

Gainsborough Town Council

Richmond House, Richmond Park, Morton Terrace

Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, DN21 2RJ

Tel: 01427 811573

Website: gainsborough-tc.gov.uk



PERSONNEL COMMITTEE AGENDA

To: Committee members:

Councillor Nigel Bowler

Councillor Dennis Dannatt

Councillor Paul Key

Councillor James Plastow

Councillor Richard Craig

Councillor Paul Hooton

Councillor Stuart Morley

Councillor Kenneth Woolley

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the **Personnel Committee** which will be held on **Wednesday 19 February 2025** commencing at **6:30pm** in the meeting room, **Richmond House, Richmond Park, Morton Terrace, Gainsborough, DN21 2RJ** and your attendance at such meeting is hereby requested to transact the following business.

AGENDA

PC25/078 Apologies for Absence

To note apologies for absence.

PC25/079 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

PC25/080 Dispensation Requests

To consider any dispensation requests received by the Town Clerk in relation to personal and/or disclosable pecuniary interests, not previously recorded.

PC25/081 Items for Exclusion of Public and Press

To determine which items on the agenda, if any, require the exclusion of public and press under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 1 (2) and resolve to exclude public and press for these items.

PC25/082 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To receive the minutes of the previous Personnel Committee meeting and resolve to sign these as a true and accurate record.

Paper A Wednesday 8 January 2025 (pages 4 to 6)

PC25/083 Wellbeing Policy Review

To review and adopt updated Wellbeing Policy.

Paper B (pages 7 to 15)

PC25/084 Sexual Harassment Policy

To consider recommending to Full Council to adopt the Sexual and General Harassment Policy and Procedure.

Paper C (pages 16 to 21)

PC25/085 Staff Handbook Review

To review and adopt updated Staff Handbook.

Paper D (pages 22 to 57)

PC25/086 Training and Development Policy Review

To review and adopt updated Training and Development Policy.

Paper E (pages 58 to 63)

PC25/087 Employee Code of Conduct Review

To review and adopt Employee Code of Conduct.

Paper F (pages 64 to 70)

PC25/088 HR Audit 2025

To consider HR compliance report from the Council's HR adviser and any necessary action resulting from it and note the certification gained.

Paper G (pages 71 to 91)

PC25/089 Health Surveillance Assessments

To note recent health surveillance assessments review recommendations.

Exclusion of Public and Press recommended due to personal nature of discussion.

Paper H (pages 92 to 94)

PC25/090 Staffing Issues

To consider any staffing issues.

Exclusion of Public and Press recommended due to personal nature of discussion.

PC25/091 Items for Notification

To receive any items for notification to be included on a future agenda (for information only)

- i. Shared Parental Leave Policy Review
- ii. Adoption Leave Policy Review
- iii. Parental Bereavement Policy Review
- iv. Child and Vulnerable Adult Welfare and Safeguarding Policy Review
- v. Volunteer Policy Review
- vi. No Smoking Policy Review
- vii. Electronic Information and Communication Systems Policy

PC25/092 Time and Date of Next Meeting

To note the date and time of the next Personnel Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 12 March 2025 at 6:30pm.

Rachel Allbones
Town Clerk
Richmond House
Gainsborough

Friday, 14 February 2025

PAPER A

Gainsborough Town Council

Richmond House, Richmond Park, Morton Terrace

Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, DN21 2RJ

Tel: 01427 811573

Website: gainsborough-tc.gov.uk



DRAFT PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on **Wednesday 8 January 2025** at **6:30pm** in the meeting room, Richmond House, Richmond Park, Morton Terrace, Gainsborough, DN21 2RJ.

Councillors Present:

Councillor Richard Craig (Chair)	
Councillor Nigel Bowler	Councillor Nicholas Coxon
Councillor Paul Hooton	Councillor Paul Key
Councillor James Plastow	Councillor Kenneth Woolley

In Attendance:

Rachel Allbones	Town Clerk (TC)
Sean Alcock	Operations Manager (OM)

PC25/067 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Dannatt, S Morley.

PC25/068 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

PC25/069 Dispensation Requests

No dispensation requests were received.

PC25/070 Items for Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED: to exclude the public and press from items PC25/073, PC25/074, PC25/075 in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 1 (2) due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

PC25/071 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Paper A)

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13 November 2024 be approved as a as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

PC25/072 Wellbeing Policy (Paper B)

RESOLVED: to adopt the revised Wellbeing Policy but look at including points of referral in 3.3.

PC25/073 Staff Sickness, Absence and Leave (Paper C)

RESOLVED: to NOTE the sickness absence and holiday report, monitor lieu time and encourage members of staff to use annual leave.

PC25/074 Recruitment and Probation Reviews (Paper D)

RESOLVED:

- i. To note recruitment of new Grounds Maintenance Team Leader on 3-month probation.
- ii. To make the Communities Officer contract permanent following a successful 3-month probation period (ending on 30th January).
- iii. To make the Operations Manager contract permanent following a successful 3-month probation period (ending on 2nd February).

PC25/075 Appraisals (Paper E)

RESOLVED: to NOTE the staff appraisal report, and the current SCP range be maintained.

PC25/076 Items for Notification

RESOLVED: to NOTE the items for notification to be included on a future agendas:

- i. Wellbeing Policy points of referral
- ii. Shared Parental Leave Policy Review
- iii. Adoption Leave Policy Review
- iv. Parental Bereavement Policy Review
- v. Child and Vulnerable Adult Welfare and Safeguarding Policy Review
- vi. Volunteer Policy Review
- vii. No Smoking Policy Review
- viii. Employee Code of Conduct Review
- ix. Staff Training Policy Review
- x. Electronic Information and Communication Systems Policy

PC25/077 Time and Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: to NOTE the date and time of the next Personnel Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday 12 February 2024 at 6:30pm at Richmond House, Morton Terrace.

The meeting closed at 7:22pm.

Signed as a true record of the Meeting: _____ Dated _____
Presiding chairman of approving meeting

PAPER B

Wellbeing Policy

Contents

1. Scope2

2. Aim of the policy2

3. Objectives2

4. Policy Actions.....2

5. Recruitment and Selection3

6. Responsibilities4

7. Review and Monitoring.....4

Document History

Adopted by Council – 30 March 2022
Reviewed & Adopted – 17 July 2024
Reviewed & Adopted – 8 January 2025
Updated & Adopted – 19 February 2025

Scope

- 1.1. Mental health problems and stress can affect anyone, regardless of their position in the organisation. This policy applies equally to all employees.
- 1.2. The implementation of this policy will also be supported by other health and safety policies including the Equality and Diversity Opportunities, Staff Handbook, Dignity at Work and Flexible Working.

Aim of the policy

- 2.1. To create and promote a culture where employees are able to talk openly about their job and mental health problems and to report difficulties without fear of discrimination or reprisal.
- 2.2. To create and promote a workplace environment that supports and promotes the mental wellbeing of all employees. We acknowledge that certain working conditions and practices can negatively affect employees' mental wellbeing, including aspects of work organisation and management, and environmental and social conditions that have the potential for psychological as well as physical harm.

Objectives

- 3.1. To tackle workplace factors that may negatively affect mental wellbeing, and to develop management skills to promote mental wellbeing and manage mental health problems effectively.
- 3.2. Give employees information on and increase their awareness of mental wellbeing.
- 3.3. Provide opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing [\(See Appendix A\)](#).
- 3.4. Consider requests for flexible working arrangements.
- 3.5. Ensure all staff have clearly defined job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities and provide them with good management support, appropriate training and adequate resources to do their job.
- 3.6. Manage conflict effectively and strive to do all they can to ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism.
- 3.7. Establish good two-way communication to ensure staff involvement, particularly during periods of organisational change.
- 3.8. To develop a culture based on trust, support and mutual respect within the workplace.

Policy Actions

- 4.1 Staff are encouraged as part of the Council commitment to health monitoring to complete the Wellness Action Plan (see Appendix [BA](#)) which will be reviewed on an annual basis or in response to change in circumstance.
- 4.1. Give non-judgmental and proactive support to individual staff who experience mental health problems.

- 4.2. Deal sympathetically with staff suffering from mental health problems due to circumstances outside the workplace, and who consequently find it difficult to do their jobs properly.
- 4.3. Give new employees a comprehensive induction program providing an understanding of the organisation, the established policies and procedures, and the role they are expected to carry out.
- 4.4. To provide support and assistance for employees experiencing mental health difficulties.
- 4.5. Ensure individuals suffering from mental health problems are treated fairly and consistently and are not made to feel guilty about their problems.
- 4.6. Encourage staff to consult their own GP, or a counsellor of their choice.
- 4.7. Investigate the contribution of working conditions and other organisational factors to mental ill health and remedy this where possible.
- 4.8. In cases of long-term sickness absence, put in place, where possible, a graduated return to work.
- 4.9. Make every effort to identify suitable alternative employment, in full discussion with the employee, where a return to the same job is not possible due to identified risks or other factors.
- 4.10. Treat all matters relating to individual employees and their mental health problems in the strictest confidence and share on a 'need to know' basis only with consent from the individual concerned.
- 4.11. To positively encourage the employment of people who have experienced mental health problems by providing fair and non-discriminatory recruitment and selection procedures.
- 4.12. Show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues.
- 4.13. Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the organisations agreed workplace mental wellbeing policy.

Recruitment and Selection

- 5.1. As an employer we recognise that people who have or have had mental health problems may have experienced discrimination in recruitment and selection procedures. This may discourage them from seeking employment. While some people will acknowledge their experience of mental health issues openly, others may fear that stigma will jeopardise their chances of getting a job. Given appropriate support, the vast majority of people who have experienced mental health problems continue to work successfully, as do many with ongoing issues.
- 5.2. We aim to ensure that all staff involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues, are aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in appropriate interview skills.
- 5.3. We aim to make it clear, in any recruitment or occupational health check undertaken, that people who have experienced mental health issues will not be

discriminated against and that disclosure of a mental health problem will enable both employee and employer to assess and provide the right level of support or adjustment.

5.4. We do not make assumptions that a person with a mental health problem will be more vulnerable to workplace stress or take more time off than any other employee or job applicant.

Responsibilities

6.1. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to making the workplace mental wellbeing policy effective.

6.2. Managers have a responsibility to:

- a) Monitor the workplace, identify hazards and risks and take steps to eliminate or reduce these as far as is reasonably practicable.
- b) Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- c) Assist and support employees who are known to have mental health problems or are experiencing stress outside work – for example due to bereavement or separation.
- d) Ensure staff are provided with the resources and training required to carry out their job.
- e) Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- f) Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking and monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- g) Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- h) In addition, senior management will ensure that staff performing a management or supervisory function have sufficient competence to discharge that function in a manner consistent with the maintenance of mental health in the workplace.

6.3. Employees have the responsibility to raise issues of concern and seek help from their line manager.

Review and Monitoring

7.1. The Council will monitor how effectively the policy meets its aims and objectives.

7.2. Indicators to measure effectiveness could include:

- a) working hours and patterns
- b) accidents at work
- c) staff complaints
- d) staff sickness levels
- e) staff turnover
- f) use of occupational health or counselling services
- g) early retirement through ill health
- h) exit interviews

Appendix A

Initially, employees experiencing mental ill health should be made aware that they can approach their line manager or a qualified mental ill health first aider that has been appointed by their organisation. If employees do not wish to speak with anyone within their organisation and depending on the severity of the condition and the type of support that is needed the points of referral below should be considered.

1. General Practitioner (GP)

First point of contact for most mental health concerns.

Can provide advice, prescribe medication, or refer to specialist mental health services.

2. NHS Talking Therapies

Self-referral available for common mental health conditions like anxiety and depression.

Includes cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), counselling, and guided self-help.

3. Community Mental Health Teams

Support people with severe or long-term mental health conditions.

Usually referred by a GP or other healthcare professional.

4. Crisis Services

NHS 111 – For urgent but non-life-threatening support.

Crisis teams (Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Teams – Provide emergency care outside of hospitals.

Samaritans (116 123) – Free, confidential helpline available 24/7.

5. Hospital A&E & Mental Health Crisis Helplines

For individuals in immediate danger of harming themselves or others.

Some areas have dedicated mental health crisis helplines.

6. Charitable Organisations

Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, SANE, Anxiety UK, YoungMinds offer support, helplines, and resources.

7. Local Charitable Organisations

Bearded Fishermen, Shine Lincolnshire.

Appendix BA**Wellness Action Plan (WAP)**

1. What helps you stay mentally healthy at work? (For example: taking a lunch break, keeping a to do list).

2. What can your manager do to support you to stay mentally healthy at work? (For example: regular feedback and supervision, explaining wider developments in organisation).

3. Are there any situations at work that can trigger poor mental health for you? (For example: conflict at work, organisational change, something not going to plan).

4. How might stress / poor mental health difficulties impact on your work? (For example: find it difficult to make decisions, hard to prioritise work tasks).

5. Are there any early warning signs that we might notice when you are starting to feel stressed / mentally unwell? (For example: changes in normal working patterns, withdrawing from colleagues).

6. What support could be put in place to minimise triggers or to support you to manage symptoms? (For example: extra catch-up time with line manager).

7. If we notice early warning signs that you are feeling stressed or unwell – what should we do? (For example: talk to me discreetly about it, contact someone that I have asked to be contacted). Please include contact names and numbers if you would like your line manager

to get in touch with someone if you become unwell.

Contact name 1: _____ Number: _____

Contact name 2: _____ Number: _____

8. What steps can you take if you start to feel unwell at work? (For example: take a break from your desk and go for a short walk, ask your line manager for support).

