any medical reports or records being shared with the Council as part of this process. However, in the absence of medical evidence the Council will have to work on the basis of what information is available in reaching its decision.

One or more meetings will be arranged with the employee to discuss their condition, the prospects for any return to work, and whether anything more can be done by the Council to help. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow employee or trade union official.

Every effort will be made to make suitable arrangements for the meeting to allow the employee to attend. Where the employee is simply too ill to take part in the process, however, the Council may proceed to dismissal in the absence of a meeting taking into account any representations made on the employee's behalf.

Where it appears that the employee will be unable to return to work within a reasonable time frame then the Council may need to consider dismissal. Any dismissal will be with notice.

There is a right of appeal against a decision to dismiss which must be exercised within five working days of the decision being communicated. You should submit your appeal in writing stating your full grounds of appeal.

The Council reserves the right not to follow these procedures in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

5.3 Disciplinary Procedure

The Council always tries to deal with disciplinary issues fairly and promptly. This procedure sets out the framework under which allegations of misconduct will be investigated and considered. While the procedure set out in this policy will be appropriate in most cases, there may be situations in which it is not practicable to

comply with a particular requirement of it. When this happens the Council will do its best to deal with the matter fairly and will pay particular attention to the need to give the employee every opportunity to explain their version of events.

The Council reserves the right not to follow this procedure in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

Definition of Misconduct

Behaviour which is disruptive, disrespectful to colleagues, or which falls short of the requirements set out in this handbook will be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure. While employees will not usually be dismissed for a first offence a failure to remedy the behaviour or to adhere to required standards may ultimately lead to dismissal once appropriate warnings have been given.

Definition of Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is behaviour which is fundamentally at odds with the employee's duty to the Council and their colleagues. In accordance with the disciplinary procedure, gross misconduct will usually result in dismissal without notice, or payment in lieu of notice, even in cases of a first offence.

It is not possible to list every example of gross misconduct which may arise, but the following provides an illustration of the sort of conduct that will fall into this category – some of which are then explained in more detail below:

- Theft;
- Deliberate acts of discrimination or harassment;
- Refusal to carry out reasonable instructions;
- Violent or intimidating behaviour;
- Wilful damage to property;
- Reckless behaviour posing a risk to health and safety;
- Any act or omission constituting serious or gross negligence/or dereliction of duty;
- Sleeping on duty;
- recording audio and/or video of any meeting, conversation or discussion with another person or people without the express prior consent of the person or people being recorded;
- Any illegal act during working time or on Council premises; and
- Any act described as gross misconduct elsewhere in this handbook.

Informal Action

Most minor acts of misconduct can be dealt with informally through discussions between an employee and their line manager. This may consist of management guidance or an informal warning given orally or in writing. These steps are an everyday

part of the management process and no formal procedure needs to be followed in respect of them.

Where informal action of this kind fails to resolve an issue, or where the misconduct alleged is considered too serious, then the matter will be dealt with formally under this procedure.

Investigation

If it is alleged that you have committed misconduct, an appropriate investigation will be carried out aimed at gathering all of the relevant evidence. You may be interviewed as part of this investigation and will have the opportunity to point the investigator towards any evidence that you feel is relevant. The right to be accompanied (see below) does not apply to any investigatory interview.

Suspension

If an allegation of misconduct is made against you, then you may be suspended from your duties on full pay while the matter is being dealt with. The Council will make every effort to ensure that any period of suspension is kept as short as possible. The purpose of a suspension is either to allow an unhindered investigation to take place, or to protect the interests of the Council and its employees. During any period of suspension you may be instructed not to contact other members of staff except for the purposes of preparing for any disciplinary hearing, where specific arrangements will be made with you. This is not a disciplinary sanction and should not been seen as a predetermination of any disciplinary process.

Hearing

Once the investigation has been carried out, the investigating officer will make a decision about whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a disciplinary hearing. If there is you will be informed of this and an appropriate date for the hearing will be arranged. This will take place within normal working hours wherever possible.

To ensure that you have adequate time to prepare for the hearing, the Council will provide you in advance with a copy of all of the written evidence that will be considered at the hearing. In exceptional cases the Council may need to withhold the identities of certain witnesses or hold back sensitive items of evidence. This will only be done where it is considered necessary to protect individuals or the essential interests of the Council and every effort will be made to ensure that you are given as much information as possible so that a fair hearing can be conducted.

You will be given sufficient notice of any hearing to allow you to prepare for it. While this will vary from case to case, the Council will generally try to give at least two days' notice of any hearing and in complicated cases a longer period of notice may be given.

The purpose of the hearing will be to consider the evidence gathered during the investigation and to consider any representations made by you or on your behalf. The hearing will be conducted by an appropriate manager who, wherever possible, has not previously been involved in the case and who was not responsible for carrying out the investigation.

The Right to be Accompanied

Employees are entitled to be accompanied at any disciplinary hearing by a fellow employee or trade union official of their choice. The Council will provide any chosen

companion with appropriate paid time off to allow them to attend the hearing. It is, however, up to the employee in question to arrange for a companion to attend the hearing.

If your chosen companion cannot attend on the day scheduled for the hearing then the Council will agree a new date. This will usually be within 5 working days of the date originally scheduled. If your companion is not available within that timescale then you may need to find someone else to take their place.

The companion's role is to advise you during the hearing and make representations on your behalf; it is not to answer questions for you. However, both you and your companion are required to cooperate in ensuring a fair and efficient hearing. The companion cannot answer questions on your behalf.

Evidence

The hearing will consider any evidence you choose to present. Should witnesses be prepared to appear on your behalf they will be permitted to do so provided that their evidence is relevant to the issues that need to be decided. The Council will not compel or require any employee to appear as a witness on your behalf and in most circumstances evidence arising from the investigation will be presented in written form. You will be entitled to challenge any of the evidence presented but will not be entitled to cross-examine witnesses.

Disciplinary Action

After considering all of the evidence, including any submissions made by you or on your behalf, the manager conducting the hearing will decide on the outcome. If misconduct is found to have taken place then the usual outcome will be a **written warning** which will be placed on your personnel file.

A warning will stay active for a period of 1 year, after which it will not be taken into account in any future disciplinary action.

If however a further instance of misconduct is found to have occurred (in accordance with this procedure) during the currency of a warning – or if any misconduct is considered to be serious enough to warrant it – then, subject to the formal process above being followed, you will be issued with a **final written warning**.

A **final written warning** will usually remain active for one year, but a longer period may be specified if the manager conducting the hearing feels that the circumstances warrant it.

