

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



To Members of the Policy & Resources Committee:-
Cllr C Clarkson *Chair*, Cllr C Gallagher, Cllr D Judd,
Cllr M Lawrie, Cllr L O'Connor, Cllr B Page,
Cllr C Robinson *Vice Chair*, Cllr I Sharkey *Mayor*
and Cllr N Watts *Deputy Mayor*

Telscombe Civic Centre
360 South Coast Road
Telscombe Cliffs
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25th February 2026

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **Policy & Resources Committee** which will be held on **Wednesday 4th March 2026** at 7.30pm in Room 1 at Telscombe Civic Centre.

Stella Newman
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. Public question time - Members of the public are welcome to attend and may ask questions relevant to the Committee at the commencement of the meeting for a total period of fifteen minutes
2. Apologies for absence and substitutions
3. To receive Members' declarations of interest in relation to matters on the agenda
4. To approve & sign minutes of the Policy & Resources meeting held on 14th January 2025 – *attached*
5. To approve & sign minutes of the Grants sub-committee meeting held on 14th January 2025 – *attached*
6. To note actions carried out or required from previous meetings and agree any further measures required – *see attached*
7. To note income and expenditure figures to 31st January 2026 – *see attached*
8. Business plan review – *see attached*
9. To review the Smoking Policy – *see attached*
10. To review and agree the Employment Handbook – *see attached*
11. To note update regarding Tye Hedge Planting scheme and agree return of unused grant – *see attached*
12. To report fencing work undertaken on the Tye at Gorham Way as authorised by the Town Clerk & Committee Chair under their delegated authority – *see attached*
13. To consider estimate for Tye fencing along the South Coast Road – *see attached*
14. To note position regarding a property in Tye Close adjoining the Tye and agree action to be taken – *see attached*
15. Update on key deposits for Tye gate padlock and agree way forward – *see attached*
16. Update regarding use of Canva for newsletter production and agree action to be taken - *see attached*
17. Urgent matters at the discretion of the Chairman for noting or inclusion on a future agenda
18. Exclusion of Press and Public – to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting during consideration of agenda items 10, 11 and 12 pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.
19. To approve confidential minutes of the Employment sub-committee meeting held on Wednesday 18th February 2026

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The Council, members of the public and press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Clerk (in advance) who will ensure they are not included in the filming.

The date for the next meeting of the Committee – 6th May 2026



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Policy & Resources Committee** held in Room 1 at Telscombe Civic Centre on **Wednesday 14th January 2026** at 7.30 pm.

Committee Members Present: Cllrs C Clarkson *Chair*, C Gallagher, D Judd, L O'Connor, B Page & N Watts *Deputy Mayor*

Also Present: Stella Newman, Town Clerk & RFO (*minutes*)
1 member of the public

1966. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions for the member of public present

1967. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Lawrie who was unwell and Cllr Robinson who had family commitments. These reason for absence were accepted. Cllr Sharkey has been granted leave of absence until May 2026.

1968. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO MATTERS ON THE AGENDA

None.

1969. TO APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES MEETING HELD ON 12th NOVEMBER 2025

It was proposed by Cllr O'Connor, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2025 were a true record of the proceedings and were signed as correct by the Chair, Cllr Clarkson.

1970. TO NOTE ACTIONS CARRIED OUT OR REQUIRED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND AGREE ANY FURTHER MEASURES REQUIRED

The action list below was noted:-

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
10.9.25	Min 1935, p 4427 – To agree update to the Memorial Policy regarding additional plaques	SN	The revised Memorial Policy was adopted by full Council on 19.11.25	Complete
12.11.25	Min 1955, p 4464 – To review the Member/Officer Relations Protocol Policy	SN	This was renamed the Councillor Officer Protocol Policy, taken to full Council on 19.11.25 and adopted.	Complete