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Manager Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date to be reviewed: _____

PAPER C

Sexual and General Harassment Policy and Procedure

Contents

Policy 2

 Examples of personal harassment..... 2

 Examples of sexual harassment 3

 Examples of victimisation..... 3

 Third party harassment 3

 16. Responsibilities 3

 Employee responsibilities 4

 17. Council responsibilities..... 4

Complaining about harassment and/or bullying 4

 18. Informal method 4

 19. Formal method 5

Document History
Adopted by Council – ?? March 2025
Reviewed & Adopted -
Reviewed & Adopted –

Policy

1. We recognise that harassment and victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. As such, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
2. Personal harassment takes many forms ranging from tasteless jokes and abusive remarks to pestering for sexual favours, threatening behaviour and actual physical abuse. For the purposes of this policy, it also includes bullying.
3. Bullying is understood to be targeted and persistent offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour and can include the abuse or misuse of power to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
4. Whatever form it takes, personal harassment is always taken seriously and is totally unacceptable.
5. We recognise that personal harassment can exist in the workplace, as well as outside, and that this can seriously affect employees' working lives by interfering with their job performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating and unpleasant working environment.
6. We deplore all forms of personal harassment and seek to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all our employees. The aim of this policy is to inform employees of the type of behaviour that is unacceptable and provide employees who are the victims of personal harassment with a means of redress.
7. This policy covers all areas of the Council. This includes overseas sites, subject to any applicable local laws which impose any additional requirements on the Council.
8. We recognise that we have a duty to implement this policy and all employees are expected to comply with it. We will also endeavour to review this policy at regular intervals in order to monitor its effectiveness.

Examples of personal harassment

9. Personal harassment takes many forms and employees may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment. Personal harassment is unwanted behaviour by one employee towards another and examples of harassment include:
 - insensitive jokes and pranks
 - lewd or abusive comments
 - deliberate exclusion from conversations
 - displaying abusive or offensive writing or material
 - abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour
 - name-calling
 - picking on someone or setting them up to fail
 - exclusion or victimisation
 - undermining their contribution/position
 - demanding a greater work output than is reasonably feasible
 - blocking promotion or other development/advancement.

10. These examples are not exhaustive and disciplinary action at the appropriate level will be taken against employees committing any form of personal harassment.

Examples of sexual harassment

11. Sexual harassment can take place in many forms within the workplace and can go undetected for a period of time where employees do not understand that particular behaviour is classed as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour related to sex, or of a sexual nature, by one employee towards another and examples of sexual harassment include:
- lewd or abusive comments of a sexual nature such as regarding an individual's appearance or body
 - unwelcome touching of a sexual nature
 - displaying sexually suggestive or sexually offensive writing or material
 - asking questions of a sexual nature
 - sexual propositions or advances, whether made in writing or verbally.
12. Sexual harassment can also take place where an employee is treated less favourably because they have rejected, or submitted to, the unwanted conduct that is related to sex or is of a sexual nature. Whether less favourable treatment occurs as a result will be examined broadly and includes areas such as blocking promotion and refusal of training opportunities or other development opportunities.

Examples of victimisation

13. Victimisation takes place when an employee is treated unfavourably as a direct result of raising a genuine complaint of discrimination or harassment. Furthermore, any employee who supports or assists another employee to raise a complaint is also subjected to victimisation if they are treated unfavourably.

Third party harassment

14. The Council operates a zero-tolerance policy in relation to harassment perpetrated against one of its employees by a third party such as a volunteer, client, customer, contractor, member of the public or visitor to the Council. All employees are encouraged to report any and all instances of harassment that involve a third party in line with our reporting procedure, as outlined below.
15. If we find that the allegation is well-founded, we will take steps we deem necessary in order to remedy this complaint. This can include, but is not limited to:
- warning the individual about the inappropriate nature of their behaviour
 - banning the individual from Council premises
 - reporting the individual's actions to the police.

In addition to this, the Council will endeavour to take all reasonable steps to deter and prevent any form of harassment from third parties taking place.

16. Responsibilities

Employee responsibilities

- 16.1 The Council requires its employees to behave appropriately and professionally at all times during the working day, and this may extend to events outside of working hours which are classed as work-related such as social events. Employees should not engage in discriminatory, harassing or aggressive behaviour towards any other person at any time.
- 16.2 Any form of harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal if it is committed:
- in a work situation
 - during any situation related to work, such as a social event
 - against a colleague or other person connected to the employer outside of a work situation, including on social media
 - against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to their suitability to carry out the role.
- 16.3 A breach of this policy by will be treated as a disciplinary manner

17. Council responsibilities

- 17.1 The Council will be responsible for ensuring all members of staff, including officers and those within management positions, understand the rules and policies relating to the prevention of harassing and bullying behaviour at work and during work-related social events. We will promote a professional and positive workplace whereby managers are alert and proactively identify areas of risk and incidents of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.
- 17.2 We will also take into account aggravating factors, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague, when deciding what disciplinary action to take.
- 17.3 Where an incident is witnessed, or a complaint is made under this policy, the Council will take prompt action to deal with this matter. All incidents will be deemed serious and dealt within in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Complaining about harassment and/or bullying

18. Informal method

- 18.1 We recognise that complaints of personal harassment, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through our normal grievance procedure. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior colleague of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a confidential helper.
- 18.2 If you are the victim of minor harassment, you should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to the harasser, and your confidential helper can assist you in this.

19. Formal method

- 19.1 Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of your Line Manager as a formal written grievance and again your confidential helper can assist you in this. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include:
- the name of the alleged harasser
 - the nature of the alleged harassment
 - the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred
 - the names of any witnesses
 - any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.
- 19.2 Where it is not possible to make the formal complaint to the above named person, for example where they are the alleged harasser, we would encourage you to raise your complaint to the Chair of Personnel Committee.
- 19.3 On receipt of a formal complaint we will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area or suspension with contractual pay until the matter has been resolved. In the event of a potential criminal matter it will be referred to the Police. If this matter concerns the behaviour of a councillor it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer.
- 19.4 On conclusion of the investigation, which will normally be within two weeks of the meeting with you, a report of the findings will be submitted to the Personnel Committee who will hold the grievance meeting.
- 19.5 You will be invited to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter once the committee hearing the grievance has had opportunity to read the report. You have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by a colleague or a union representative and you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.
- 19.6 You will be able to put your case forward at the meeting and the manager will explain the outcome of the investigation. You have a right to appeal the outcome, which is to be made to the Town Clerk within two weeks of receiving the outcome.
- 19.7 If the decision is that the allegation is well founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure up to and including dismissal.
- 19.8 The Council is committed to ensuring employees are not discouraged from using this procedure and no employee will be victimised for having brought a complaint.

PAPER D

Staff Handbook

Contents

1	Handbook Introduction	4
2	Equal Opportunities Statement	4
3	Probation Period of Employment	4
4	Declaration of other Employment	5
5	Remuneration	5
	Introduction	5
	Wages/Salary Payments	5
	Acting Up / Additional Duties	5
	NJC Pay Rates	5
	National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service	5
	Overtime and Time Off in Lieu	6
	Flexitime	6
	Flexible Working	7
	Time off	7
	Reimbursable Expenses	7
	Insurance Premiums	7
	Training	7
	Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS)	7
6	Holiday Rules, Policy and Procedures.....	8
	Introduction	8
	6.2 Rules and procedures	8
7	Additional Statutory Employee Rights.....	9
	Introduction	9
	Examples of additional statutory leave/time off:.....	9
8	Health and Safety	9
	Introduction	9
	Duty of employees	10
	Lone Workers	10
	Wellbeing	10
9	Alcohol and Drugs Policy	10
	Advice and counselling	11
	Prohibition on alcohol and drug consumption in the workplace	11
	Alcohol and drug related misconduct	11
	Alcohol and drug testing.....	12
10	Emergency First Aid at work	12
11	Smoking Policy.....	12
12	Council Policies and Procedures	12

Introduction	12
Continuous Service	13
Absence Rules, Policies and Procedures	13
Important.....	13
Illness & Statutory Sick Pay	14
Medical Appointments.....	15
Maternity Leave	15
Paternity Leave	15
Shared Parental Leave	15
Adoption Leave	15
Parental Bereavement Leave.....	15
Bereavement Leave.....	15
Redundancy.....	16
Employee Checks.....	16
Council Electronic Information and Communication Systems.....	16
Social Networking	16
Employee Code of Conduct	17
Appearance and Housekeeping	17
Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy	17
Whistle Blowing and Confidential Reporting Policy	17
Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations.....	18
Insurance - Personal Accident and Assault.....	18
Fidelity Guarantee.....	18
Death in Service.....	18
Annual Performance Review (Appraisal).....	18
Changes in Personal Details	19
Mobile Phones	19
Use and Maintenance Rules of Council Vehicles	19
Vehicle Tracking	20
Satellite Navigation	20
Parking of Council Vehicles.....	21
Fines.....	21
Council Documentation	21
Social Events	21
13 Dignity at Work Policy.....	21
14 Sexual Harassment Policy	22
15 Disciplinary Policy.....	22
General Principles.....	22
Rules of Conduct	22
Misconduct.....	22
15.7 This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.....	23
Gross Misconduct	23
General Principles.....	25
Confidentiality	25

Investigations.....	26
Suspension.....	26
16 Formal Disciplinary Procedure.....	26
Written information.....	26
Disciplinary hearing.....	26
Appeals.....	27
Right to be accompanied	27
17 Dismissals and Disciplinary Action	28
Disciplinary sanctions.....	28
Stage 1: Verbal warning.....	28
Stage 2: First written warning.....	28
Stage 3: Final written warning	28
Stage 4: Dismissal	29
Alternative sanctions short of dismissal.....	29
18 Capability Policy.....	29
Policy and Principles.....	29
Disabilities.....	30
Informal discussions.....	30
Capability hearings	30
Right to be accompanied at hearings	31
Stage 1: First Capability hearing	31
Stage 2: Second Capability hearing	32
Stage 3: Dismissal or Redeployment	32
Appeals.....	33
19 Grievance Policy.....	33
General principles	33
Raising grievances informally.....	34
Written grievances	34
Meetings and investigations.....	34
Appeals.....	35
Right to be accompanied	35

Document History

Adopted – 12 July 2023

Reviewed & Adopted –

1 Handbook Introduction

- 1.1 Gainsborough Town Council prides itself on providing a high-quality service in all of its activities and the content of this Handbook, along with your Statement of Main Terms and Conditions of Employment, will provide you with the employment information you need as well as all of the policies and procedures you are expected to follow.
- 1.2 At the early stage of your employment, you will receive an induction informing you of relevant Council information. Such information will include the Health and Safety aspects of your environment.
- 1.3 Training and/or Continual Professional Development relevant to your position will be provided and you will be responsible to your Line Manager.
- 1.4 Your hours of work and all other key aspects of your employment are detailed in your Main Terms and Conditions of Employment, this employee handbook contains non-contractual procedures.
- 1.5 The Council welcomes you into our team and, as we have an open-door policy, please feel free to approach us with any concerns you may have, or to let us know of any areas you feel we, as a team, could improve upon.
- 1.6 All policies mentioned within this handbook can be found on the Staff Zone Section of our website.
- 1.7 We look forward to working with you.

2 Equal Opportunities Statement

- 2.1 Gainsborough Town Council is committed to providing equal opportunities for all employees, including job applicants.
- 2.2 The Council provides equal opportunities regardless of disability, skin colour, race, religion, religious or philosophical beliefs, age, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, ethnic origin, or national origin.
- 2.3 Therefore, any employee found to be in breach of this equal opportunities policy, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary procedures as contained within this Handbook.
- 2.4 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or the Deputy Clerk.

3 Probation Period of Employment

- 3.1 All new employees are initially employed for a Probationary Period, covering their first 3 months of continuous employment.
- 3.2 The employee's performance will be reviewed by their Line Manager and the Chair of the Personnel Committee at the end of this Probationary Period and their contract of employment will either be confirmed as permanent, or the probationary period extended for a period of time that is at the discretion of the Line Manager and the Chair of the Personnel Committee.
- 3.3 If the Employee's performance and / or conduct have been particularly unsatisfactory during the probationary period, a decision may be made to terminate employment at the end of the probationary period.

- 3.4 All new employees will be given regular feedback regarding their performance during their initial 3 months. This means that any decisions taken about their employment at the end of the first 3 months will not be unexpected by the Employee.

4 Declaration of other Employment

- 4.1 It is a condition of their Contract of Employment that employees inform the Council of any alternative employment you undertake, in order to ensure that no Tax, National Insurance or Working Time liabilities will accrue to the Council. The Council also reserves the right to require that any other employment that you undertake does not conflict with the role or standards required to be undertaken or met in public office whilst employed by the Council.

5 Remuneration

Introduction

- 5.1 All employees' wages/salary will be paid as detailed below. In the event you have any concerns relating to your pay, you are asked to raise them with the Deputy Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer or in his/her absence the Town Clerk at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.2 If employees have been underpaid for any reason, every effort will be made to rectify the matter as soon as is practicably possible.

Wages/Salary Payments

- 5.3 All employees will be paid on the 25th of each month direct to your designated Bank Account but can vary slightly in the event of that day falling on a Bank Holiday or weekend.
- 5.4 Employees will receive a wage slip explaining how their pay is calculated and any deductions will be shown.

Acting Up / Additional Duties

- 5.5 Members of the Grounds Maintenance Team are given the opportunity to 'act up' and undertake the basic functions of supervision and allocating pre-determined tasks when the Team Leader is absent from work under the instructions of the Operations Manager.
- 5.6 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

NJC Pay Rates

- 5.7 All employees are paid by reference to the National Joint Council (NJC) rates of pay which are reviewed on an annual basis and changes implemented on 1st April each year.

National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service

- 5.8 The Council accepts the provisions of the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service agreed annually between the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). This is agreed after reference to the National Joint Council ("the NJC") for Local Government Services agreement ("the Green Book"). This may be more commonly known as the NJC Conditions.
- 5.9 In some cases, the Council may adopt its own policies and procedures to complement the Green Book and Council service provision.