An employee who is found to have committed further misconduct during a period covered by a final written warning will, following a hearing conducted in accordance with this procedure, generally be dismissed.

Dismissal

An employee will not normally be dismissed under this procedure for a single instance of misconduct unless a final written warning is already in place. However, where gross misconduct is found to have occurred then dismissal without notice or payment in lieu will be the usual outcome.

Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it fundamentally undermines the relationship between employer and employee. If you are accused of gross

misconduct this will be made clear when you are invited to a disciplinary hearing. A wide range of behaviours can amount to gross misconduct but the most common involve dishonesty, violent or aggressive behaviour, the wilful destruction of Council property or a deliberate refusal to obey a reasonable instruction.

Appeal

An employee may appeal against the outcome of a disciplinary hearing by doing so in writing stating your full grounds of appeal within one week of being notified of the outcome. The person to whom an appeal should be directed will be detailed in the disciplinary outcome letter. An appeal hearing will be convened and conducted by an appropriate member of the senior management team.

The appeal will consider any grounds the employee chooses to put forward and they will have the same right to be accompanied as at a disciplinary hearing. The result of the appeal hearing will be final.

Employee Absence

It is important that disciplinary issues are dealt with promptly. The Council may therefore need to proceed with a disciplinary hearing even if the employee is absent due to ill health or simply does not attend. Before hearing the matter in an employee's absence, the Council will attempt to arrange the hearing in such a way that the employee will be able to attend or to submit written representations to the hearing and/or to arrange for an appropriate representative to attend the hearing on their behalf.

5.4 Grievance Procedure

The Council aims to be responsive to concerns raised by employees and if you are unhappy with something affecting you at work you are encouraged to raise this with your manager or in the case of the Clerk this should be addressed to the Personnel Committee on an informal basis. If that is not possible then you should speak to another manager who will try to assist you in resolving any issue you may have. The following procedure is designed to be used when these informal attempts to resolve any dispute have not been successful.

Any written complaint or grievance raised which alleges that a member or co-opted member of the authority has failed to comply with the authority's Code of Conduct will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct Procedure.

Examples of issues that could be dealt with under the grievance procedure include:

(a) terms and conditions of employment;

(b) health and safety;

(c) work relations;

(d) bullying and harassment;

(e) new working practices;

(f) working environment;

(g) organisational change; and

(h) discrimination.

The Grievance Procedure should not be used to complain about issues which do not directly relate to, or impact on, you and your work/ working environment.

The Grievance Procedure should not be used to complain about disciplinary action, reasonable action taken under the Performance Management Procedure or Sickness Absence Procedure. Any such complaints should be dealt with under the relevant appeal procedure.

Raising a Grievance

If you feel that the matter needs to be raised formally you should raise a grievance by making a written complaint, stating that it is being made under this procedure. You should give as much information about your grievance, including any relevant dates and times, as you can, so as to allow for any investigation into your concerns to take place.

We would expect you to raise any grievance as soon as possible and, in any event, unless in exceptional circumstances, no later than 6 months after the occurrence of the issue complained of.

A grievance will normally be dealt with by your manager and should be addressed to them directly. In the case of the Clerk this should be addressed to the Personnel Committee on a formal basis. Where the grievance is directly concerned with your manager's behaviour, however, you should submit your grievance to another member of the management team who will arrange for somebody who is not directly involved in the issue to deal with it.

Grievance Hearing

A grievance hearing will then be arranged so that you can explain the issue and suggest how it can be resolved. You will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official as described in Section 5.1, above. The manager conducting the hearing will consider what you have said and may either deal with the matter immediately or decide to carry out further investigations. In that case the hearing will be adjourned until the investigation has been completed.

Once the investigations are concluded, if new information comes to light, if it is considered appropriate, you may be invited in to a reconvened meeting, to have the opportunity to consider and respond to the findings of the investigation. Following this a decision on the outcome of your grievance will be made.

Allegations of Misconduct

Where an employee is making allegations of misconduct on the part of other employees then the Council may need to carry out an investigation into the allegations and pursue the matter through the disciplinary procedure. Where this happens, the grievance will be held over until the disciplinary process has been concluded.

Relationship with Other Procedures

Where your grievance relates to the conduct of other procedures such as the disciplinary or performance management procedures then the Council may choose to either delay the consideration of the grievance until that procedure has been completed

or to deal with the grievance in the course of that procedure or by way of appeal if that appears to be a fairer or more straightforward way of dealing with the issue.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a grievance then you may appeal. You should submit your appeal in writing within one week of being informed of the outcome of your grievance. Your appeal should be directed to the Chair of the Council. An appeal hearing will then be convened and conducted by a Panel drawn from the Full Council. You will have the right to be accompanied at the appeal by a fellow employee or trade union official as described in Section 5.1. The outcome of any appeal will be final.

The Council aims to be responsive to concerns raised by employees and if you are unhappy with something affecting you at work you are encouraged to raise this with your line manager. If that is not possible then you should speak to a member of the management team who will try to assist you in resolving any issue you may have. The following procedure is designed to be used when these informal attempts to resolve any dispute have not been successful.

5.5 Redundancy Policy

Commented [RH3]: Do you pay enhanced redundancy pay over and above the statutory rates? If so, please supply details as the Council is required to publish details as to how any enhanced redundancy payments are calculated.

About this policy

We will always try to avoid the need for compulsory redundancies but sometimes these may be necessary. The pattern or volume of our business or methods of working may change and requirements for employees may reduce.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that, whenever reduction in employee numbers may become necessary:

(a) we communicate clearly with all affected employees and ensure that they are treated fairly;

(b) we try to find ways of avoiding compulsory redundancies;

(c) we consult with employees (and where appropriate with recognised trade unions and / or employee representatives); and

(d) any selection for compulsory redundancy is undertaken fairly, reasonably and without discrimination.

This policy applies to all employees. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

Avoiding compulsory redundancies

Where we are proposing to make redundancies we will enter into consultation with all affected employees on an individual basis and, where appropriate, also with recognised trade unions and / or employee representatives.

In the first instance we will consider steps that might, depending on the circumstances, be taken to avoid the need for compulsory redundancies. Examples of such steps include:

(a) Reviewing the use of agency staff, self-employed contractors and consultants.

(b) Restricting recruitment in affected categories of employee and in those areas into which affected employees might be redeployed.

(c) Reducing overtime in affected departments to that needed to meet contractual commitments or provide essential services.

(d) Freezing salaries for a specified period.

(e) Considering the introduction of short-time working, job-sharing or other flexible working arrangements, where these are practicable.

(f) Identifying suitable alternative work with the Council that might be offered to potentially redundant employees.