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



1970. To note actions carried out or required from previous meetings and agree any further measures required (Contd)

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
12.11.25	Min 1956, p 4464 – To review the Safeguarding Policy	SN	The Safeguarding Policy was taken to full Council on 19.11.25 and adopted.	Complete
12.11.25	Min 1957, p 4464 – To review the Investment Policy	SN	The Investment Policy was taken to full Council on 19.11.25 and adopted.	Complete
12.11.25	Min 1959, p 4464 – To consider prices for various signs on Telscombe Tye	SN	The A1 and A5 signs have been ordered & delivered – the quality of the A5 signs is very poor & I have submitted a complaint to the manufacturer, but heard nothing to date. The snap frames have been ordered & delivered & will need to be installed by a contractor.	March 2026
12.11.25	Min 1960, p 4465 – To consider draft proposals for Tye access improvements from LDC funded via a SDNPA grant	SN	LDC were informed we agreed with the proposals for the gates and MOT surfacing on the Tye and we are awaiting a further update from them.	March 2026
12.11.25	Min 1961, p 4465 – To approve draft spec for Tye gate works	SN	The spec for Tye gate repairs was put out to tender with a closing date of 19 th December.	See new agenda item
12.11.25	Min 1962, p 4466 – To agree to proceed with grant application with the ITF for Tye hedging	SN	The grant was submitted and the money has been received. Plants not ordered as trying to arrange meeting with SNDPA Ranger. Decision needs to be made when planting will take place.	See new agenda item
12.11.25	Min 1963, p 4466 – To consider updating the Tye Management Plan	SN	A working group meeting needs to be arranged to begin the review.	March 2026
12.11.25	Min 1964, p 4466 – To consider whether to comment on the ES & Btn/Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy	SN	CC's response was agreed and submitted by the Town Clerk.	Complete



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1971. TO NOTE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FIGURES TO 30th NOVEMBER 2025

The actual year to date Committee figures at 30th November 2025 were income of £330,275 and expenditure of £134,562. The Town Clerk's report gave explanations for any significant differences between budget and actual spend figures to date and was accompanied by the full income and expenditure printouts to 30th November 2025 showing the budget lines for the Committee and the actual year to date expenditure, as well as those for Earmarked Reserves. The figures were noted by the Committee.

1972. TO NOTE COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THIS COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the complaints.

1973. TO CONSIDER REPLACEMENT FOR MICROSOFT PUBLISHER

Following discussion regarding alternatives to be used to produce the newsletter and other documents once Publisher is withdrawn in October this year, it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Watts and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to sign up to Canva Pro at an annual subscription of £100 from 1st April 2026.

1974. TO CONSIDER INSTALLING A PLAQUE ON A TYE BENCH IN MEMORY OF MR G WEBB

Following consideration, it was proposed by Cllr O'Connor, seconded by Cllr Judd and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to approach Mrs Webb to see if she was in agreement for a plaque to be placed either on a perch bench on the Tye or a non-memorial bench in Chatsworth Park in memory of Mr G Webb and what wording is preferred, with the cost to be paid for by the Council.

1975. TO CONSIDER RETURNING TWO KEY DEPOSITS FOR THE TYE GATE

It was noted that the Council are still holding deposits for 2 keys issued for a padlock on a gate on bridleway 8 leading across Telscombe Tye. Although the 2 residents had previously been written to requesting return of the key so their deposit could be refunded, no response had been received. It was therefore proposed by Cllr O'Connor, seconded by Cllr Gallagher and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to issue one more reminder to the 2 residents requesting that they return the key within 21 days for refund of the £100 deposit and inform them that if nothing is heard within the 21 days, they will forfeit the deposit due to non-return of Council property. A recommendation will then be made for the money to be transferred to the Tye earmarked reserve, nominal code 9014-910.

1976. TO CONSIDER ESTIMATES FOR GATE REPAIRS ON TELSCOMBE TYE

It was proposed by Cllr O'Connor, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** that the estimate from Ace Landscapes in the sum of £5,502.09 plus VAT for repairs to gates on the Tye, (including additional latching post for gate 15 and additional hanging post for gate 22), as well as repairs to fencing at Gorham Way be accepted.

1977. TO DISCUSS UPDATE REGARDING TYE HEDGE PLANTING SCHEME AND AGREE HOW TO PROCEED

After careful consideration as to whether to proceed with the previously agreed hedge planting along the existing fence line of the Tye adjacent to the South Coast Road and taking into account comments



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1977. To discuss update regarding Tye hedge planting scheme and agree how to proceed

made by the SNDPA Ranger, it was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Gallagher and **RECOMMENDED** by a majority that as it had previously been agreed to apply for a grant from the International Tree Foundation of £2,196.89 which had been approved and the funds received, the planting should proceed which will be undertaken by volunteers; that the Town Clerk orders the plants etc when required and that a working group be set up to facilitate the planting. Cllr O'Connor was against. Members of the working group were **agreed** as follows - Cllrs Clarkson, Gallagher, O'Connor and the Town Clerk.

1978. TO CONSIDER THE UPDATED EMAIL AND INTERNET USAGE POLICY, TO BE RE-NAMED THE IT POLICY

It was proposed by Cllr Judd seconded by Cllr Watts and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to agree the updated IT Policy using the NALC template which had been adapted to the Council's requirements and that the second sentence of 2.1.6 be removed. This will be taken to full Council on 21st January recommending adoption.