Overtime and Time Off in Lieu

- 5.10 Employees who are on flexitime arrangements are expected to manage overtime worked.
- 5.11 Employees who are on fixed hours are expected to take time off in lieu for occasional overtime as part of the flexible working approach required of all employees. Time off in lieu should also be taken if there is a requirement to work on a statutory bank holiday.
- 5.12 On occasions employees may be required and work outside of normal hours and overtime may be paid. Examples of such cases are: attending evening and weekend meetings, caretaking work after midnight and cemetery work outside of normal working hours.
- 5.13 For routine work the overtime arrangements should be specified in the contract. Where overtime is required in an extraordinary situation authorisation should be sought from the appropriate Committee Chair.
- 5.14 The overtime rate will be 1.5 times the employees normal rate of hourly pay for authorised hours worked greater than 37 or such hours as are specified as the basic weekly working hour requirement under a contract.
- 5.15 For cemetery weekend working overtime rate will be 1.5 times the employees normal rate of hourly pay. Staff to be paid minimum of 2 hours of overtime for weekend interments.
- 5.16 For Remembrance Sunday overtime working lieu time will be awarded at 1.5 times hours worked.

Flexitime

- 5.17 Some employees will have formal flexitime arrangements which are part of their contractual terms. The details of such a scheme, if appropriate will be issued with your main Terms and Conditions of Employment.
- 5.18 A flexitime scheme places an employee in a position of significant trust. You do have an obligation to work your contracted hours and the flexitime scheme allows you to do so over a period of time. Deliberate failure to work contracted hours constitutes gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal.
- 5.19 In order to operate the scheme, it is important that Flexitime Records are kept up to date. You may be asked to produce your current or past Flexitime Record. Failure to maintain or produce an up-to-date record when required could lead to disciplinary action.
- 5.20 While flexible time allows you flexibility in determining your working hours it is a general requirement that the needs of the job will be satisfied. Therefore, it is expected that flexible time will be used sensibly and that employees will plan to work when required to do so.
- 5.21 For example, where an evening meeting is scheduled which requires your attendance then in all normal circumstances it is expected that flexible time will be used to meet this requirement. In the event that such needs of the job are not being met then the Flexitime scheme may be suspended or terminated.
- 5.22 Whenever your use of flexitime creates a pattern of work which is significantly different from the Standard Working Day then you should as far as is possible let the Town Clerk and other affected colleagues know of your planned work schedule.

Flexible Working

5.23 Gainsborough Town Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment and to developing working practices and policies that support work-life balance. It gives eligible employees an opportunity to formally request a change to their working pattern in accordance with the statutory procedure for such requests.

5.24 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Time off

5.25 Time off may be required for medical or dental appointments, and staff are required to use any accrued flexi time for this purpose. Where such time off is required it will only be granted at the discretion of their Line Manager.

5.26 Where possible, such appointments should be outside normal working hours.

Reimbursable Expenses

5.27 Employees can claim for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the Council, to ensure that employees are properly reimbursed for legitimate business expenses and to ensure that these expenses are treated appropriately for tax purposes.

5.28 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Insurance Premiums

5.29 If an officer (Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk & Operations Manager) is required to use their car for Council business purposes, then the Council will reimburse the amount of the difference between the ordinary social and domestic amount and that required by the insurer for business purposes. The Council may also reimburse the same cost for other staff members at its sole discretion.

Training

5.30 Council is committed to providing all workers with fair and reasonable access to training and development which allows them to enhance their skills, knowledge and ability to achieve their best potential in their work.

5.31 Employees will have access to training on the basis of the needs of their job and the requirements of each individual.

5.32 The training needs and objective of all employees will be monitored and assessed by relevant Line Managers. Employees are encouraged to inform their line managers of any training they may wish to undertake and will be given a formal opportunity on an annual basis to discuss their training needs and objectives during their annual performance review.

5.33 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or the Deputy Clerk.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS)

5.34 Where required, employees will have to undergo a DBS check as an element of our work can be carried out in residential areas where there may be elderly living alone, living in sheltered housing, living in residential homes, young mothers with new babies, or children at a school.

5.35 The Disclosure and Barring Service will only issue DBS certificates to the applicant only. Therefore, the Council will ask all employees and prospective employees to show the necessary certification. Subject to an employee's written or verbal

agreement, the Council will track/carry out a status check on their DBS certificate. Information will only be passed to those individuals authorised to receive it in the course of their duties.

5.36 Disclosure of information will only be used for the specific purpose that it has been requested for and for which the individual staff members consent has been sought.

5.37 A DBS check uses a range of different information sources, including the records of:

- the Police National Computer (PNC) and other data sources
- the Independent Safeguarding Authority

6 Holiday Rules, Policy and Procedures

Introduction

6.1 Gainsborough Town Council requires all employees to request holidays in accordance with the rules and procedures as set out below.

6.2 Rules and procedures

- Due to the nature of our business, you must, using the holiday request form (a holiday card to be presented to their Line Manager) provide at least twice the amount of time beforehand as the amount you wish to take off, unless your employment contract says otherwise.
- No more than 2 consecutive weeks may be taken at any one time. However, in special circumstances, a longer period of holiday/additional holidays may be granted by the Town Clerk. Such requests must be made in writing.
- Employees are asked not to pay for any holidays e.g. abroad, prior to your request being granted by your Line Manager. In the event your holiday request is refused, the Council will not be held accountable for any money or deposit you may lose.
- Holiday pay, including Bank Holiday payments, will be paid at your normal rate of pay.
- Part time employees will receive holiday pay and holiday days pro rata.
- All employees are permitted to carry over up to 5 days annual leave per year.
- You may be required to work on a Bank Holidays, for which you will be paid as normal and entitled to take one day off in lieu at a mutually agreed date.
- All employees must reserve holiday days for the Christmas and New Year close down period. Such dates will be communicated to you well in advance.
- Under the NJC Agreement employees shall have an entitlement to two extra statutory days which will be taken every year in the Christmas and New Year period.

6.3 Compassionate Leave

- We aim to extend sympathy, compassion and understanding should employees suffer a bereavement. At all times, we will try to assist employees to come to terms with their loss.
- Application for bereavement leave should be made on the Absence Request Form, after discussing this with a manager.

- We will normally grant up to 5 days unpaid leave in the event of the death of an immediate relative (spouse, parent, step-parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child, mother-in-law and father-in-law). Any time off in addition to this should be discussed with the employee's manager. Reasonable unpaid compassionate leave will be granted taking into account such factors as the relationship with the deceased person and the timing and location of the funeral.
- We accept that sometimes the need to take this leave can arise at very short notice, but request that employees should discuss their requirements with their manager before taking any time off and, in any event, at the earliest opportunity. All requests for compassionate leave will be dealt with on a confidential basis.

7 Additional Statutory Employee Rights

Introduction

- 7.1 There are several employment statutory rights (see list below), which apply to all qualifying employees within Gainsborough Town Council. Such rights include, for example, the right to take unpaid time off work to take care of a personal emergency.
- 7.2 As employment legislation has the potential to change or be updated twice yearly (but can be updated at any time), all employees are asked to discuss their situation/needs with your Line Manager. They will look into the qualifying criteria under current statutory requirements and entitlements. Once your situation and/or needs have been established, your entitlements (or not, if that is the case) will be explained to you and applied accordingly.

Examples of additional statutory leave/time off:

- Time off to attend jury service.
- Time off for training/educational needs.
- Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Shared Parental leave, Parental Bereavement leave and Carers leave.
- Time off to take care of dependants in an emergency (e.g. child, parent etc.).
- Unpaid parental leave and shared parental leave (birth or adoption).

8 Health and Safety

Introduction

- 8.1 Gainsborough Town Council takes all reasonable precautions to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions which comply with duties under The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Such compliance, and how the Council manages this important area, is contained within the Health and Safety manual located at Richmond House. Also contained within this manual is the Council's Health and Safety Statement and Policy which you are entitled to view upon request.
- 8.2 Upon commencement of employment, all employees will be trained on all Health and Safety aspects of the Council's activities, and you are asked to place Health and Safety high on the agenda. With this in mind, the following points are designed to serve as a reminder of your duties under The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Duty of employees

- 8.3 All employees have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and others, including visitors; this also applies when visiting clients/sites.
- 8.4 Relevant employees shall not drive a Council vehicle if medication restricts their ability to do so. The Town Clerk and the Operations Manager must be informed immediately, and alternative duties will be arranged.
- 8.5 Where relevant, employees must wear their protective clothing, e.g. gloves, overalls, hard hats, and other equipment, when carrying out specific duties and, if appropriate, whilst visiting clients' sites/premises.
- 8.6 Employees shall request replacement protective clothing or equipment for damaged or misplaced items from the Operations Manager. Such clothing and equipment are stored at Richmond House.
- 8.7 In the event a employee has an accident at work, whether they receive an injury or not, it must be reported it to the Operations Manager and the Town Clerk.
- 8.8 All accidents and 'near misses' must be entered into the accident book which is situated at Richmond House.
- 8.9 All employees shall inform the Operations Manager and the Town Clerk of any hazard or danger that may be a risk to the Health and Safety of themselves or others.
- 8.10 All employees shall inform the Operations Manager and the Town Clerk of any actions displayed or acts or omissions committed by other employees which may cause a risk to Health and Safety.
- 8.11 Failure to abide by the Council's Health and Safety policy and procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken against an employee. Such action, dependent on the seriousness of the breach, or repeated breaches of the policy, may result in dismissal.
- 8.12 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or the Deputy Clerk.

Lone Workers

- 8.13 The Council ensures that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers in order to reduce the risks of lone working as far as is reasonably possible and practicable.
- 8.14 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Wellbeing

- 8.15 Mental health problems and stress can affect anyone, regardless of their position in the organisation. This policy applies equally to all employees.
- 8.16 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

9 Alcohol and Drugs Policy

- 9.1 Alcohol and drug misuse or abuse can be a serious problem within the workplace. Employees who drink excessively or take unlawful drugs are more likely to work inefficiently, be absent from work, have work accidents and endanger their colleagues.

- 9.2 The Council has a duty to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all its employees. However, the Council recognises that, for a number of reasons, employees could develop alcohol or drug related problems. In relation to drugs, these rules apply to those that are unlawful under the criminal law and not to prescribed medication. These rules aim to promote a responsible attitude to drink and drugs and to offer assistance to employees who may need it.

Advice and counselling

- 9.3 It is the Council's intention to deal constructively and sympathetically with an employee's alcohol or drug related problems, such as alcohol or drug dependency.
- 9.4 When it is known that an employee has an alcohol or drug problem, the Town Clerk will be able to provide advice and guidance on how to seek suitable treatment. The primary objective of any discussions will be to assist the employee with the problem in as compassionate and constructive a way as possible. Any discussions of the nature of an employee's alcohol or drug problem and the record of any treatment will be strictly confidential unless the employee agrees otherwise.
- 9.5 If an employee has an alcohol or drug problem, they should seek appropriate help. If an employee has an alcohol or drug problem which affects their conduct or performance at work and they refuse the opportunity to receive help, the matter will be referred for action under the Council's disciplinary procedure as appropriate. Likewise, if after accepting counselling and assistance, and following review and evaluation, an employee's conduct or work performance reverts to the problem level, the matter may also be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Prohibition on alcohol and drug consumption in the workplace

- 9.6 No alcohol or drugs must be brought onto or consumed on Council premises at any time or whilst attending any training courses, whether internal or external. Employees must never drink alcohol or take drugs if they are required to drive private or Council vehicles on Council business. Employees must also not drink alcohol or take drugs when they are on operational standby or on call.
- 9.7 Employees representing the Council at business/client functions or conferences or attending Council organised social events outside normal working hours are expected to be moderate if drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure they are well within the legal limits if they are driving. They are prohibited from taking drugs on these occasions.
- 9.8 Social drinking after normal working hours and away from the Council's premises is, of course, generally a personal matter and does not directly concern the Council. The Council's concern only arises when, because of the pattern or amount of drink involved, the employee's attendance, work performance or conduct at work deteriorates.
- 9.9 A breach of these provisions is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.

Alcohol and drug related misconduct

- 9.10 Whilst these rules are aimed at assisting employees with alcohol or drug problems, action will nevertheless be taken under the Council's disciplinary procedure if misconduct takes place at work as a result of drinking or taking drugs, or if an employee is found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst at work.

- 9.11 Even a small amount of alcohol can affect work performance and, if an employee is found under the influence of alcohol whilst at work, there could be serious health and safety consequences. The same applies to being under the influence of drugs. Incapacity or misconduct caused by an excess of alcohol or drugs at work is a potential gross misconduct offence under the Council's disciplinary procedure and the employee is therefore liable to be summarily dismissed. This also applies to any employee believed to be buying or selling drugs or in possession of or taking drugs on the Council's premises.
- 9.12 The Council reserves the right in any of these circumstances to arrange for the employee to be escorted from the Council's premises immediately and sent home without pay for the rest of the day or shift.

Alcohol and drug testing

- 9.13 On the grounds of protecting health and safety and only where necessary to achieve a legitimate business aim, the Council reserves the right to carry out random alcohol and drug screening tests on those employees in the workplace whose activities and job duties have a significant impact on the health and safety of others.
- 9.14 If an employee receives a positive test result, this will be viewed as a potential gross misconduct offence and renders the employee liable to summary dismissal in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure. Unreasonable refusal to submit to an alcohol or drug-screening test will also be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

10 Emergency First Aid at work

- 10.1 In order to protect the wellbeing of our employees and to promote a safe working environment, the Council have staff trained in emergency first aid at work to deal with any emergencies.

11 Smoking Policy

- 11.1 To comply with legislation, smoking is not permitted inside any of the Council buildings. This policy also includes Council vehicles. If you do smoke, this will only be allowed during authorised breaks and only in outside areas as explained to you during your induction.
- 11.2 The policy also includes the use of e-cigarettes and vaping.
- 11.3 Employees found to be in breach of this policy, which will be regarded as gross misconduct, will be subject to the disciplinary procedures as laid out in this Handbook.
- 11.4 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

12 Council Policies and Procedures

Introduction

- 12.1 As with all Councils, whether large or small, several policies and procedures have been devised and developed in conjunction with internal and external needs and requirements. That is to say, both employees, members, contractors and members of the public alike have been accommodated when creating such policies, to ensure the business remains workable. One example of this is the

absence policy as detailed below. This policy is designed to allow for preparation to cover absent employees where necessary, ensuring minimum disruption is caused.

- 12.2 Additionally, several other Council policies and procedures have been developed with the guidance of the HR advisor, legislation and/or other significant bodies, e.g. ACAS, an example of this being the Discipline and Grievance Procedures.