(g) Inviting applications for early retirement or voluntary redundancy. In all cases the acceptance of a volunteer for redundancy will be a matter of our discretion and we reserve the right not to offer voluntary redundancy terms or to refuse an application where it is not in the interests of our business to do so.

Any measures adopted must not adversely affect our operations.

Making compulsory redundancies

When it is not possible to avoid making compulsory redundancies, we will advise all affected employees and, where appropriate, recognised trade unions and / or employee representatives that compulsory redundancies cannot be avoided and on the procedure that will then be followed and the criteria that will be applied.

In carrying out any redundancy exercise we will not discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or age. Part-time employees and those working under fixed-term contracts will not be treated differently to permanent, full-time comparators.

The criteria used to select those employees who will potentially be made redundant will be objective, transparent and fair and based on the skills required to meet our existing and anticipated business needs.

We will then consult individually with those employees who have been provisionally selected for redundancy.

Where selection for redundancy is confirmed, employees selected for redundancy will be given notice of termination of employment in accordance with their contracts and written confirmation of the payments that they will receive. Employees will be given the opportunity to appeal against this decision.

We will continue to look for alternative employment for redundant employees until their termination dates. The manner in which redundant employees will be invited to apply for and be interviewed for vacancies will be organised depending on the circumstances existing at the time. Alternative employment may be offered subject to a trial period where appropriate.

6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

6.1 Equal Opportunities Statement

We are equal opportunity employer and are fully committed to a policy of treating all of our employees and job applicants equally in all aspects of employment including: recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal.

We will take all reasonable steps to employ, train and promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities and qualifications, without regard to race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership or disability. In this Policy these are known as the "Protected Characteristics".

We will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability alone. We will also take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment based upon any of the Protected Characteristics. We will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with us, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with us to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under our Disciplinary Procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

Employees must not harass, bully or intimidate other employees for reasons related to one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

You should draw to the attention of your line manager any suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment. You must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct. Employees should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with

customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.
- Associative discrimination or discrimination by association – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- Discrimination by perception – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
- Indirect discrimination - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.
- Victimisation – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination or are suspected of doing so.
- Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified unfavourable treatment because of something arising in consequence of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Our Commitment

Recruitment

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant abilities and qualifications. We are committed to applying our equal opportunities policy statement at all stages of recruitment and selection.

Recruitment publicity will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified people when advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community.

Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular Protected Characteristics. However, where having regard to the nature and context of the work, having a particular Protected Characteristics is an occupational requirement and that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, we will apply that requirement to the job role and this may therefore be specified in the advertisement.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. We will ensure that this equal opportunities policy is available to all staff, and in particular is given to all staff with responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion.

The selection of new staff will be based on job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question. Person specification and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment, promotion or transfer will be assessed objectively against the requirements of the job.

With disabled job applicants, we will have regard to our duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria and practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

All applications will be processed consistently. The staff responsible for short listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application. All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job.

Training, transfer and promotion

We will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all line managers in order to familiarise them with our policy on equal opportunities, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible. The training will also enable line managers to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

We will also provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the equal opportunities and anti-harassment policies and what they can do to create a work environment that is free of bullying and harassment.

All persons responsible for selecting new employees, employees for training or employees for transfer or promotion to other jobs will be instructed not to discriminate because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The promotional system will be checked from time to time in order to assess how it is working in practice.

When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular Protected Characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, our systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of one or more of the Protected Characteristics.

Equal pay and equality of terms

We are committed to equal pay in employment. We believe our male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, we will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

6.2 Bullying and Harassment

We are committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. This includes harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions.

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to a Protected Characteristic. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

(a) unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;

(b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);

(c) offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;

(d) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), by way of example:

(a) physical or psychological threats;

(b) overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;

(c) inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

6.3 Procedure

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to your line manager who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally under our Grievance Procedure.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, we will inform you of our decision. If we consider you have been harassed or bullied by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

6.4 Monitoring equal opportunities and dignity at work

We will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel and pay practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity and dignity at work are being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices. If changes are required, we will implement them. We will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Breaches of this Policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Bullying & Harassment Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Related Policies

This policy is supported by the following other policies and procedures (in the Employee Handbook):

(a) Grievance Procedure.

(b) Disciplinary Procedure.

(c) Flexible Working Procedure.

(d) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave Policies.

(e) Parental Leave Policy.

(f) Time Off for Dependants Policy.

(g) Data Protection Policy.

Eastleigh Town Council

8 / 25 TO RECEIVE THE RECRUITMENT FOR THE ASSET AND OPEN SPACE OFFICER

8 / 25 / 1 To **receive** and **note** the recruitment pack for the Asset and Open Space Officer and the associated recruitment timeline

8 / 25 / 2 To appoint the interview panel for the 15th July



APPOINTMENT OF:

ASSETS and OPEN SPACES OFFICER

TO

EASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

RECRUITMENT INFORMATION PACK

MAY 2025

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for responding to the Council's recent advertisement for this post. We trust that you will find this Recruitment Information Pack, together with the Job Description and Person Specification enclosed of assistance in deciding to apply.

The information is arranged as follows:

1. Role of the Assets and Open Spaces Officer
2. Background to the Council, Information
3. Job Advertisement
4. Job Description & Person Specification
5. Key Terms and Conditions of Employment
6. Application and Selection Process.
7. Application Form

If you would like to apply, please complete the application form (CVs alone will not be acceptable) and submit it by email or print and post by **12 noon on Thursday 26th June 2025** to the email / postal address at the bottom of this page**.** Please note that the recruitment process is being managed by a third party and **all** queries should be directed to the contact details below.

This Recruitment Information Pack will not form part of any subsequent contract of employment.

If you have any questions on the Recruitment Information Pack or the recruitment and selection process, require any further information on the council or the post, or you would like an informal discussion on the role, please contact Reg Williams via the details below.

If as a result of a disability or impairment you would like us to make any special arrangements concerning the completion of your application, or attending for interview, please let us know.

****

Contact: Reg Williams – RW Consultancy

c/o 1 Osmund Walk, Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 6NE

Email: Regzzr1400@gmail.com

Telephone: 07494 760535

THE ROLE OF THE ASSETS and OPEN SPACES OFFICER TO EASTLEIGH TC.

Why Become an Assets and Open Spaces Officer?

Becoming an Assets and Open Spaces Officer to a Town Council is an extremely rewarding job in a local community – the result of work undertaken can be clearly seen by all and will visibly contribute to the well-being and reputation of the Council itself, helping to ensure that the council achieves a range of its aims and objectives.