1979. TO CONSIDER UPDATED SICKNESS & ABSENCE POLICY

It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Page and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** to add additional items 3.2 and 3.3 detailing that the Council pays sickness absence on a 12 month rolling basis and that the updated Policy be taken to full Council on 21st January recommending adoption.

1980. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

There were no urgent matters.

1981. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public during consideration of the following items pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and the member of the public left the meeting.

1982. TO APPROVE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE EMPLOYMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12th NOVEMBER & 10th DECEMBER 2025

Cllr Judd proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 12th November 2025 be accepted and the recommendations adopted, seconded by Cllr Watts and unanimously **RESOLVED**.

It was proposed by Cllr O'Connor, seconded by Cllr Watts and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** that the minutes of Employment Sub-Committee meeting held on 10th December 2025 were a true record of the proceedings and were signed as correct by the sub-committee Chair, Cllr Judd.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Signed, Chair

Date for next meeting of the Committee – Wednesday 4.3.26



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **GRANTS COMMITTEE (sub-committee of P&R)** held at Telscombe Civic Centre on Wednesday 14th January 2026 at 6.45pm.

Committee Members Present:- Cllrs C Clarkson, D Judd *Vice Chairman*, L O'Connor, B Page *Chairman* & N Watts *Deputy Mayor*

Also Present: Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO (minutes)

159. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Robinson due to family commitments and this reason for absence was accepted. Cllr Sharkey has been granted leave of absence until May 2026.

160. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

161. TO AGREE GRANT APPLICATIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:-

Each application was discussed and the reason for the request, as well as the financial position of each applicant and how they benefit the local community were taken into account. It was noted that due to the high number of previous applications and grants awarded, funds were limited. It was proposed by Cllr Clarkson, seconded by Cllr O'Connor and unanimously **RECOMMENDED** that grants be awarded as follows:-

Kempton House Day Centre - £150 towards a guided trip to Newhaven Fort for 5 people.

Peacehaven and Telscombe Bowls Club - £300 for two new benches.

Telscombe Residents Association - £150 towards the cost of meeting room hire and general running costs.

Telscombe Cliffs Women's Institute - £250 towards the costs of speakers for meetings.

Payment is recommended and made subject to the money being spent on the specific reason claimed for and agreed by the Committee. Recipients will be asked to provide evidence or a report confirming this.

162. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING AND/OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

None.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.05pm.

Signed, Chairman

Agenda Item 6 – To note actions carried out or required from previous meetings and agree any further measures required

Action List for P&R meeting on 4th March 2026

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
12.11.25	Min 1959, p 4464 – To consider prices for various signs on Telscombe Tye	SN	The A1 and A5 signs have been ordered & delivered – the quality of the A5 signs is very poor & I have submitted a complaint to the manufacturer, but heard nothing to date. <i>Replacement signs for the poor quality ones have now been received from the manufacturer & need to be installed.</i> The snap frames have been ordered & delivered & will need to be installed.	Complete
12.11.25	Min 1960, p 4465 – To consider draft proposals for Tye access improvements from LDC funded via a SDNPA grant	SN	LDC were informed we agreed with the proposals for the gates and MOT surfacing. <i>Works are due to start the week commencing Monday 16th March and should be completed by the end of the month.</i>	March 2026
12.11.25	Min 1963, p 4466 – To consider updating the Tye Management Plan	SN	A working group meeting needs to be arranged to begin the review.	March 2026
14.1.26	Min 1973, p 4504 – To consider replacement for Microsoft Publisher	SN	Other recommendations from Cllr Clarkson have been looked into.	See new agenda item
14.1.26	Min 1974, p 4504 – To consider installing a plaque on a Tye bench in memory of Mr G Webb	SN	Mr Webb's wife is going to come back to me with the family's preference of wording and whether to site on the Tye or at Chatsworth Park.	May 2026
14.1.26	Min 1975, p 4504 – To consider returning two key deposits for the Tye gate	SN	Letters issued and no response received.	See new agenda item
14.1.26	Min 1976, p 4504 – To consider estimates for gate repairs on Telscombe Tye	SN	Purchase order was sent to Ace Landscapes and works have been completed.	Complete
14.1.26	Min 1977, p 4504/5 – To discuss update regarding Tye hedge planting scheme and agree how to proceed	SN	Working group meeting took place & agreed for alternative coastal plants to be purchased & order has been placed. Request put out for volunteers to help with planting.	See new agenda item