Continuous Service

- 12.3 For the purposes of entitlements to annual leave, sick pay arrangements, and maternity arrangements, continuous service includes continuous previous service with any public authority to which the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc.) (Modification) Order 1999 applies.

Absence Rules, Policies and Procedures

- 12.4 In order for the Council to remain efficient and minimise any disruption, employees are asked to adhere to the absence and lateness reporting rules and procedures as set out below. By doing so, appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure adequate cover is available where and when necessary.
- Employees shall **not** report any period of absence or lateness by way of mobile text messages. This rule also applies to work related issues.
 - Employees are asked to contact the Council as soon as possible before the commencement time of your working hours, as stated in your main Terms and Conditions of Employment.
 - Employees shall inform their Line Manager of the reason for each absence and expected date of return.
 - Employees shall inform their Line Manager of the reason for each period of lateness.
 - Where appropriate, employees shall remain in contact with the Council on a daily basis where periods of absences extend to more than 1 day.
 - **Each** period of absence extending to 7 days or **less** must be supported by a Council Self Certification Form, available from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk. The form must be completed, stating the reason for your absence, signed, dated, and returned to him/her.
 - **Each** period of absence extending to **8 days or more** (including Saturday and Sunday) must be supported by a current Doctor's medical certificate/s for the duration of your absence. The certificate/s must be submitted to the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.
 - Long term absences must be supported by consecutive Doctor's medical certificates.
 - If the given date on a medical certificate lapses and you do not provide a replacement, you will be considered absent without authorisation.

Important

- 12.5 Although the Council is sympathetic to periods of absence due to illness, it may be considered necessary, where persistent, or long-term absences become a concern, to contact your Doctor and seek a medical report. This will only be exercised with your permission and in accordance with current statutory requirements.

- 12.6 The Council also reserves the right to require you to be independently medically examined at the Council's expense.
- 12.7 In the event an employee is absent, whether long term or intermittent, and the reason for such absences are found not to be genuine, disciplinary action may be taken which may ultimately lead to dismissal.

Illness & Statutory Sick Pay

- 12.8 Employees should report all accidents immediately, or as soon as possible, to their Line Manager who will report it to the Town Clerk; or whoever is deputising in their absence.
- 12.9 In the event of time off due to illness:
- 1 Notification should be given as soon as possible during the first day of incapacity.
 - 2 Employees need to complete a Council Sickness Self Certification Form after 3 consecutive days of sickness absence.
 - 3 A GP's Statement of illness is required after seven consecutive days absence.
- 12.10 Please note that failure to comply with the sickness absence policy reporting requirements may result in the Employee losing their sick pay for the period in question.
- 12.11 When an employee returns to work after a period of sickness absence, their line manager will conduct a return-to-work interview. This will be done either on the employee's first day of return to work, or as soon as practicable thereafter, if the line manager is absent on that day.
- 12.12 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.
- 12.13 Employees are entitled to Council sick pay paid at the following rates:

Length of Continuous Employment	Council Sick Pay Entitlement Full Pay	Council Sick Pay Entitlement Half Pay
Up to 12 months	1 month	2 months after completing 4 months service
Up to 2 years	2 months	2 months
Up to 3 years	4 months	4 months
Up to 4 years	5 months	5 months
Up to 5 years	5 months	5 months
Over 5 years	6 months	6 months

- 12.14 This includes payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), which is payable to Employees whose weekly pay is equal to or, exceeds the National Insurance Lower Earnings Limit. SSP is payable to Employees for up to a total of 28 weeks within any twelve-month period. If the period of sickness exceeds twenty-eight weeks, SSP will end, and the Employee will be required to claim Incapacity Benefit.
- 12.15 In the event of an employee being absent for six weeks or more through sickness, or alternatively if the Council has genuine concerns regarding the

health of an employee, the Council may request that they attend a consultation with a doctor appointed by the Council. The Council will pay for this consultation. The employee concerned does not have to give their consent to this request, however failure to do so may be seen as a deliberate act to prevent a reasonable investigation by the Council's management.

Medical Appointments

12.16 Staff are where possible required to make GP and dentist appointments outside of normal working hours. Staff attending hospital appointments are required to show an appointment card to the Line Manager prior to attending the appointment.

Maternity Leave

12.17 All pregnant employees are entitled to take up to one year's (52 weeks) maternity leave, regardless of length of service. Maternity leave and pay are separate entitlements.

12.18 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or the Deputy Clerk

Paternity Leave

12.19 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or the Deputy Clerk

Shared Parental Leave

12.20 The Council complies with the Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014, which provides a statutory right for an employee to take shared parental leave (ShPL) in connection with the birth of a child, or placement of an adopted child born on or after 5th April 2015.

12.21 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or the Deputy Clerk.

Adoption Leave

12.22 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or the Deputy Clerk

Parental Bereavement Leave

12.23 If, in the unfortunate circumstances you are a parent or a primary carer and suffer the loss of a child under the age of 18 or after 24 weeks pregnancy, you will be entitled to take up to 2 weeks' parental bereavement leave.

12.24 Employees who have sufficient service and earnings will be entitled to statutory parental bereavement pay for this period. Otherwise, you will be entitled to take up to 2 week's unpaid leave.

12.25 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or the Deputy Clerk.

Bereavement Leave

12.26 Employees are asked to discuss their needs with Town Clerk or the Deputy Clerk in his/her absence. Such leave will be sensitively granted dependent on the situation and circumstances.

Redundancy

- 12.27 In the event the Council is faced with a potential risk of redundancies, employees will be fully consulted, and every effort will be made to avoid a redundancy situation, by fully exploring any options available.

Employee Checks

- 12.28 It is a condition of your employment to submit to random checks when requested to do so by a member of Management. Such checks may include for example, bags, cars, lockers. If an employee's personal belongings are subject to a check, two members of Management will be in attendance. At least one Manager will be of the same sex as the person being checked. Employees may also request a work colleague, who is available at that specific time, to be present.
- 12.29 If a more intensive search is required, it will be referred to the necessary authority.
- 12.30 If unauthorised item/s of Council property or item/s belonging to someone else are found during the check, it/they will be confiscated pending further investigations.
- 12.31 If the investigations result in disciplinary action being taken, such action may result in dismissal.

Council Electronic Information and Communication Systems

- 12.32 The Council has IT systems in place to assist relevant employees in their day-to-day tasks. The full procedures you must follow, and the prohibitions and restrictions of use, must be adhered to at all times. The policy and procedures when using the IT system will be communicated to employees during their training.
- 12.33 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk. **POLICY NEEDS WRITING**
- 12.34 Additionally, and where relevant to an employee's position within the Council, an employee may be supplied with a laptop to which the rules, as stated above, also apply. They are asked to take care of this valuable piece of equipment, particularly when visiting clients. It must be locked away securely in the boot of the employees vehicle when not in use and their vehicle is unattended. This includes when visiting petrol stations or food outlets.
- 12.35 Theft, which is proved to be due to your negligence, will result in the cost of such equipment being recovered from the employee.
- 12.36 In the event an employee leaves the Council, the laptop must be returned with all the existing data remaining intact, i.e. the memory must not be erased. Failure to return such equipment will result in the full cost of its recovery and/or a replacement charge being made to the employee.

Social Networking

- 12.37 Employees are not permitted, during work time or otherwise, whether using work IT systems or personal computer systems, to post, or in any way disseminate information relating to the Council, its business, its customers, or any of its employees on any website, online diary, personal blog, tweet, message board or social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter).
- 12.38 Non-compliance with this could lead to disciplinary action being taken which may amount to Gross Misconduct.

- 12.39 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Employee Code of Conduct

- 12.40 Local government employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to councillors and fellow employees with impartiality. Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service.
- 12.41 Further information about the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Appearance and Housekeeping

- 12.42 In order to promote a clean and healthy environment, all employees must attend work in clean laundered work clothes. This clean and healthy environment extends to the appearance of work rooms/areas and work equipment.

Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy

- 12.43 It is the Council policy to conduct all of our business in an honest and ethical manner. We take a zero-tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption and are committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all of our business dealings and relationships, wherever we operate, as well as implementing and enforcing effective systems to counter bribery.
- 12.44 We will uphold all laws relevant to countering bribery and corruption. However, we remain bound by the laws of the UK, including the Bribery Act 2010, in respect of our conduct both at home and abroad.
- 12.45 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Whistle Blowing and Confidential Reporting Policy

- 12.46 The aim of the policy is to ensure that our employees are confident that they can raise any matters of genuine concern without fear of reprisals, in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously and that the matters will be investigated appropriately and regarded as confidential.
- 12.47 Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Town Council. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Council. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.
- 12.48 Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, transparency and accountability. In line with that commitment it expects employees and others that we deal with who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
- 12.49 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations

- 12.50 Everyone has rights, with regard to the way in which their personal data is handled. During the course of the Council's activities, the Council will collect, store, and process personal data about our customers, suppliers, and other third parties, and we recognise that the correct and lawful treatment of this data, will maintain confidence in the organisation, and will provide for successful business operations.
- 12.51 Data users are obliged to comply with this policy when processing personal data on our behalf. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action. Likewise, the Council will ensure that it processes personal data of its employees in the correct manner. Employees will be made aware of the data we process and will be either asked for consent or be informed of the legal reason we are processing this data.
- 12.52 Further information about the Council's Data Protection Policy, Privacy Policy, Subject Access Request Policy, Data Breach Policy and Document Retention Policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Insurance - Personal Accident and Assault

- 12.53 As a responsible employer the Council is anxious to minimise the risk to its employees of personal accident or assault whilst performing their duties. The Council will therefore insure staff against death or permanent disablement arising from and in the course of their duties.
- 12.54 In the event of death or permanent disablement arising from a violent or criminal assault suffered in the course of employment then all insurance payments will be made in accordance with paragraph 7 of Part 3 of the Green Book.

Fidelity Guarantee

- 12.55 For the purpose of securing the Council against the loss of money or other property under the control of its employees, or in accordance with the requirements of legislation, the Council will maintain adequate insurances to cover such losses.

Death in Service

- 12.56 In the event of an employee's death in service, any salary, or gratuities due to the employee will be paid the appointed individual.

Annual Performance Review (Appraisal)

- 12.57 A satisfactory performance is a basic contractual requirement. Employees have a duty to monitor their own performance and to take advantage of appropriate training opportunities as they arise. Employees should also seek opportunities to improve the way things are done either on their own initiative, if appropriate or in conjunction with their colleagues and management. This will help to maintain the overall quality and cost effectiveness of the services offered and to ensure the continued viability of the employment the Council will undertake an Annual Performance Review (Appraisal).
- 12.58 The Council will ask employees to take part in an annual performance review. We do this both to build on the employee's strengths for their future development and that of the Council; and at the same time offer support/training in the case of any weaknesses.
- 12.59 The reviews should be seen as a positive process, which we believe are beneficial to both the employee and the Council.

12.60 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Changes in Personal Details

12.61 Employees must notify the Council of any change of address, next-of-kin etc, so the Council can maintain accurate information on its records and contact you in an emergency. Such changes should be advised to the Town Clerk.

Mobile Phones

12.62 Employees shall abide by the following rules when operating personal or Council mobile phones:

- Employees shall not operate their mobile phones whilst driving. In the event you do not have a hands-free kit for your Council vehicle, you must ensure you have stopped the car, parked it safely and turned off the engine prior to answering or making a call.
- Personal calls must be limited during working hours.
- Employees shall not contact the Council concerning any work-related issues by way of mobile phone text messaging.
- Employees shall not use a camera function on a mobile phone (whether personally or Council owned) to take images or video unless they are for work related matters whilst carrying out your duties.
- The sending and/or receiving of 'suggestive' text messages or pictures on a mobile phone (whether personally or Council owned) is strictly prohibited whilst carrying out your duties.
- Employees found to be operating personal mobile phones, tablets, iPods, MP3 Players or similar, without permission, whilst carrying out their duties, will be subject to disciplinary action being taken against them.
- Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Use and Maintenance Rules of Council Vehicles

12.63 All employees provided with a Council vehicle shall abide by the following:

- Employees may only use Council vehicles for private use with the strict authorisation from a Line Manager.
- Personal driving licences will be requested annually. The Council will ask your permission to access your details from the DVLA web site, under the Data Protection Policy as laid out in this handbook. Or we may ask you to provide this yourself.
- Any road traffic offence(s) for which you are convicted, must immediately be communicated to a Line Manager.
- It is the employees responsibility to ensure annual services are booked and carried out by the Council's nominated service provider.
- Oil levels, tyre pressure, screen wash, water, emergency equipment, etc. must be maintained at a satisfactory level.
- The vehicles must be kept clean inside and out.

- Smoking is not permitted inside Council vehicles.
- In the event an employee leaves the Council, the vehicle must be returned without delay or as agreed by a Line Manager. Failure to return it will result in the full cost of its recovery being charged to the employee.

12.64 Employees found to be in breach of this policy or driving a Council vehicle when not authorised to do so, will be subject to the appropriate level of disciplinary proceedings being taken.

Vehicle Tracking

12.65 The Council reserves the right to install monitoring devices such as satellite tracking systems in all Council vehicles to track the movement of the vehicle during business use. Such devices may record or transmit information such as the location of the vehicle, the distance it has covered, its speed and related information about the user's driving habits. An employee will be advised if a monitoring device has been installed, or will be installed, in their Council vehicle and will also be advised of the nature of the monitoring that will take place.

12.66 As Council vehicles may also be used for private use, the Council does not wish to monitor the vehicle when used privately. Therefore, where a monitoring device has been installed, a "privacy button" or similar arrangement will be provided to enable the monitoring to be disabled or deactivated by the employee during private use. Monitoring must not, however, be disabled at any time during business use. If any employee is discovered contravening this rule, they will face serious action under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

12.67 The purposes of vehicle tracking are to:

- ensure drivers are not in breach of the Working Time Regulations 1998
- help prevent accidents by monitoring driver speed and habits
- maximise driver performance and productivity and improve customer service
- improve fuel economy by monitoring and managing Council vehicles more effectively
- protect the health, safety, and welfare of lone drivers by ensuring they can be more easily located in the event of an emergency.