The role of the Assets and Open Spaces Officer is to manage the Council's public assets, including high profile areas such as open spaces, parks, play areas and other infrastructure to ensure they are maintained to the highest standards possible at all times. In addition, the post will support, work with and alongside the Town Clerk & RFO and other Officers, as well as the elected Councillors in driving the Council forwards. The role is a key, integral part in ensuring that Eastleigh is an attractive and well-maintained place to live, work and visit.

What does the Assets and Open Spaces Officer to the Council do?

The enclosed job description lists the duties in more detail, but the main duties of the job can be summarised as to:

- Support the Town Clerk & RFO, other staff and elected Councillors in providing professional support to ensure the Council can take considered, accurate decisions.
- To be the Council's main point of contact for all matters relating to its assets and open spaces.
- Plan, budget and implement projects as related to the services managed.
- Prepare and manage relevant budgets.
- Oversee maintenance contracts.
- Engage with local residents and other stakeholders to seek views and their priorities.
- Ensure compliance with relevant laws, safety, risk management and so on.

Skills and Attributes Needed

The Assets and Open Spaces Officer should pride themselves in having a good deal of common sense, confidence in dealing with a wide range of differing audiences, be very well organised, and have a real passion for managing the public realm.

The key attributes required are detailed in the person specification included in the Recruitment Information Pack but underwriting these qualities is a sense of public duty - of wanting to be a part of ensuring that the services and functions provided to the residents of the town are as good as is practicable.

GETTING TO EASTLEIGH:

By Road – Eastleigh is located to the east of the M3 and just north of where that motorway meets the M27. It is located just to the north of the large city of Southampton and around 8 miles to the south of Winchester.

By Rail – There is a rail connection in the town to London Waterloo, with several trains per hour though some require a change. It takes up to 90 minutes making Eastleigh a town which is commutable to central London.

By Bus & Coach – Eastleigh has the usual bus services and an extensive national coach station is available at nearby Southampton.

EASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

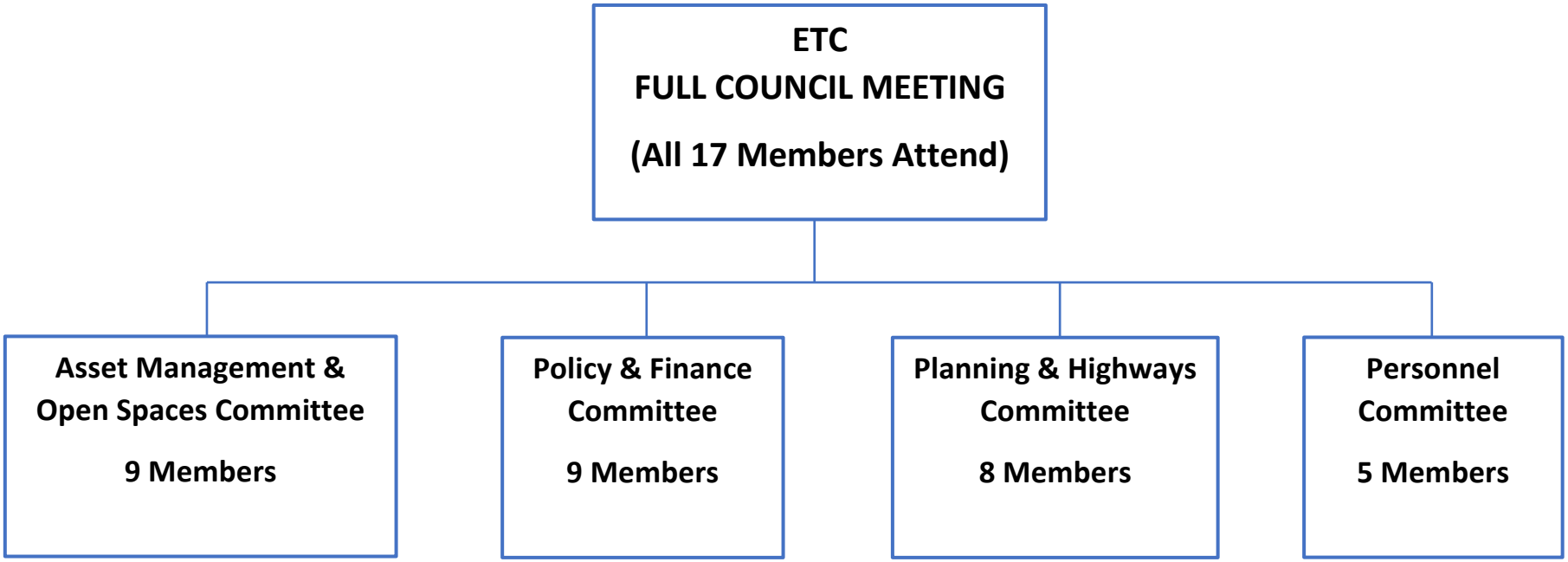
Eastleigh Town Council was created in May 2022 and so is a new, evolving Council within the sector. It is, however, well advanced in setting its vision for the future and has already adopted a set of core values – Choose Local First, Connections, Caring, Safe & Inclusive and Sustainable. This post represents one of the next stages in the Council's evolution to meet its aspirations.

It serves a population of around 21,000 across five electoral wards – Blenheim, Brookwood, Cable, Nightingale and North Stoneham. The five wards are represented by 17 Councillors.

The precept in 2025/26 is £77.57 at Band D, with a tax base of around 5,900 and a budget of just under £500,000.

ETC is a part of a three-tier local government structure, with Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) being the principal area authorities for the county area.