Date of Meeting	Issue Detail	Action Owner	Update	Due Date
14.1.26	Min 1978, p 4505 – To consider updated Email & Internet Usage Policy, to be renamed the IT Policy	SN	Policy was taken to full Council on 21.1.26 and adopted.	Complete
14.1.26	Min 1979, p 4505 – To consider updated Sickness & Absence Policy	SN	Policy was taken to full Council on 21.1.26 and adopted.	Complete



AGENDA ITEM	7
COMMITTEE	Policy & Resources
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk & RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	To note income & expenditure figures to 31 st January 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

The Committee Income & Expenditure figures to 31st January 2026 are attached, Appendix A, along with the Earmarked Reserves for information. The figures show the actual year to date spend compared with the current annual budget. Total expenditure for the Committee is £170,109 and income is £334,633, which includes the full precept received.

2. INFORMATION

4001-101 and Employee salaries, PAYE, NI and pension - the monthly payments to HMRC for PAYE and NI are actually made the following month, hence the figures may appear to be a little low.

4002-101 NI contributions employer – again the payments to HMRC are made in arrears. For example, our employer NI contribution payment of £1,277 made in January was for December's liability.

4012-101 Councillors basic allowance – payments will be made in March 2026 to those Councillors who choose to claim their allowance (it is not payable to co-opted Councillors).

4023-101 Subscriptions – the majority of subscriptions that are due are paid at the beginning of the financial year, with the highest being for ESALC/NALC of £1,965 and the SLCC of £415.

4024-101 Postage – savings have been made as we have cancelled the franking machine contract and are utilising email more.

4025-101 Insurance – this is showing an overspend of £257 and we were aware the renewal was going to be more than budgeted for. This was because the budget for 2025/26 was set before we were notified of the renewal cost for 2024/25 which had increased a lot more than anticipated. The increases have been taken into account for 2026/27, with the budget increasing to £4,450. I will suggest at the Council meeting on 18th March to make a virement of £300 from 4024-101 postage to 4025-101 insurance to cover the deficit.

4050-101 Legal fees – In July we spent £100 for legal fees which was a contribution via ESALC for the ESCC street lighting maintenance contract query and £295 for an OH referral for an employee. Another OH referral for another employee of £595 has also been made from this budget line.

Regarding 4056-101 Professional fees - the main payment from this budget line is for the bookings and accounts annual maintenance package and payment has been made.

4058-101 payroll services – our payroll provider notified us in March that they were increasing their cost as from 1st April and the increase was agreed at our full Council meeting in March. Unfortunately, our budget had already been set and we will therefore go slightly over budget at year end of approximately £135, but again I can recommend a virement of £140 from the remaining budget in 4043-101 website to cover the deficit

4059-101 elections – we haven't incurred any election expenses in this financial year and the £1,000 will therefore go into the earmarked reserve for elections, 9021-910, which will increase it to £19,899. This will be used for any by-election that may take place and for the main election which is due in May 2027.

4061-101 Telscombe Tye – costs to date are £350 for the Tye cut, minor fencing repairs and the Tye inspections which have now resumed.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the figures are noted. They, along with all other Committee figures, will be taken to full Council on 18th March 2026 for agreement.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

N/A

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Budget spending is closely monitored and reported regularly to this Committee.

**Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/01/2026
Committee Report**

Month No: 10

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
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Policy and Resources**101 General Administration**

1010	Income miscellaneous	20	70	0	(70)		0.0%
1031	Income Wayleaves	0	16	16	(0)		100.6%
1040	Income Newsletter	0	400	350	(50)		114.3%
1050	Grants Received	0	2,197	0	(2,197)		0.0%
1176	Precept Received	0	322,076	322,076	0		100.0%
1190	Interest Received	1,972	9,874	4,500	(5,374)		219.4%