12.68 In some cases, the Council may be under a legal obligation to monitor the use of vehicles, even if used privately, for example by fitting a tachograph as a permanent fixture in a lorry. In these cases, the Council's legal obligation will always take precedence and the monitoring cannot be turned off.

12.69 The Council may use the information obtained from vehicle monitoring in any subsequent disciplinary action where the data shows there has been a breach by the employee of Council rules and procedures.

Satellite Navigation

- If a Council vehicle is fitted with a detachable, satellite navigation system the employee must ensure it is secure and locked in the glove box or boot compartment of the vehicle when it is unattended. This includes when visiting petrol stations or food outlets.

- In the event an employee leaves the Council, the satellite navigation system must be returned with all data remaining intact, i.e. its memory must not be erased. Failure to return such equipment will result in the full cost of its recovery and/or a replacement charge being made to the employee.

12.70 Theft which is proved to be due to an employee's negligence will result in the cost of such equipment being recovered from the employee.

Parking of Council Vehicles

12.71 Employees are asked to park in designated parking areas only. The Council will not be held accountable for fines incurred due to breaches of this policy.

12.72 It is a condition of employee's employment to ensure their vehicle is locked and secure when unattended and the keys are on their person. This includes when visiting a petrol station or food outlet.

12.73 Additionally, all valuables, including Council equipment must be stored in the boot. In the event the vehicle is stolen, due to it not being locked, or broken into due to Council equipment being on display, the Council reserves the right to reclaim any costs incurred from the employee.

Fines

12.74 Employees receiving any form of fine, i.e. speeding fine, parking ticket, toll or congestion charge fine whilst in charge of a Council vehicle shall be responsible for the full costs.

Council Documentation

12.75 All Council documentation, paperwork and information which will be at an employee's disposal remain the Council's property. Employees are asked to take care of it all and not disclose confidential information to any other party. As the contents of such documents contain Council specific information, they are also required to return such materials to the Council in the event your employment is terminated.

Social Events

12.76 The Council recognises the importance of a healthy social life for all of its employees, in order to strike a happy work/life balance. However, on occasions where the Council feels that your behaviour has brought its name into disrepute (e.g. Council social events and/or events organised or attended by other Council employees), the Council reserves the right to investigate such matters and if appropriate, instigate disciplinary procedures.

13 Dignity at Work Policy

13.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Council workers are treated with dignity and respect and are free from harassment or other forms of bullying at work.

13.2 This policy is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment.

13.3 Breach of this policy will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

13.4 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

14 Sexual Harassment Policy

- 14.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all our workers are treated with dignity and are free from sexual harassment in the course of employment.
- 14.2 This policy is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment.
- 14.3 Breach of this policy will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.
- 14.4 Further information on the Council's policy can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

1415 Disciplinary Policy

General Principles

- 15.1 The aim of the disciplinary procedure and disciplinary rules is to provide a framework within which Managers can work with employees to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct, and to encourage improvement where necessary.
- 15.2 The disciplinary rules should be read in conjunction with our disciplinary procedure. Disciplinary action should only be taken in accordance with that procedure.
- 15.3 If employees are in any doubt as to their responsibilities, or the standards of conduct expected, they should speak to their Line Manager.

Rules of Conduct

- 15.4 While employed by the Council employees should at all times maintain professional and responsible standards of conduct. In particular employees should (please note that this is a non-exhaustive list):
- observe the terms and conditions of their contract;
 - observe all policies, procedures and regulations included in the Staff Handbook or notified to them from time to time by means of notice boards, email, the Staff Zone Section of our website or otherwise;
 - take reasonable care in respect of the health and safety of employees and third parties;
 - comply with all reasonable instructions given by their Managers; and
 - act at all times in good faith and in the best interests of the Council, its customers, and employees.
- 15.5 Failure to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct may result in steps being taken under the disciplinary procedure.

Misconduct

- 15.6 The following are examples of matters that will normally be regarded as misconduct:
- minor breaches of Council policies, including the Sickness and Absence Policy, Electronic Information and Communications Systems Policy and Health and Safety Policy;

- minor breaches of their employment contract;
- damage to, or unauthorised use of, Council property;
- poor timekeeping;
- time wasting;
- unauthorised absence from work;
- refusal to follow instructions;
- excessive use of Council telephone;
- excessive personal email or internet usage
- obscene language or other offensive behaviour;
- negligence in the performance of your duties; or

15.7 This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

Gross Misconduct

15.8 Gross misconduct is misconduct which, in the Council's opinion, is serious enough to prejudice the business or reputation, or which irreparably damages the working relationship and trust between employer and employee. It is a serious breach of contract and may lead to summary dismissal, that is, dismissal without notice or any compensation.

15.9 The following are examples of matters that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- theft or fraud;
- physical violence or bullying;
- deliberate and serious damage to property;
- serious misuse of our property or name;
- deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive, or obscene material;
- bringing the organisation into serious disrepute;
- serious incapability brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs;
- causing loss, damage, or injury through serious negligence;
- serious breach of health and safety rules;
- serious breach of confidence;
- theft, or unauthorised removal of Council property or the property of an employee, contractor, customer, or member of the public;
- fraud, forgery, or other dishonesty, including fabrication of expense claims and time sheets;
- acceptance of bribes or other secret payments arising out of their employment;

- accepting a gift from a customer, supplier, contractor or other third party in connection with Council employment without prior consent from your Line Manager;
- deliberate damage to buildings, fittings, property or equipment, or the property of an employee, contractor, customer, or member of the public;
- actual or threatened violence, or behaviour which provokes violence;
- conviction for a criminal offence that in the Council's opinion may affect the reputation or the relationships with the Council's employees, customers, or the public, or otherwise affects your suitability to remain an employee;
- being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances during working hours;
- possession, use, supply, or attempted supply of illegal drugs;
- repeated or serious disobedience of instructions, or other serious act of insubordination;
- serious neglect of duties, or a serious or deliberate breach of their employment contract or operating procedures;
- serious or repeated breach of health and safety rules or serious misuse of safety equipment;
- knowing breach of statutory rules affecting their employment;
- unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information or failure to ensure that confidential information in our possession is kept secure;
- unauthorised use, processing, or disclosure of personal data contrary to the Council's Data Protection Policy;
- harassment or discrimination against employees, contractors, clients, or members of the public on the grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, race, disability, religion, age, or sexual orientation contrary to the Equal Opportunities Policy or the Harassment and Bullying Policy.
- failure to disclose any of the information required for their employment or any other information that may have a bearing on the performance of their duties;
- giving false information as to qualifications or entitlement to work (including immigration status) in order to gain employment or other benefits;
- knowingly taking parental, paternity or adoption leave when not eligible to do so, or for a purpose other than supporting a child;
- making a disclosure of information under the Whistleblowing Policy that is malicious or made for personal gain;
- making untrue allegations in bad faith against another employee;
- victimising another employee who has raised concerns, made a complaint or given evidence information under the Whistleblowing Policy, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Procedure or otherwise;
- serious misuse of our information technology systems (including misuse of developed or licensed software, use of unauthorised software and misuse of

email and the internet) contrary to our Electronic Information and Communications Systems Policy;

- undertaking unauthorised employment during your working hours;
- entering an area of the premises which has been clearly designated as a prohibited area, without authorisation.

15.10 This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

General Principles

15.11 This procedure is for guidance only and does not form part of employees contract of employment.

15.12 This procedure does not apply to cases involving:

- genuine sickness absence;
- proposed redundancies; or
- poor performance or capability.

15.13 Minor conduct issues can normally be resolved informally between the employee and their Line Manager. These discussions should be held in private, and without undue delay, whenever there is cause for concern. In some cases, an informal verbal warning may be given, details of which will be placed on the employees personnel records. Formal steps will be taken under this procedure if the matter is not resolved, or if informal discussion is not appropriate (for example, because of the seriousness of the allegation).

15.14 Except in cases of gross misconduct or for short term service employees, they will not normally be dismissed for a first act of misconduct. Instead, the Council will normally give you a warning and a chance to improve.

15.15 Where disciplinary allegations are made against a short-term service employee, the Council may omit some of the steps set down in this procedure and/or vary some or all of the time limits.

15.16 Any steps under this procedure should be taken promptly unless there is a good reason for delay. We may vary any time limits if it is reasonable to do so.

Confidentiality

15.17 The Council's aim, during an investigation or disciplinary procedure, is to deal with matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved.

15.18 All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with an investigation or disciplinary matter.

15.19 Employees are not permitted to make any electronic recordings of any investigative meetings, disciplinary or appeal hearings. The employees representative, or any companions or witnesses who accompany them to any meetings or hearings are also forbidden from making electronic recordings.

15.20 Employees will normally be told the names of any witnesses whose evidence is relevant to disciplinary proceedings against them, unless, using discretion, the Council believe that a witness' identity should remain confidential.

15.21 Witnesses must treat as confidential any information given to them in the course of an investigation, including the identity of any employees under investigation.

Investigations

- 15.22 The purpose of an investigation is for the Council to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts relating to any disciplinary allegations against an employee, before deciding whether to proceed with a disciplinary hearing. This may involve reviewing any relevant documents, interviewing the employee and any witnesses, and taking witness statements.
- 15.23 Investigative interviews are solely for the purpose of fact-finding, and no decision on disciplinary action will be taken until after a disciplinary hearing has been held.
- 15.24 Employees do not normally have the right to bring a companion to an investigative interview. However, the Council may allow you to bring a companion if it helps you to overcome a difficulty caused by a disability, or any difficulty in understanding English.
- 15.25 Employees must cooperate fully and promptly in any investigation. This will include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents and attending any investigative interviews.
- 15.26 The amount of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case.

Suspension

- 15.27 In cases of alleged gross misconduct, employees may be placed on investigatory suspension from work while an investigation and/or disciplinary procedure is ongoing. The suspension will be for no longer than is necessary to investigate the allegations and we will confirm the arrangements to you in writing. While suspended an employee should not visit Council premises or contact any of the Council customers, suppliers, contractors, or employees, unless you have been authorised to do so.
- 15.28 Suspension of this kind is not a disciplinary sanction and does not imply that any decision has already been made about your case. Employees will continue to receive your full basic salary and benefits during the period of suspension.

1516 Formal Disciplinary Procedure

Written information

- 16.1 The Council reserve the right to depart from the precise requirements of the procedure where it is expedient to do so and where the resulting treatment of the employees is no less fair.
- 16.2 Following any investigation, if the Council consider there are grounds for disciplinary action, the Council will inform the employee in writing of the allegations against them and the basis for those allegations. This will normally include:
- a summary of relevant information gathered during the investigation
 - documents which will be used at the disciplinary hearing
- 16.3 You will have a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the hearing.

Disciplinary hearing

- 16.4 The Council will give the employee you written notice of the date, time, and place of the disciplinary hearing, which will normally be held between two days and one week after you receive the written notice.

- 16.5 Employees may bring a companion with you to the disciplinary hearing.
- 16.6 Will be conducted by Town Clerk or Chair of the Personnel Committee. For more severe cases the HR Advisor will be consulted.
- 16.7 Employees must take all reasonable steps to attend the hearing. Failure to attend the hearing without good reason may be treated as misconduct in itself. If the employee or their companion cannot attend at the time specified, they should inform the Town Clerk immediately and we will seek to agree an alternative time.
- 16.8 The purpose of the disciplinary hearing is to review the evidence and to enable you to respond to any allegations that have been made against an employee. If an employee has a companion, he or she may make representations to the hearing and ask questions but should not answer questions on the employees behalf. The employee may confer privately with their companion at any time during the hearing.
- 16.9 The disciplinary hearing may be adjourned if the Council need to carry out any further investigations. For example, Council may decide to re-interview witnesses in the light of any new points that have been raised at the hearing. The employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the hearing is reconvened.
- 16.10 Within one week of the disciplinary hearing, the Council will inform the employee in writing of their decision (including details of any misconduct we consider you have committed; and the disciplinary sanction to be applied) together with the reasons for our decision. The Council will also inform the employee of their right to appeal.

Appeals

- 16.11 Should the employee wish to appeal they should do so in writing, stating their full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which they were informed of the decision.
- 16.12 The Council will give the employee written notice of the date, time, and place of the appeal hearing. This will normally be between two days and one week after you receive the written notice. In cases of dismissal the appeal will be held as soon as possible, but not within two weeks of notice of dismissal.
- 16.13 Where practicable, the appeal hearing will be conducted by a Manager who is no less senior to the person who conducted the disciplinary hearing and a member of the Personnel Committee. Employees may bring a companion with them to the appeal meeting.
- 16.14 The Council will inform the employee in writing of our final decision within one week of the appeal hearing. There will be no further right of appeal.
- 16.15 The date on which any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the employee will be reinstated with no loss of continuity of pay.

Right to be accompanied

- 16.16 An employee may bring a companion to any disciplinary or appeal hearings under this procedure. The companion may be either a Trade Union Official or a work colleague.
- 16.17 If the employees choice of companion is unreasonable, the Council may ask them to choose someone else. For example:

- if in the Council's opinion the companion may have a conflict of interest or may prejudice the hearing; or
- if the companion is unavailable at the time a hearing is scheduled and will not be available for more than ten working days.

1617 Dismissals and Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary sanctions

- 17.1 The Council aim to treat all employees fairly and consistently. Disciplinary action previously taken against other employees for similar misconduct will usually be considered but should not be treated as a precedent. Each case will be assessed on its own merits.
- 17.2 Depending on the seriousness of the matter any of the following stages may be omitted.

Stage 1: Verbal warning

- 17.3 Employees may be given a verbal warning for a minor act of misconduct where they have no other active warnings on their disciplinary record.
- 17.4 The warning will be confirmed in a letter to the employee which will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required and the likely consequences of further misconduct.
- 17.5 A record of the warning will be placed permanently on their personnel file and will remain active for six months from the date it is given, after which time it will be disregarded in deciding the outcome of future disciplinary proceedings.
- 17.6 The Town Clerk is Responsible for issuing.