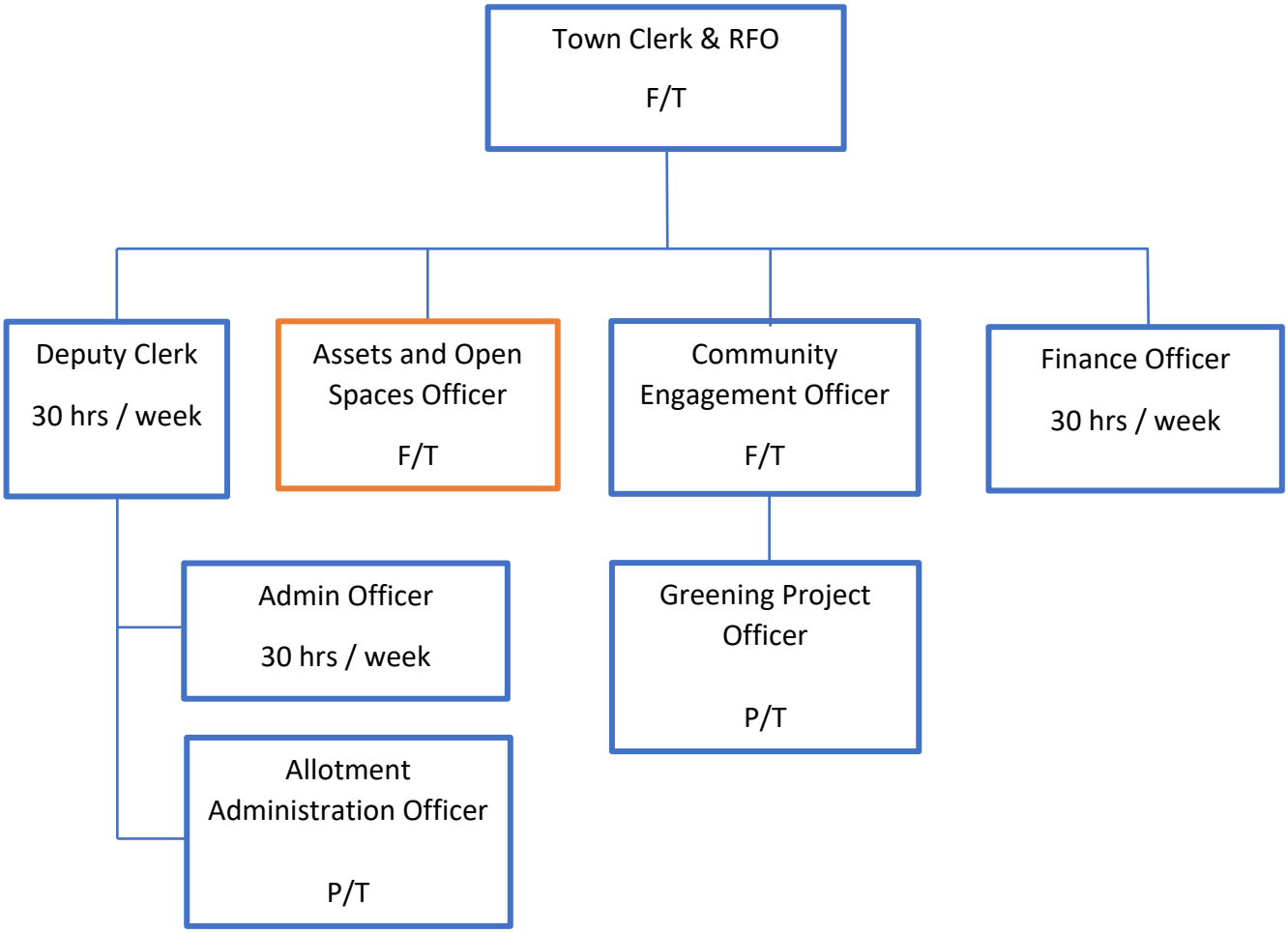
EASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:



PLEASE NOTE:

1. **In addition to this there may be Working Groups which meet on an as and when basis.**

EASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL STAFF STRUCTURE:



NOTES:

- **The Assets and Open Spaces Officer post for which this Recruitment Pack refers is shown in orange.**



Recruitment of an Assets and Open Spaces Officer – Eastleigh Town Council

Salary Scale: NJC SCP 24 – 32 (currently £34,314 to £42,511 p/a inclusive)
(depending on experience and qualifications).

Plus: LGPS or Nest Pension access, Free Parking, Possible TUSKER Car Scheme.

Eastleigh Town Council is seeking to appoint a highly proactive, experienced and enthusiastic Assets and Open Spaces Officer to ensure that the public realm activities of ETC are maintained and managed to the very highest standards. The Officer will also be an active member of the senior management team at the Council, ensuring that the Town Clerk & RFO is supported at all times in reaching the aims and aspirations required by the elected Councillors, residents and stakeholders. This will be very much a pro-active role within the council, and not one for somebody who wants routine and repetition.

The Council is still relatively new, having been established in May 2022, and whilst it does not currently have an adopted Strategic Plan as such, it is a long way down the line of creating one and has already adopted a set of core values. This post will be key in ensuring that the Council's aims and aspirations, as highlighted in those core values are achieved in as effective and efficient manner as possible.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have relevant experience – a track record of working in a grounds and assets maintenance environment, an ability to interact with differing groups of people, have excellent IT skills, experience of managing staff and / or contractors, a working knowledge of preparing and managing budgets, be self-motivated and possess sound communication and organisational skills.

It is not essential that candidates have a level of local government experience, though a basic knowledge of how Local Councils at the Town Council level operate would be of some benefit. Attendance at evening meetings and weekend events may be required occasionally, for which time off in lieu will be granted.

Eastleigh Town Council is committed to Equality of Opportunity and actively welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

This process is being managed by a third party acting for the Town Council. For an informal discussion and to access the Recruitment Pack then please call Mr Reg Williams on 07494 760535.

- **The closing date for the receipt of applications is 12 Noon on Thursday 26th June 2025.**
- **Interviews will take place in Eastleigh on Tuesday 15th July 2025.**
- **It is hoped the new Assets and Open Spaces Officer will commence around 1st September 2025.**

JOB DESCRIPTION

Assets & Open Spaces Officer

Job Grade:	SCP Range: 24 – 32, LC2 Substantive
Contracted Hours:	37 hours per week – incl. meetings
Contracted Days:	Monday to Friday inclusive ** (see below)
Responsible To:	The Town Clerk
Based At:	Cableworks, 14 Annealing Close, Eastleigh SO50 9PX
Car User:	Casual User Only
Job Description Date:	May 2025
Annual Leave:	As per NJC agreements
Politically Restricted Post?	Yes – Due to seniority and role
Enhanced CRB Check?	Yes

**** - but flexible to meet the needs of the business to cover such issues as occasional evening meetings, call out rota and call outs, events and so on.**

Main Purpose of Role:

The Assets and Open Spaces Officer at ETC is responsible for managing the Council's public assets, including parks, green spaces, and other public infrastructure, ensuring their effective and efficient operation and maintenance. This role involves various tasks such as planning, budgeting, coordinating with other Council teams, and ensuring compliance with regulations.

Overall Responsibilities:

The Assets and Open Spaces Officer is the senior officer overseeing a portfolio of services and facilities owned and managed by ETC. Reporting to the Town Clerk, the Assets and Open Spaces Officer will be fully responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its functions are caried out. The post will also form a key part of the senior management team of the Council, supporting and assisting the Town Clerk as required.

The Assets and Open Spaces Officer is expected to advise the Council on, and assist in the formation of, overall policies and strategies to be followed in respect of the services managed and maintained and to produce all the information required for making effective decisions and to implement constructively all decisions.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. As the Town Council's adviser in all matters relating to the service areas managed and maintained, provide the necessary documented recommendations for effective decision making.
2. Implement all decisions of the Council in a timely, efficient, and structured manner.
3. To manage the Council's parks, green spaces, play areas, other open spaces and ancillary services and facilities, including planning, maintenance, and user access.
4. To manage the Council's assets, facilities and buildings, including overseeing the lifecycle of those public assets, including planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, and disposal.
5. Effectively manage and record the Council's asset base.
6. Overseeing contracts for maintenance, landscaping, and other services related to public assets.
7. Ensuring compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and standards for public assets and open spaces.
8. Managing projects related to asset and open space development and improvement.
9. Collect and analyse data on asset and open space performance and reporting on key indicators.
10. In respect of the services managed and maintained, to ensure that the Council always has an approved, up to date, regularly reviewed Risk Register, Risk Management Plan, Risk Assessments and Health and Safety Plans – recommending updates or changes as required.
11. To lead in preparing reports for meetings of the relevant Council committees; to attend such meetings and present reports, answer questions and so on in relation to the services managed and maintained.
12. To prepare in consultation with appropriate Councillors, reports for Working Groups of the Council; attend the meetings and contribute as required in relation to the services managed and maintained.
13. To lead, as appropriate, on the monitoring, management and preparation of tender documents relating to project work, including the spending of s106 and/or CIL contributions as appropriate.
14. To advise Councillors on suggestions and proposals put forward for consideration by the Council and to advise on practicability and the likely effects of specific courses of action in relation to the services managed and maintained.
15. To assist the Town Clerk and the Councillors in preparing the Council's Strategic Plan and implementation of those aspects of any Corporate and/or Strategic Plans adopted by ETC accordingly in relation to the services managed and maintained.
16. To attend training courses on the work and role of the Assets and Open Spaces Officer as required by the Council, including attendance at relevant conferences, seminars, and workshops.
17. To identify new and innovative ways of working to ensure that ETC is as effective and efficient as possible in meeting its obligations and requirements in relation to the services managed and maintained.
18. To support the Town Clerk on initiatives, projects and any other workstream as required from time to time.
19. To take an active and contributory role in being a part of the senior management team at ETC.
20. To manage the Council's depot arrangements, ensuring adherence to all safety requirements.
21. To ensure that the Council's depot and surrounding area is maintained in a professional, clean, and organised manner at all times.
22. To oversee the management and maintenance of the Council's vehicles, plant and machinery and all other ancillary tools and needs required for the service to function to its maximum potential.
23. To be a key part in any discussions and proposals in relation to future devolution opportunities.

Personnel Management:

1. Be responsible for the management, supervision, and control of all staff reports in keeping with the adopted policies of the Council, ensuring they are fully aware of how they contribute to the corporate aims of the Council.
2. To ensure that all staff are employed regarding employment law and good employment practices.
3. To ensure the effective delegation and allocation of responsibilities and activities to any staff.
4. To review the performance of staff at regular intervals, ensuring appropriate training and updating of skills to match the responsibilities and duties in light of annual appraisals.

5. To ensure principles of equality and diversity are always embraced.
6. To ensure that all staff reports are suitably dressed, including the wearing and / or use of PPE where required at all times.

Financial Management:

1. To manage and regularly monitor all revenue and capital budgets and expenditure under the delegated control of the post.
2. Preparing and managing budgets for asset and open space projects, ensuring cost-effectiveness.
3. To liaise with the Finance Officer to ensure all financial information in relation to the services managed and maintained is up to date and accurate.
4. To sign off all invoices received in respect of the services managed and maintained.
5. To ensure compliance with the Council's adopted Financial Regulations when managing budgets in relation to the services managed and maintained.
6. To ensure that the services and facilities managed and maintained are insured at correct levels, advising the Council on all self-insuring options if appropriate.
7. To work alongside the Town Clerk in preparing draft budget estimates for Council consideration in relation to the services managed and maintained.

Civic and Community:

1. To establish and maintain good working relationships with Councillors, employees, voluntary groups, community organisations, other local authorities, and other relevant agencies.
2. Engaging with residents and other stakeholders to understand their needs and priorities related to public assets and open spaces.
3. Working with other council departments and external agencies to achieve common goals.
4. To actively foster and develop relationships with third party organisations of all types, other tiers of local government, neighbouring Councils, and the voluntary sector to enhance Eastleigh as a positive place to live, work and visit.
5. To act as a representative of the Council as required at meetings with key stakeholders and positively promote the Council within the local community to ensure its continued presence in local affairs.
6. To attend and assist with Town Council events as required.

General Duties:

1. To deal with visitors to the Council offices relating to the workstreams managed.
2. To ensure the efficient running of the Council depot, reviewing and monitoring on-site systems, processes and procedures and updating where appropriate to ensure best practices are exercised and maintained.

Personal Duties:

1. To have due regard for your own health and safety and that of any colleagues who may be employed and the general public, and to bring to the attention of the Council without delay any matters which may be prejudicial to health and safety best practices and policies.
2. To treat all colleagues, Councillors, partners, and members of the public with respect and equality.

Note: This job description outlines the main duties and responsibilities of the post and is designed for the benefit of both the post holder and the Council in understanding the prime functions of the post. It should not be regarded as exhaustive as there may be other duties and responsibilities relevant to the grading of the post.

EASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL PERSON SPECIFICATION – ASSETS & OPEN SPACES OFFICER

ESSENTIAL	**DESIRABLE**
EXPERIENCE: • Working in a management role within the work areas related to this post. • Experience of managing a team of staff. • Experience of managing a revenue budget of around £250k p/a, plus capital expenditure.	EXPERIENCE: • Experience of working within Local Government at the Local Council level. • Experience of a range of Local Council software packages.
KNOWLEDGE: • Current and detailed knowledge of grounds maintenance processes and needs. • Good knowledge of facilities management requirements. • Good knowledge of managing a portfolio of property and buildings • Good understanding of the various Data Protection and GDPR Acts. • Knowledge of working in a strategic manner.	KNOWLEDGE: • Knowledge of maintaining buildings in conservation areas. • A working understanding of how financial management within the Parish sector works. • Knowledge of the principles of how Local Government works.
SKILLS REQUIRED: • Excellent communication skills in all forms. • Accurate record keeping and organisational skills along with a strong working ethic. • Strong IT skills. • Risk Management – identifying, assessing and managing • Time Management – managing multiple projects and work streams • Excellent people management skills. • Project management	SKILLS REQUIRED: • Certification in Risk Management or demonstrable experience of detailed risk mitigation plans • Project management qualification or demonstrable experience of project management methodologies such as PRINCE, WATERFALL
QUALIFICATIONS: • Play Inspection Qualification or demonstrable knowledge of inspection requirements using 3rd party contracts • Good standard of general education, at least to A Level. • A relevant professional qualification.	QUALIFICATIONS: • First Aid certificate. • NEBOSH General Certificate • A general management qualification of some form.
ATTRIBUTES: • Good, clear communicator. • Desire for continuous improvement. • A friendly, approachable, courteous, and polite disposition. • A smart, professional appearance.	ATTRIBUTES: • Demonstrable knowledge of data driven decisions, problem solving and decisiveness • Inclusivity and a growth mindset • Highly adaptable and self-motivated
ABILITIES: • Ability to manage and deal with a wide range of differing personalities.	ABILITIES: • Qualification in Management or demonstrable experience of team building and delegation