Stage 2: First written warning

- 17.7 A first written warning will usually be given for:
- first acts of misconduct where there are no other active warnings on their disciplinary record; or
 - minor misconduct where there is an active verbal warning on their record.
- 17.8 The warning will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required and the likely consequences of further misconduct.
- 17.9 The warning will be placed permanently on the employees personnel file and will remain active for six months from the date it is given, after which time it will be disregarded in deciding the outcome of future disciplinary proceedings.
- 17.10 The Town Clerk is Responsible for issuing.

Stage 3: Final written warning

- 17.11 A final written warning will usually be given for:
- misconduct where there is already an active written warning on their record; or
 - cases where there is no active warning on file, but we consider that the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant a final written warning.
- 17.12 The warning will set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required and the likely consequences of further misconduct.

17.13 The warning will be placed permanently on the employees personnel file and will normally remain active for 12 months or, if we decide that this matter is more serious, for a longer period. Their conduct may be reviewed at the end of this period and, if it has not improved sufficiently, the Council may decide to extend the active period. After the active period, it will be disregarded in deciding the result of future disciplinary proceedings.

17.14 The Town Clerk and Chair of Personnel are Responsible for issuing.

Stage 4: Dismissal

17.15 The Council may decide to dismiss you in the following circumstances:

- misconduct by short term service employees
- misconduct where there is an active final written warning on their record; or
- gross misconduct regardless of whether they have received any previous warnings.

17.16 Gross misconduct will usually result in summary dismissal, that is, dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice. In cases not involving gross misconduct, employees will be given their full contractual notice period, or payment in lieu of notice.

17.17 Termination of a contract of employment will be from a formal disciplinary panel.

Alternative sanctions short of dismissal

17.18 In appropriate cases we may consider some other sanction short of dismissal, such as:

- demotion;
- transfer to another department;
- period of suspension without pay;
- loss of seniority;
- reduction in pay;
- loss of future pay increment or bonus;
- loss of overtime.

17.19 These sanctions may be used in conjunction with a written warning.

1718 Capability Policy

Policy and Principles

18.1 The primary aim of this procedure is to provide a framework within which Line Managers can work with employees to maintain satisfactory performance standards and to encourage improvement where necessary.

18.2 It is the Councils policy to ensure that concerns over performance are dealt with fairly and that steps are taken to establish the facts. Employees should be given:

- a written statement of the reasons for concern;
- a fair hearing; and
- the right to an appeal hearing

- 18.3 Employees will not normally be dismissed for performance reasons without previous warnings. However, in serious cases of negligence, or in any case involving an employee who has not yet completed 2 years' service, dismissal without previous warnings may be appropriate.

Disabilities

- 18.4 At each stage, consideration should be given to whether the unsatisfactory performance is related to a disability and if so, whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of the job or other aspects of the working arrangements.
- 18.5 If an employee has difficulty at any stage of the procedure because of a disability or wish to inform the Council of a medical condition they consider relevant, they should tell us.

Informal discussions

- 18.6 In the first instance, performance issues may be dealt with informally between an employee and their Line Manager as part of day-to-day management. Informal discussions may be held with a view to (for example):
- clarifying the required standards;
 - identifying areas of concern;
 - establishing the likely causes of poor performance and identifying any training needs;
 - setting targets for improvement; and/or
 - agreeing a timescale for review.
- 18.7 In some cases, an informal verbal warning may be given if the Line Manager deems it appropriate. There is no right of appeal.
- 18.8 The formal procedure will be used for more serious cases, or in any case where informal discussions have not resulted in a satisfactory improvement.

Capability hearings

- 18.9 A capability hearing will be held at each stage of the procedure.
- 18.10 Unless it is impractical to do so, the Council will give an employee at least 48 hours written notice of the date, time, and place of the capability hearing.
- 18.11 The Council will inform an employee in writing of their concerns over their performance and the basis for those concerns. The employee will have a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the hearing.
- 18.12 The Council reserve the right to depart from any stage of the process where the circumstances warrant it.
- 18.13 The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the hearing. Failure to attend a hearing without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If the employee or their companion cannot attend at the time specified, they should inform the Council immediately and the Council will seek to agree an alternative time.
- 18.14 A hearing may be adjourned if the Council need to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at the hearing. The employee will be

given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the hearing is reconvened.

- 18.15 The Council will give the employee written confirmation of their decision, the reasons for it, and their right of appeal, within one week of a capability hearing (unless this time scale is not practicable), in which case we will confirm this information as soon as is practicable.

Right to be accompanied at hearings

- 18.16 The employee may bring a companion to any capability or appeal hearings under this procedure. The companion may be either a Trade Union Official or a work colleague. The employee must tell the Manager conducting the hearing, in good time before the hearing, who your chosen companion is.
- 18.17 In some circumstances the choice of companion may not be allowed: for example, anyone who may have a conflict of interest, or whose presence may prejudice the hearing.
- 18.18 The employees companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up their case, but will not be allowed to answer questions on the employees behalf. The employee may confer privately with their companion at any time during the hearing.

Stage 1: First Capability hearing

- 18.19 Where performance is unsatisfactory, a first capability hearing will be held.
- 18.20 The purposes of the first capability hearing include:
- setting out the required standards that are considered not to have been met;
 - establishing the likely causes of poor performance;
 - allowing the employee the opportunity to explain the poor performance and ask any relevant questions;
 - discussing measures, such as additional training or supervision, which may improve performance;
 - setting targets for improvement; and
 - setting a timescale for review
- 18.21 Following the hearing, if the Council decide that it is appropriate to do so, they will give the employee a first written warning setting out:
- the areas in which the employee have not met the required performance standards;
 - targets for improvement;
 - any measures, such as additional training or supervision, which will be taken with a view to improving performance;
 - a timescale for review; and
 - the consequences of failing to improve within the review period, or of further unsatisfactory performance.
- 18.22 The employee's performance will be monitored and is likely to include a review period.

Stage 2: Second Capability hearing

18.23 If the employee's performance does not improve within the first written warning period, or if there are further instances of poor performance while their first written warning is still active, the Council will hold a second capability hearing.

18.24 The purposes of the second capability hearing include:

- setting out the required standards that are considered not to have been met;
- establishing the likely causes of poor performance, including any reasons why the measures taken so far have not led to the required improvement;
- allowing the employee the opportunity to explain the poor performance and ask any relevant questions;
- identifying further measures, such as additional training or supervision, which may improve performance;
- setting targets for improvement; and
- setting a timescale for review.

18.25 Following the hearing, if the Council decide that it is appropriate to do so, they will give you a final written warning setting out:

- the areas in which the employee have not met the required performance standards;
- targets for improvement;
- any measures, such as additional training or supervision, which will be taken with a view to improving performance;
- a further timescale for review; and
- the consequences of failing to improve within the timescale, or of further unsatisfactory performance.

18.26 The employee's performance will be monitored and may include a review period.

- if their Line Manager is satisfied with the performance, no further action will be taken;
- if their Line Manager is not satisfied, the matter may be progressed to a stage 3 capability hearing; or
- if their Line Manager feels that there has been a substantial but insufficient improvement, the review period may be extended.

Stage 3: Dismissal or Redeployment

18.27 If the employee's performance does not improve within the final written warning period, or if there are further serious instances of poor performance while their final written warning is still active, or the situation is so serious we will hold a further capability hearing.

18.28 The purposes of the stage 3 hearing include:

- setting out the required standards that are considered not to have been met;
- identifying areas in which performance is still unsatisfactory;

- allowing you the opportunity to explain the poor performance and ask any relevant questions;
 - establishing whether there are any further steps that could reasonably be taken to rectify the poor performance;
 - establishing whether there is any reasonable likelihood of the required standard of performance being met within a reasonable time; and
 - discussing whether there is any practical alternative to dismissal, such as re-deployment to any suitable job that is available at the same or lower grade.
- 18.29 In exceptional cases where the Council believe that there is a reasonable likelihood of the necessary improvement being made within a reasonable time, a further review period will be set, and the final written warning extended.
- 18.30 If performance remains unsatisfactory and there is to be no further review period, the Council may:
- re-deploy you into another suitable job at the same or (if your contract permits) lower grade; or
 - dismiss you.
- 18.31 A potential outcome of this hearing is dismissal. Dismissal will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice, unless the employee is guilty of gross misconduct within the meaning of our disciplinary policy, in which case the Council may dismiss the employee without notice or any pay in lieu.

Appeals

- 18.32 Employee's may appeal against the outcome of any stage of the formal capability procedure. If they wish to appeal, they should do so in writing, stating their full grounds of appeal within one week of the date on which they were informed of the decision.
- 18.33 Unless it is not practicable, the Council will give the employee between two days and one week's written notice of the appeal hearing. In cases of dismissal the appeal will be held as soon as possible, but not within two weeks of notice of dismissal.
- 18.34 Where practicable, the appeal hearing will be held by a Manager who is senior to the person who conducted the capability hearing. The employee may bring a companion with them to the appeal meeting.
- 18.35 The Council's final decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing, if possible, within one week of the appeal hearing. There will be no further right of appeal.
- 18.36 The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss the employee will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.

1819 Grievance Policy

General principles

- 19.1 It is the Council's policy to ensure that all employees have access to a procedure to help resolve any grievances relating to their employment, quickly and fairly.

- 19.2 This grievance procedure is for guidance only and does not form part of employee's contract of employment.
- 19.3 This procedure applies to all employees, regardless of length of service.
- 19.4 Any steps under this procedure should be taken promptly unless there is a good reason for delay. The time limits in this procedure may be extended if it is reasonable to do so.
- 19.5 The Council may vary this procedure as appropriate to a particular case. The procedure may also be discontinued if it becomes impracticable for either party to continue with it. In any case the Council will inform the employee in writing of the final outcome of their grievance.
- 19.6 Written grievances will be placed on the employees personnel file, along with a record of any decisions taken; any appeal notice; the outcome of any appeal; and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process.

Raising grievances informally

- 19.7 Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with the employees Line Manager. If this does not resolve the problem, the employee should follow the standard procedure below.

Written grievances

- 19.8 Employees should put their grievance in writing and submit it to your Line Manager unless the grievance is about your manager, in which case your grievance should be submitted to his/her Line Manager or Chair of Personnel Committee.
- 19.9 The written grievance should indicate that the employee is invoking this grievance procedure and contain a brief description of the reasons for the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. In some situations, the Council may need to ask the employee to clarify the subject matter of their grievance in advance of the meeting, or to provide further information.

Meetings and investigations

- 19.10 Employees will be invited to a grievance meeting, which will normally take place no more than two weeks after the Council have received their written grievance.
- 19.11 The Council may carry out such investigations as they consider appropriate prior to the meeting. This may involve interviewing the employee and any witnesses.
- 19.12 Employees may bring a companion to any of the meetings under this procedure.
- 19.13 Employees must take all reasonable steps to attend any meetings. If the employee or their companion cannot attend at the time specified, they should inform the Council immediately and they will make reasonable efforts to agree an alternative time.
- 19.14 The purpose of the initial grievance meeting is to enable the employee to explain their grievance and to discuss it with the Council. If the employee has a companion, they may make representations to the Council and ask questions but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf. The employee may confer privately with their companion at any time during the meeting.
- 19.15 After the initial grievance meeting, the Council may carry out such further investigations and/or hold such further grievance meetings as the Council consider appropriate.

- 19.16 We will inform the employee of the decision and of their right of appeal, within two weeks of the final grievance meeting. This will be confirmed in writing.

Appeals

- 19.17 Should the employee wish to appeal they should do so in writing, stating their full grounds of appeal, within two weeks of the date on which the decision was sent or given to them.
- 19.18 The Council will hold an appeal meeting, normally no more than two weeks after they receive the appeal. Where practicable, this will be held by someone senior to the person who conducted the grievance meeting(s). The employee may bring a companion to the appeal hearing.
- 19.19 The Council's final decision will be notified to the employee within one week of the appeal hearing. This will be confirmed in writing.

Right to be accompanied

- 19.20 Employees may bring a companion to any meetings held under this procedure. The companion may be either a Trade Union Official or a work colleague. The employee must tell the person holding the meeting, in good time beforehand, who their chosen companion is. Employees are allowed reasonable time off from duties to be a companion, without loss of pay.
- 19.21 In some circumstances their choice of companion may not be allowed: for example, anyone who may have a conflict of interest, or whose presence may prejudice the meeting. The Council may also ask the employee to choose someone else if the meeting would have to be delayed for over five working days because your companion is unavailable.

PAPER E

Staff Training and Development Policy

Contents

1. Purpose and scope.....	2
2. Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs	2
3. Consideration	2
4. Categorising training and personal development	2
5. Guidance for support	3
6. Study leave.....	4
7. Training Cost Agreement.....	4
General principles:	4
What is a training cost agreement?.....	4
When will training cost agreements be required:	4
The procedure for training cost agreements:	5
Recovery of Training Costs:.....	5

Document History

Adopted by Council – 11 May 2022

Reviewed and adopted – February 2025

1. Purpose and scope

This purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for staff. It applies to all staff whether full or part time, temporary or fixed term.

2. Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs

Training and development needs will be identified from a variety of sources:

- Induction and probationary periods
- One-to-ones
- Appraisal
- Workforce planning
- Team meetings
- Annual plan
- Change processes

In addition, the council will encourage staff to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
- Online training
- Internal coaching
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals, DVDs etc.)
- In house training
- Work shadowing
- Time for self-directed research and learning

3. Consideration

A number of factors will be taken into account when assessing a request from an individual. This policy provides one element of the decision-making process. Other factors will include availability of finance and the individual's employment record.

In order to ensure that the council is able to consistently evaluate requests, training and development opportunities have been organised into three categories according to the degree of importance each intervention has for different roles.

4. Categorising training and personal development

The three categories are as follows:

1. Mandatory

Mandatory training is legally required for the post-holder, or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role, that the council makes it a mandatory requirement. Any mandatory training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. They should also be stated in the contract for new starters, along with whom is responsible for the costs of the training/qualifications. For mandatory qualifications, it is unlikely that an applicant would be recruited without having previously attained the qualification. Where a qualification becomes mandatory for the role, the council will provide reasonable assistance for the employee to attain the qualification (see the section on Guidance for Support below).

Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular job role whilst other training may be a generic requirement. Examples of mandatory training include:

Generic training

- Health and Safety (Personal Safety, Manual handling, Display Screen equipment)

- [Food hygiene
- Data Protection]

2. Desirable

Desirable training is not legally required for the post, but it is directly relevant to the individual's job. Any desirable training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description.

For desirable qualifications or training, an individual may be recruited without having previously attained the qualification or undergone the training but may be expected to attain the qualification within a defined period of time. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings or annual appraisals. A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the council. Examples may include:

Job specific

- [Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)
- Cemetery Legal Compliance
- Microsoft Excel]

3. Optional

An optional qualification or optional training may not be directly linked to the individual's current job. Optional training or development is generally more beneficial to the individual's career than it is for the council.

Personal development aimed at developing the skills or knowledge of an individual in order to provide a successor for an existing job is deemed to be optional. However, depending on the circumstances, training for succession may be 'desirable'.

Job specific

- [Community Governance
- Town Planning Technical Support - Level 3 Diploma]

5. Guidance for support

Since 2020 new contracts need to referenced any training provided by the employer. It should also note if there is a requirement to gain a qualification within a stipulated amount of time, or where it is required that a qualification is maintained. If it is possible that the employment will be ended, if the qualification is not gained in the stipulated time, then the contract should state this.

Support for qualifications, training and personal development can include [financial assistance towards the cost of tuition, examinations and resource materials in addition to half / day release and time off for study leave and taking the examination]. Any financial and non-financial support to training and development is entirely at the discretion of the council.

[Any financial support in excess of [£xxx], including the offer of a loan, will always be conditional upon the employee's agreement to either a full or partial repayment of the financial support provided. The council reserves the right to reclaim financial support where the employee;

- Leaves the council during the duration of the course, or up-to 1 year following completion of the course.
- Fails to complete the training
- Fails to attend training without good reason]

6. Study leave

Where individual requires study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.

[Where individuals require study leave to undertake study which is not mandatory but part of the individual's formal continuous professional development, the council will contribute up to 50% of study leave time, to a maximum of 3 days per annum.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake training which is not mandatory but part of the individual's desire for career development, the council will contribute up to 3 days study leave per annum for courses which are directly related to the individual's role.

Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the Clerk (or Chairman of the Council), setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested.]

No study leave will be granted where individuals undertake study which is not required for their role, or not directly related to their role. However, the Clerk (or Chairman of the Council) will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the council can be met.

7. Training Cost Agreement

General principles:

From time to time the Council may require for employees to attend training and development opportunities. The Council will carry the cost of most training you will need to undertake to carry out your job role as required. However, from time to time the Council may agree to finance training and development opportunities that exceed the requirements for your post. This may be training to obtain qualifications at a higher level than your current job role, for instance, or training that is particularly expensive.

In certain scenarios that are detailed in this policy the Council may in consideration of this, ask that you agree to incur liability by way of a training cost agreement, should your employment terminate within a certain timeframe of the training being completed.

This policy outlines the scenarios and processes that the Council will follow when agreeing to pay for employee training. The policy does not form part of any individual training cost agreement.

What is a training cost agreement?

A training cost agreement is a written agreement between an employer and employee setting out the conditions of any training the employer pays for. It will detail the cost of the training, the training provider and who is responsible for paying for it in the first instance.

When will training cost agreements be required:

Scenario 1

You may be asked to enter into a training agreement if you are requesting training or are being asked to attend training that will give you a higher level of qualification than your current job role entails. For instance you may want the council to sponsor you to obtain a degree (level 6) in your field of work, but the job role merely requires you to be educated to A-level (level 3) standard.

Scenario 2

The qualification or training you would like to attend is at the same level you are already working to but it would enhance your knowledge and understanding. The training, however, is very costly, maybe hundreds or even thousands of pounds.

The above scenarios are merely examples. There may be many more scenarios in which the council may ask you to enter into a training agreement before committing to fund the training. You will always be advised whether an agreement will be required before your training is approved.

The procedure for training cost agreements:

All training cost agreements need to be signed prior to the training and you must complete individual agreements for each piece of training. You cannot list more than one.

Recovery of Training Costs:

The full terms & conditions will be listed in an individual training cost agreement but in summary the standard repayment amounts will usually be:

- a) if you cease employment during the training course or within 12 months of completing the training course, 100% of the costs shall be repaid;
- b) if you cease employment more than 12 months but no more than 18 months after completion of the training course, 50% of the costs shall be repaid;
- c) if you cease employment more than 18 months but no more than 24 months after completion of the training course, 25% of the costs shall be repaid;
- d) thereafter, no repayment shall be required.

The Council reserve the right in exceptional circumstances to amend the repayment terms. Should you have any questions in relation to this policy please do not hesitate to raise these with the Town Clerk.

PAPER F

Employee Code of Conduct

Contents

Behaviour at Work.....	2
Standards.....	2
Alcohol and Drugs.....	2
Disclosure of Information.....	2
Statements to the Press/Media	2
Confidentiality.....	2
Political Neutrality.....	3
Relationships - Councillors.....	3
The Local Community and Service Users	3
Contractors.....	3
Appointment and other Employment Matters	4
Intellectual Property	4
Trade Union Membership.....	4
Personal Interests	4
Discrimination and Equality issues.....	4
Separation of Roles - Tendering	4
Corruption	5
Gifts, Gratuities and Hospitality	5
Use of Financial Resources	5
Hospitality.....	5
Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving	6

Document History

Adopted by Council –

Reviewed & Adopted – February 2025

Behaviour at Work

- 1.1 We must all behave with civility towards others.
- 1.2 Rudeness or abuse of any description cannot be tolerated from or towards other members of staff, councillors or members of the public.
- 1.3 Everyone must all use our best endeavours to promote the interest of the Council.
- 1.4 Involvement in activities, which could be construed as being inappropriate to the position of a person working in the public sector will be the subject of discussion with you and may lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.5 Confidential information regarding the Councils business must not be disclosed to anybody either during or after the termination of your employment.
- 1.6 All reasonable instructions from your line-manager are to be carried out.
- 1.7 Intoxication at work either as a result of alcohol or drugs will result in disciplinary action.
- 1.8 Any incidence of harassment, abuse, victimisation or intimidation will be investigated and sanctions imposed on the perpetrator(s) through the proceedings open to the Council by its internal processes or in law.

Standards

- 2.1 Local government employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to councillors and fellow employees with impartiality. Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service. Employees must report to the appropriate manager any impropriety or breach of procedure.

Alcohol and Drugs

- 3.1 You should not at any time bring onto the Council premises any alcohol or drugs (other than those prescribed by your doctor).

Disclosure of Information

- 4.1 It is generally accepted that open government is best. Legislation requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, government department, service users and the public. Generally the Council will only restrict discussion about Confidential Personal and Commercial matters (Data Protection Act 1998 & the Freedom Of Information Act 2000) and be open about all other matters in the course of conducting its business.

Statements to the Press/Media

- 5.1 You must not make any statements to the press or media without the prior clearance and authority of the Council unless you are otherwise authorised by the Council's Communications Policy.

Confidentiality

- 6.1 Any information which:

- Is or has been acquired by you during or in the course of your employment, or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence ;
- Has not been made public by the Council, or you have been authorised to disclose: -

shall be confidential and, unless required by law, you shall not, either before or after the termination of your employment disclose such information to any person without the prior written consent.

- 6.2 You shall exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documents or other material containing confidential information, and on the termination of your employment, or at any other time, upon demand return to us any such material in your possession.

Political Neutrality

- 7.1 Employees serve the authority as a whole. It follows they must serve all councillors equally and must ensure that the individual rights of all councillors are respected.
- 7.2 Subject to the Council's conventions, employees may also be required to advise political groups. They must do so in ways which do not compromise their political neutrality.
- 7.3 Employees, whether or not politically restricted, must follow every lawful expressed policy of the authority and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

Relationships - Councillors

- 8.1 Employees are responsible to the Council as a whole. For some, their role is to give advice to councillors and managers and all are there to carry out the authority's work. Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential to good local government. Close personal familiarity between employees and individual councillors can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and councillors and should therefore be avoided. Both parties are expected to conduct their relationship in an impartial manner.

The Local Community and Service Users

- 9.1 Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individual within that community as defined by the policies of the authority.

Contractors

- 10.1 All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be made known to the Town Clerk. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.
- 10.2 Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, should declare that relationship to the Town Clerk.

- 10.3 In certain cases the Town Clerk may deem it necessary to withdraw a staff member from a ordering or tendering process or from being involved in supervising a contractor with whom they may have a prejudicial relationship.

Appointment and other Employment Matters

- 11.1 Employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her. Employees must disclose any cases where a relevant close relationship exists and must withdraw from the appointment process.
- 11.2 Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee who is a relative, partner, etc.

Intellectual Property

- 12.1 Employees should take advice on the ownership of intellectual property or copyright created during their employment.

Trade Union Membership

- 13.1 You are under no obligation to join a Trade Union.
- 13.2 You are free to join or not join any Trade Union of your choice.
- 13.3 An employee who is an official of an independent Trade Union recognised by the employer must be granted time off to attend to duties
- 13.4 An employee who a learning representative of the trade union recognised by the employer must be granted time off under TULRCA 1992 s.168A, as inserted by s. 43 of the Employment Act 2002 for the purpose of analysis of learning and training needs, the provision of information and advice on learning and training matters, the promotion of the values of learning and training. The employers obligation to allow time off is subject to a reasonable test.

Personal Interests

- 14.1 Employees must declare to the Council or an appropriate officer any financial interests which could conflict with the Council's interests. Employees should also declare to an appropriate officer membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct.

Discrimination and Equality issues

- 15.1 All Council employees should ensure that policies relating to equality issues as agreed by the Council are complied with in the spirit as well as the letter of the law. All members of the local community, customers and other employees have a right to be treated with fairness and equity.

Separation of Roles - Tendering

- 16.1 Employees involved with tendering processes must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

- 16.2 Employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors should not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.
- 16.3 Employees should ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

Corruption

- 17.1 Employees must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity. If an allegation is made it is for the employees to demonstrate that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained and such allegations, if proven, will be treated as instances of gross misconduct.

Gifts, Gratuities and Hospitality

- 18.1 The Council's general policy is to inform all staff and its agents, who are working on its behalf, that the offering of gifts and gratuities to any client or any other third party, to obtain a benefit or advantage is not permitted and will be treated as potential Gross Misconduct.
- 18.2 Similarly receiving gifts from suppliers, or any third party associated with the supplier, to obtain an advantage or benefit will be treated as potential Gross Misconduct.
- 18.3 However should an Employee or Agent of the Council feel that it is appropriate to offer gifts or hospitality to clients or to receive any gift or hospitality from suppliers, or any other third party, these are to be declared prior to the event to the Town Clerk.

Use of Financial Resources

- 19.1 Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community.

Hospitality

- 20.1 Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the local Council in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the authority should be seen to be represented. They should be properly authorised and recorded.
- 20.2 When hospitality has to be declined those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the Council.
- 20.3 Employees should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers, although you may keep insignificant items of token value such as pens, diaries, etc.
- 20.4 Acceptance by employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal, where the Council gives consent to attendance in advance and where purchasing decisions are not compromised. Where visits to

inspect equipment, etc. are required, employees should ensure that Council meet the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving

- 21.1 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a Council activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.
- 21.2 Where the Council wishes to sponsor an event or service neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to an appropriate manager of any such interest. Similarly, where the Council through sponsorship, grants, aid, or by other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

PAPER G



Compliance Survey

Gainsborough Town Council

January 2025



www.stallardkane.co.uk

9 LORD STREET, GAINSBOROUGH DN21 2DD T 01427 678 660
GAINSBOROUGH | LONDON | MANCHESTER | BIRMINGHAM | HULL

Executive Summary

This audit was undertaken at the company's site at Richmond House, Gainsborough, DN21 2RJ on 13/01/2025, in order to carry out a full review on the Company's current HR management system. This is in order to allow Stallard Kane to understand your current working practices and get a feel for how you have worked in the past and how you wish to operate moving forward.

The following list is a guide to some of the work required to improve current Human Resources standards. It is intended to be used as an action list to enable remedial work to take place and should be used in conjunction with the Compliance Survey. To reflect the relative importance, Action Levels are indicated against each item.

The survey assessed compliance in governance, statutory obligations, health and safety, and staff training. Strengths included financial reporting and internal controls, while gaps were found in training records, policy reviews, and risk assessments.

Recommendations include regular training updates, policy reviews, and improved compliance tracking to enhance efficiency and reduce risks.

Should you require any further assistance, Stallard Kane Ltd will be happy to assist where necessary.

Stefan Atkinson
Human Resources Advisor

Action Levels

The action levels used in this report are for you to quickly gain an insight to the overall assessment and result of the audit.

For reference:

Immediate action required: Red

The colour Red is used to draw attention to an action that requires an immediate change to a practice or its implementation. There may also be a need for retrospective action. This will be outlined in the comments.

Breach of Company Policy and Procedure: Amber

The colour Yellow is used to show where action is required to correct a practice that is either inconsistent or absent. It is also used to make recommendations for improvements to the current management system.

Good Practice carried out noted: Green

The colour Green indicates the evidence of good practice. It is not meant to imply that no further improvements might be made.

Stallard Kane Ltd makes every effort to ensure that the information provided within all HR paper Audits, website uploads and HR online services is accurate and up to date, but no legal responsibility is accepted for any errors, omissions or misleading statements and the HR service is for information purposes only. We are not responsible for, and cannot guarantee the accuracy of, information within HR Audit documentation, that it does not manage; nor are in the possession of or within its control. It is the obligation of the client to provide accurate and truthful information and documentation to ensure the integrity of the HR Audit process is maintained.