KEY TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

(The full Contract of Employment will be made available upon offer of appointment)

1. General

1.1. The terms and conditions of employment are in accordance with the National Joint Council Scheme of Conditions of Service and the provisions of the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks Conditions of Service for Clerks of Local Councils or as amended by the Council.

1.2. This Statement outlines the key elements contained within the Contract of Employment. Please note that this statement is for guidance purposes only and is not exhaustive or as comprehensive as the main Contract of Employment document which will form part of the contract with Eastleigh Town Council if appointed.

1.3. Your period of continuous service for statutory employment rights dates from your commencement with Eastleigh Town Council on ……. (TBC)

1.4. If you have previous continuous service with an organisation covered by the Redundancy Payments (Local Government) (Modification) order (which covers local authorities and related bodies) this will be included in calculating your entitlement to a redundancy payment, sickness allowance and annual leave.

1.5. In this case, your date of continuous service is …… (TBC)

1.6. You are employed as the Assets and Open Spaces Officer and your duties will be as outlined within the job description for the role. Your duties may be modified from time to time to suit the needs of the business.

2. Salary

2.1. The salary is set as per the NJC (National Joint Council) agreed structure and is currently set at grade SCP 24-32 inclusive.

3. Working Week

3.1. The normal working week for this post is 37 hours per week.

3.2. Days of work are Monday to Friday. In addition, is occasional attendance at evening or weekend meetings and functions as required and for which time off in lieu is granted.

4. Annual Leave

4.1. Your paid leave entitlement is set out in your contract of employment. The basic entitlement for a full-time employee is 23 days p/a, plus 8 Bank Holidays plus 2 additional statutory days.

5. Probation

5.1. 6-month probationary period which will be reviewed after 6 weeks, 3 months and 5 months & 2 weeks.

6. Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook

6.1. Eastleigh Town Council will abide by the Code of Conduct, in accordance with the policies outlined in the Council's proposed Staff Handbook and also the NJC guidelines. A copy of the Staff Handbook will be made available as soon as possible after appointment.

7. Pay Method

7.1. Salary will be paid on the 20th day of each month, directly by credit transfer to a bank or building society.

8. Salary Review

8.1. The salary is subject to any revisions agreed by the NJC nationally, along with any increment increases which may, or may not be applicable and which are usually effective from 1 April each year.

9. Work Location

9.1. Cableworks, 83 Tinning Way, Eastleigh, SO50 9QH with attendance at other locations as required and when necessary.

10. Expenses

10.1. Travel allowance is payable in accordance with the provisions in the Council's policy.

11. Other Terms

11.1. All staff are required to operate within the Council's code of practice on confidentiality.
11.2. A no smoking policy will be in operation in the Council's buildings and vehicles.

12. Notice Period

12.1. After completion of the probationary period, 3 months on either side in writing to terminate the employment. Unless your employment is terminated on grounds of gross misconduct when summary dismissal will apply, the minimum period of notice of termination of your employment which you are entitled to receive from the Council in writing, after completion of any probationary service, period is three months.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Recruitment Schedule

The proposed recruitment timetable is as follows – any changes will be advised as required.

Closing Date for the Receipt of Applications:	Thursday 26th June 2025 at 12 noon
Formal Interview:	Tuesday 15th July 2025
Appointment:	By no later than 17th July 2025
Start Date (Provisional - TBA):	Monday 1st September 2025

Application Procedure

You should complete the Town Council's Application Form in full and not disregard any section. CVs are not acceptable as an alternative to completing the Application Form but may be attached along with any supplementary information or documents in support of your application.

When submitting your application, you should address the requirements of the Job Description and Person Specification for the post and ensure that your relevant key experiences, knowledge, skills and personal style are clearly described to give you the best opportunity in the short listing process.

Please note you will be required to show documentary proof of qualifications claimed at interview, along with evidence of your eligibility to legally reside and work in the UK.

Completed application forms should be headed "Confidential - Application for the Post of Assets and Open Spaces Officer" and received before 12 noon Thursday 26th June 2025 via email to:

regzzr1400@gmail.com or via post to

Reg Williams – RW Consultancy
c/o 1 Osmund Walk
Old Sarum
Salisbury
SP4 6NE

Selection Process

The formal interviews will be undertaken by the Council's Interview Panel on Tuesday 15th July 2025 at the Eastleigh TC offices.

The formal interview will be structured to assess your competence and suitability for the post.

It will definitely include:

1. A formal interview of relevant questions by the Panel.
2. A short presentation. You will be given the topic and asked to prepare in advance of the interview a 10-minute presentation, in whatever format you feel comfortable with.

***Please** note the above dates and confirm your availability to attend the interview if short listed when completing your application form. It is expected that you will be advised by around Monday 30th June 2025 if you have been selected for interview.*

Appointment and Commencement

It is anticipated that the successful candidate will be notified no later than around Thursday 17th July with a commencement date of around Monday 1st September 2025 subject to contracts, period notices and so on.

References

If you are shortlisted, references will normally be applied for in advance of the interview unless you indicate in the application form that you do not give the Council permission so to do. If appropriate, the authenticity of referees may be checked by direct confidential contact if you are to be offered the post.

Proof of Eligibility to Reside and Work in the UK

In accordance with its legal obligations the Council will require you to provide proof that you are legally able to reside and work in the UK if you are successful in your application before commencing employment.

DBS Check

The Council does require a criminal record check processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as part of its recruitment process.

Canvassing

Canvassing, either directly or indirectly, will disqualify you from appointment. Sending copies of, or extracts from, your completed Application Form, CV or testimonials to any Member or Officer of the Council will be regarded as canvassing.

Equal Opportunities

The Council wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment opposing all forms of unlawful and/or unfair discrimination on grounds of any protected characteristic in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We aim to appoint therefore purely on merit and suitability for the post on offer. You are invited to complete and return the enclosed Equality Monitoring Information Form and return it with your completed application Form. The completed form will be regarded as strictly confidential, kept separately from and in no way used or affect the outcome of your application for employment.

Equality Positive Action (where applicable)

The new positive action terms mean that it is not unlawful to recruit or promote a candidate who is of equal merit to another candidate if the employer reasonably thinks that:

- The candidate has a protected characteristic that is underrepresented in the workforce;
- People with that characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic.

However, positive action does not allow an employer to appoint a less suitable candidate just because that candidate has a protected characteristic that is under-represented or disadvantaged.

Further Information

We hope that the information contained in this Recruitment Pack is helpful and sufficiently thorough to enable you to submit your application which we look forward to receiving.

However, if you have any questions on the information in the Recruitment Pack or any aspect of the appointment or the recruitment process please do not hesitate to contact Reg Williams as set out in the Introduction earlier in the Pack.

****

This Recruitment Pack has been prepared on behalf of and agreed with the Eastleigh Town Council but does not form part of any future contract of employment.

EASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

APPLICATION FORM – ASSETS and OPEN SPACES OFFICER

Please return this form to the address given in the Application Pack via post or email.

Application for the post of	**Assets and Open Spaces Officer**
Closing date	**Noon, Thursday 26th June 2025**
How did you hear about this job?	

Part A

Personal Details

Family Name / Surname	
Previous Name(s)	
Forename(s)	
Preferred Title (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr)	
Current Address (Please include Postcode)	
National Insurance Number	
Preferred Contact Telephone Number	
Alternative Telephone Number	
Email Address	

Part B

Present (or most recent) Employer

Name and Address of Employer			
Job Title			
Start Date		Notice required or date left	
Salary (£) p/a		If part time, please give hours per week	
Please give details of your main tasks and responsibilities – and if applicable your reason for leaving			
Please explain why you are applying for this post at this time:			

Part C

Employment History

Please give as much relevant information as possible. For posts working with children and vulnerable adults you must give your full employment history from when you left school or higher education and explain any gaps in your employment and include dates. Please include any time spent employed as a volunteer, and also include an explanation as to any gaps in employment.			
Name and Address of Employer	Dates From / To (MM/YY)	Job Role	Final Salary and Reason for Leaving

Part D

Academic, Professional and Vocational Qualifications plus Membership of any Professional Bodies

Exams Passed (Level) Qualifications & Memberships (Most recent first)	Grade and Date Achieved	Name of Educational Establishment and / or Professional or Awarding Body

Part E

Training / Continuing Professional Development

Please give details of relevant training /development activities		
Training Course and Organiser or Development Activity	Time Spent	Outcome – Grade Achieved (where applicable)

Part F

Personal Statement

You may continue onto a separate sheet if you need to.

Key Competencies, Knowledge and Skills: referring to the person specification, provide examples of how you have demonstrated the key competencies and the knowledge and skill requirements for this role. You may use experience gained from within and/or outside the workplace to provide these examples. (We recommend that you use the different headings on the person specification as a starting point.)
Personal Attributes: Please describe ways in which you have demonstrated the personal attributes required for this post, as outlined in the person specification.

Part G

Supplementary Information

Transport: Do you hold a current driving licence?	Yes / No
What categories of driving licence do you hold?	
Are you willing and able to travel to meet the requirements of the post (please delete as appropriate)	Yes / No
Please provide details of any current motoring convictions, disqualifications or penalty points, with dates and reasons and/or any difficulties you foresee concerning travel:	
Positive About Disability: we welcome applications from people with disabilities. Wherever possible we will make reasonable adjustments to enable a person with a disability to access the application and appointment process fairly.	
Do you consider yourself to have a disability (please delete as appropriate)	Yes / No
If 'yes' and you are offered an interview, would you welcome a pre-interview discussion to identify any particular needs that you may have?	Yes / No
Disclosure of Criminal Offences: The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 gives individuals the right not to disclose details of old offences which are seen as 'spent'	
Please give details, including dates and places, of pending prosecutions and any convictions, cautions and bind-overs since the age of 17 years, that are not 'spent'	

Part H

References and Declarations

References: Please provide the names of two professional referees, each of whom can write with authority about your performance, abilities and competence in a work, voluntary or educational environment. The first reference must be your manager or a senior manager representing your current or most recent employer. References will not be accepted from colleagues, relations or people who know you solely as a friend. If you do not wish your current employer to be contacted prior to interview, please tick the box below ☐

Name of First Reference	
Job Title of Referee	
Name of organisation	
Address (including Postcode)	
Email address if available	
Daytime telephone number	
Relationship to you (e.g. supervisor, tutor)	
Dates of your employment	From To

Name of Second Referee	
Job Title of Referee	
Name of organisation	
Address (including Postcode)	
Email address if available	
Daytime telephone number	
Relationship to you (e.g. supervisor, tutor)	
Dates of your employment	From To

Part I

Declaration

Declaration			
• I confirm that I am eligible and entitled to live and work in the United Kingdom • I am willing for this data to be held and processed by Eastleigh Town Council and if necessary be verified with relevant third parties. This may include previous employers. • The information on this form is accurate. I understand that providing false information is an offence and may lead to be my application being disallowed or, should I be appointed, to my dismissal and, if appropriate, may be referred to the police			
Signed		Date	

Equal Opportunities – Recruitment Monitoring

This information will be treated with the strictest confidence and held separately from your application. Its purpose is to monitor our equal opportunities policy and will not be used as part of the recruitment process

✓ Please tick the appropriate box

Which of these groups do you consider yourself to belong to?

- White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- White - Irish
- White - Any other White background (please type in box below)

- Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Black or Black British - African
- Black or Black British - Any other Black background (please type in the box below)

- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background (please type in the box below)

- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White and Black African
- Mixed - White and Asian
- Mixed - Any other Mixed background (please type in the box below)

- Other ethnic group - Arab
- Other ethnic group - Other ethnic group (please type in the box below)

- Travelling community - Gypsy/Roma
- Travelling community - Traveller of Irish descent
- Travelling community - Other member of the Travelling community (please type in the box below)

- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify):

Do you have a long term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do? Please select one option only.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you? (Please select all that apply)

- Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Learning disability or difficulty
- Mental Health issue
- Long standing illness or health condition
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify):

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Eastleigh Town Council

9 / 25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for the 4 September 2025