DEFECTS AND RECOMMENDED ACTION LIST

BREACH OF LEGISLATION	Immediate action required to address deficiencies.
BREACH OF BEST PRACTICE/ COMPANY PROCEDURE	Action should be taken in the short/medium term to address deficiencies.
BEST PRACTICE	The Company should continue to follow best practice.

Action Plan - Breach of best practice/ Company Procedure

Subject	Recommendation/Action	Completion Date	Completion Signature
Exit Interview	When an employee decides to leave their employment it is advised that they be required to undergo an exit interview. This will give the employee the opportunity to raise any issues they may have and for the employer to investigate these as necessary. This may allow the company to put things into place that means the employee decides to stay or at least make the company aware of the issues rather than the first thing they know about the issue being a claim for constructive dismissal.		
PPE	Employers have a duty to ensure that suitable personal protective equipment is provided to his employees who may be exposed to a risk to their health or safety while at work except where and to the extent that such risk has been adequately controlled by other means which are equally or more effective. It is advised that employee sign for receipt of all issued PPE to minimise the potential for an employee claiming that they were not issued the correct PPE. All employees sign for the issue of uniform, additional disposable PPE is readily available on site.		

Stallard Kane Ltd – HR Compliance Audit

Name of Client: Gainsborough Town Council	Name of Auditor: Stefan Atkinson	Number of Employees: 10	Date of Audit: 13/01/2025
Name of person seen: Rachel Allbones	Marking Guide: • N/A - Not Applicable • 0 - Not Compliant • 1 - Not Fully Compliant • 2 - Compliant		

Section	Remarks	Advice/Actions	Mark
General			
Young Workers (under 18)	No, the Company currently do not employ anyone under the age of 18.	There is a requirement to undertake a Young Person's Risk Assessment for an employee under the age of 18. The school leaving age has now changed and children should not leave school until the age of 18 unless they are undertaking an apprenticeship or further education from the age of 16	N/A
Disabled Workers	No, the Company do not believe that any of the current workers are disabled.	Should the Company employ a disabled worker the employer would be required to look at if there are any reasonable adjustments they could put in place so that the individual could continue to do their role.	N/A
Expectant Mothers	No, currently the Company believe they do not have any expectant mothers.	No further action required	N/A

General			
Sub-Contractors	Yes, individuals are genuinely self employed	Only two bodies can decide the employment status of an individual, be it employee, worker or self-employed, those being an employment tribunal or HMRC. There is an employment status for tax questionnaire and the link is as below: https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/check-employment-status-for-tax/setup which on completion will indicate the employment status of an individual.	2
Part Time Workers	Yes, there are 2.	Part-time workers should be treated no less favourably to full time employees.	N/A
Full Time Workers	Yes, there are 8.	No further action required	N/A
Do you have any staff on Zero Hours Contracts?	No	No further action required, should the Company require a zero-hour contract SKA will be happy to assist. Under the Government good work plan, individuals on a zero hour contract for 26 continuous weeks will be able to request a permanent contract.	N/A
Agency Workers	No	Should the Company use agency staff in the future the rule below will apply.	N/A

General			
If the Company use Agency workers, is the Company aware of the Agency workers Regulation Act Oct 2011?	N/A	No further action required	N/A
HR Manual			
Is the HR Manual available and are the policies current?	Yes	The HR Manual has been checked and is up to date. An electronic HR Manual will be provided alongside the HR Audit this year. The HR manual should be kept securely but be easily accessible should any employees require to see full copies of the policies within.	2
Do the Company operate CCTV on site? Do you have a CCTV policy in place?	No, there is no CCTV in operation on site.	Should the Company decided to operate CCTV on site, it is advised that an adequate policy is in place that informs the employees of this fact. Employees should also be informed who, how and how often the footage will be monitored and stored in line with the Company's General Data Protection Regulations.	N/A
Employee Handbook			
Is the current handbook still outstanding to be printed?	No	Good practice	2
Are there any amendments needed to the current version?	No, i will review and check.	Please review the changes, and inform me of any further updates.	N/A
Have all new employees received a handbook and is there evidence it has been signed for?	Yes	Good practice, the signed receipt should be kept on file	2
Do the Company undertake DBS checking? is this covered in the Employee Handbook?	No, the Company does not require its employees to undergo DBS checks.	This will be added to the employee handbook this year.	N/A

Recruitment & Selection			
Does the Company use Application forms as part of the recruitment process?	Yes - application form doesn't identify any protected characteristics	No further action required	2
Does the Company use an interview assessment form?	Yes, Company use interview assessment forms	No further action required	2
Is there evidence that the Health Questionnaire is being completed at the correct time?	Yes, at or after the offer of employment stage	No further action required	2
Is there evidence that Health Questionnaires are being updated regularly?	Yes, annually.	No further action required	2
Does the Company take up references and in what format?	Yes	No further action required	2
Does the Company ask all new employees to show Right to Work in UK under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006?	Yes	No further action required	2
Ask the Employer what evidence they would ask for?	Yes, the relevant information is taken from the Company and a copy kept in personnel files	No further action required	N/A
Have staff signed an opt out form for 48 hr week if applicable?	N/A	No further action required	N/A
Are personnel files kept secure and who has access?	Yes, locked away with restricted access.	No further action required	2

Contractual			
Are employees issued their main terms and conditions of employment on day one of employment?	Yes	No further action required	2
Are the Company aware of the current NMW rates and the increase from 6th April 2023: Apprentice £5.28, 16-17 £5.28, 18-20 £7.49, 21-22 £10.18, age 23 and over £10.42 (note that where the National Living Wage used to apply to those age 25 and over, this now applies to those age 23 and over)	Yes, the Company are aware of and Pay in line with NW and NLW	No further action required	2
Training			
Is Induction Training given and does the company use an Induction form to record the details?	Yes	No further action required	2
Are training cost agreements being used?	No	No further action required	N/A
Are there any current skill gaps within your workforce that you wish to address?	No	No further action required	N/A
Employee Relations			
Does the Company carry out annual appraisals with employees?	Yes, being carried out at the moment.	No further action required	2

Employee Relations			
Does performance continue to be discussed throughout the year?	Yes, as and when required.	No further action required	N/A
Discipline and Grievance			
Are all employees made aware of the discipline and grievance process?	Yes, it is covered within the employee handbook.	No further action required	2
Are there any current disciplinary or grievance issues to discuss? If so at what stage and is the company following the correct procedure?	No	No further action required	N/A
Have there been any dismissals through discipline in the last 12 months?	No	No further action required	N/A
Sickness and Absence			
Do staff receive SSP or Company sick pay?	Staff receive Council sick pay, as per their main terms and conditions of employment	No further action required	N/A
Is absence monitored and how?	Yes	Sickness absence is monitored using the self cert and return to work interview forms.	2
Is sickness and absence an issue for the Company?	No	No further action required	N/A
Do employees self cert when returning from a period of sickness of 7 days?	Yes, Managers are responsible for these	Employees can self-certify for up to 7 days. When an employee returns to following a period of absence of less than 7 days, they should be required to fill in a self-cert form, this should then be kept on the individual's personnel file.	2

Sickness and Absence			
Do you carry out return to work interviews?	Yes	No further action required	2
Do you have any employees on LTS?	No	No further action required	N/A
Have you requested access to the medical reports?	Yes	In the event that the Company believes further medical information is required from an employee's own doctor, specialist or consultant, the Company will need to contact the employee with a look to obtain permission to access their medical records. The Company should be aware that the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 places certain restrictions on employers that wish to obtain medical information about employees from their own doctor and also gives individuals a range of rights in relation to any such medical report.	N/A
Have you requested OH to conduct a medical examination?	Yes	As soon as it becomes clear that an employee's absence will be long-term, the manager should speak to the employee about a referral to Occupational Health for an assessment of the effects of the condition, the likely duration of the illness or condition and whether or not there are any steps that the Company could take to facilitate the employee's return to work.	N/A
Have the Company considered medical capability termination?	No	No further action required	N/A
Do the Company have any staff who are Mental Health First aid trained?	Yes	Although this is not a legal requirement, this is good practice.	N/A
Is the Company concerned about any employees from a mental health perspective? Any advice required?	Yes, it is being continually monitored.	No further action required	N/A

Leavers			
How many leavers have you had in the last 12 months?	The Company have had 1 leaver in the last year	No further action required	N/A
Have any leavers been due to redundancy?	No	Should the Company need to undergo a redundancy process, it is advised to contact SKA for advice throughout.	N/A
Have leavers received an exit interview?	No	When an employee decides to leave their employment it is advised that they be required to undergo an exit interview. This will give the employee the opportunity to raise any issues they may have and for the employer to investigate these as necessary. This may allow the company to put things into place that means the employee decides to stay or at least make the company aware of the issues rather than the first thing they know about the issue being a claim for constructive dismissal.	1
Have any issues been raised from these, and have you actively investigated the issues?	No	Advised that should issues be raised, to contact us for further advice.	1
Legal Requirements			
Is the company aware that the GDPR came into effect on the 25th May 2018 and what processes do you have in place to ensure compliance with the regulations?	The Company are aware of the legislation and have appropriate processes in place.	The Company have the relevant policies in place and undertake regular reviews of their personnel files to ensure Compliance.	2

Legal Requirements			
Are you aware of the Tribunal decision in regard to Holiday pay and Overtime? What is the company doing regarding the changes?	No	Following recent case law, when an employee takes holiday, they should not only be paid their basis hours, but the employer should also take into consideration any regular overtime, bonuses, commission etc. When on holiday an employee should be paid an average of what they have been earning over the previous 52 weeks rather than their basic hours. This is only applicable to the first 4 weeks holiday entitlement as prescribed and not the full 5.6 weeks as prescribed by UK law. The additional 1.6 weeks and any further entitlement can be paid at the normal rate of pay.	N/A
Do you have any workers who work for part of the year, that have a permanent contract? If so, how do you calculate their holiday entitlement?	No	No further action required	N/A
Are you aware of the range of Employment Law updates proposed throughout 2024?	Yes	In November 2023 the Government published a response to a consultation they conducted in respect of reforms to retained EU employment law. This consultation came about following our exit from the EU and places a key focus on amending, removing, or replacing unnecessary employment laws we have retained from the EU, thereby simplifying some areas of complex legislation we find ourselves working with. Please refer to the 'Employment Law Update - Quick Reference Guide', which has been provided alongside your HR Audit report, for a full overview of the updates expected throughout 2024. Key areas affected are: updates to the Equality Act (2010), the re-introduction of rolled up holiday pay, the introduction of Carer's Leave, changes to statutory Paternity Leave, updates to Flexible Working regulations, changes to TUPE consultation requirements, plus many more.	N/A

Safety Management			
Does the Company have a Safety policy in place?	Yes, this is located in the Office.	No action required.	2
Do staff report safety issues to the Management Team?	Staff report H&S issues to Sean.	If an employee see's something in a workplace that they think is breaking health and safety law and is likely to cause serious harm, they can report it. It may be possible to put some health and safety problems right without contacting HSE. The employee should look to firstly speak to the person in charge of the work, the employer or their union or employee representative.	N/A
Are First Aiders certificates in date?	Yes	The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work. These Regulations apply to all workplaces including those with less than five employees and to the self-employed.	2
Are all staff issued with the relevant PPE (if applicable and is it signed for)	Yes, all staff have received their PPE however it has not been signed for.	Employer's have a duty to ensure that suitable personal protective equipment is provided to his employees who may be exposed to a risk to their health or safety while at work except where and to the extent that such risk has been adequately controlled by other means which are equally or more effective. It is advised that employee sign for receipt of all issued PPE to minimise the potential for an employee claiming that they were not issued the correct PPE. All employees sign for the issue of uniform, additional disposable PPE is readily available on site.	1
Is there an accident book available and where is it located?	Yes, the accident book is located in the Office.	No further action required	2

Safety Management			
If night workers are employed do they have an annual assessment?	N/A	no further action required.	N/A
Is there a Fire Risk Assessment in place?	Yes	A 'Competent person' must carry out and regularly review a fire risk assessment of the premises. This will identify what you need to do to prevent fire and keep people safe. You must keep a written record of your fire risk assessment if your business has 5 or more people.	2
Does the Company have an evacuation plan in place?	Yes	No further action required	2
Company Vehicles			
Does the Company obtain copies of Driving Licences for any employees that drive Company vehicles or use their own vehicles for Company business?	Yes	Good practice, no further action required	2
Do Company Vehicles have trackers? Do the Company have a policy on Tracking?	No, company vehicles do not have trackers fitted.	No further action required	N/A
Compliance			
Do you have responsibility for this building (or any other work premises) and its core maintenance? If Yes, who is responsible for overseeing this?	Yes	If a company has responsibility for a premises - either through the terms of their lease or through ownership of the building itself - they have responsibility for certain statutory maintenance items in order to remain compliant. This can range from ensuring electrical items are PAT tested, fire extinguishers are serviced, the electrical installation is inspected, to having an Asbestos Management Survey (if the building was build pre-2000) and a Legionella Risk Assessment.	N/A

Compliance			
Are you aware of the range of services SK Compliance can offer?	Yes	No further action required	N/A

Employee Files	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
HR Certificate in date and displayed	✓			
Are personnel files kept secure?	✓			
Application Form	✓			
Interview Assessment Form	✓			
Right to work in UK	✓			
Terms and Conditions	✓			
Job Descriptions		✓		
Induction check list	✓			
Evidence of Handbook signed for	✓			
Health Questionnaire & evidence of re issuing	✓			
Driving Licence	✓			
Health and Safety Training	✓			
Appraisals	✓			
Return to Work Forms			✓	
Self Cert Forms			✓	
Opt Out Form			✓	
Fit Notes			✓	

Employee Files	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
P45/46	✓			
PPE signed for	✓			
Is the client aware of the Members area?	✓			

Compliance Survey Score	
Possible:	58
Actual:	55
Percentage:	94.83%



one of the team

This is to certify that

Gainsborough Town Council

have engaged the services of Stallard Kane Ltd
to ensure compliance with Employment Law Practices and Procedures

Registration Date January 2025

Renewal Date January 2026



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Certificate of Achievement

Gainsborough Town Council

Has achieved

Silver Status

over

90%

rating

Annual Compliance Survey

13/01/2025

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