General Administration :- Income 1,992 334,633 326,942 (7,691) 102.4%

4001	Salary inc TAX/NI/Pen Emp'ee	10,069	106,239	133,250	27,011	27,011	79.7%
4002	NI contributions Employer	1,277	11,103	16,000	4,897	4,897	69.4%
4003	Pension contributions Employer	1,839	20,486	26,250	5,764	5,764	78.0%
4005	Staff expenses	8	105	300	195	195	35.1%
4008	Staff training/conferences etc	0	375	750	375	375	50.0%
4009	Mayors Allowance 1	0	534	1,007	473	473	53.0%
4010	Councillors/civic expenses	18	299	400	101	101	74.8%
4011	Councillor training	0	120	200	80	80	60.0%
4012	Councillors basic allowance	0	0	4,100	4,100	4,100	0.0%
4019	Mayors allowance 2	74	105	1,500	1,395	1,395	7.0%
4020	Miscellaneous expenses	0	0	200	200	200	0.0%
4021	Stationery, copier etc	244	1,366	2,100	734	734	65.0%
4022	Telephone	69	740	1,200	460	460	61.7%
4023	Subscriptions	0	2,717	3,465	748	748	78.4%
4024	Postage	0	41	500	459	459	8.2%
4025	Insurance	4,257	4,257	4,000	(257)	(257)	106.4%
4027	IT services	317	3,309	4,400	1,091	1,091	75.2%
4030	Newsletter & publicity	210	2,175	3,650	1,475	1,475	59.6%
4040	Computer equipment	0	0	750	750	750	0.0%
4041	Computer maintenance	270	2,694	3,400	706	706	79.2%
4042	Bank charges	41	409	750	341	341	54.6%
4043	Website	25	250	400	150	150	62.5%
4050	Legal fees	0	990	1,000	10	10	99.0%
4056	Professional fees	0	1,521	1,650	129	129	92.2%
4057	Audit fees	0	838	1,650	813	813	50.8%
4058	Payroll services	86	863	900	38	38	95.8%
4059	Elections	0	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	0.0%
4061	Telscombe Tye	80	1,672	2,500	828	828	66.9%

General Administration :- Indirect Expenditure 18,885 163,209 217,272 54,063 0 54,063 75.1%

Net Income over Expenditure

(16,893) 171,423 109,670 (61,753)

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/01/2026

Month No: 10

Committee Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
<u>102 Grants</u>							
4075 Grants	850	2,490	2,500	10		10	99.6%
4081 Citizens Advice contribution	0	4,410	4,410	0		0	100.0%
Grants :- Indirect Expenditure	850	6,900	6,910	10	0	10	99.9%
Net Expenditure	(850)	(6,900)	(6,910)	(10)			
Policy and Resources :- Income	1,992	334,633	326,942	(7,691)			102.4%
Expenditure	19,735	170,109	224,182	54,073	0	54,073	75.9%
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(17,743)	164,523	102,760	(61,763)			

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/01/2026

Month No: 10

Committee Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
<u>Earmarked Reserves</u>							
910 Earmarked Reserves							
9011 Park/playground refurbishment	0	1,839	120,714	118,875	118,875		1.5%
9012 Civic Centre maintenance	0	3,560	11,630	8,070	8,070		30.6%
9013 Information technology/server	0	0	3,556	3,556	3,556		0.0%
9014 Telscombe Tye	0	690	55,082	54,392	54,392		1.3%
9018 Tye signage expenditure	551	551	1,200	649	649		46.0%
9020 Youth projects expenditure	0	1,060	2,548	1,488	1,488		41.6%
9021 Election expenses	0	0	19,899	19,899	19,899		0.0%
9023 Street lighting expenditure	0	3,210	28,000	24,790	24,790		11.5%
9026 Councillor training	0	0	3,140	3,140	3,140		0.0%
9027 Burial fees	0	0	8	8	8		0.0%
9028 Bus shelters	0	0	6,500	6,500	6,500		0.0%
9029 Street furniture	0	0	2,605	2,605	2,605		0.0%
9030 CCTV	0	0	2,344	2,344	2,344		0.0%
9032 Website	0	0	1,810	1,810	1,810		0.0%
9033 Telephones	0	0	2,500	2,500	2,500		0.0%
9035 Grounds maintenance	0	0	16,500	16,500	16,500		0.0%
9036 Coastal management	0	0	6,500	6,500	6,500		0.0%
9037 CIL monies	0	0	16,247	16,247	16,247		0.0%
9038 Neighbourhood plan	0	0	3,851	3,851	3,851		0.0%
9039 Clifftop fencing	0	0	5,000	5,000	5,000		0.0%
9040 Community cafe	0	0	19,500	19,500	19,500		0.0%
9041 Tye management	0	0	3,200	3,200	3,200		0.0%
9042 Memorials - bench maintenance	0	0	550	550	550		0.0%
9043 Bridleway 8 gate key deposits	0	0	200	200	200		0.0%
9044 Wave Leisure	0	0	1,500	1,500	1,500		0.0%
9045 Legal/professional fees	0	595	6,250	5,655	5,655		9.5%
9046 Kitchen appliances	0	0	3,000	3,000	3,000		0.0%
9047 Solar panels	0	0	3,000	3,000	3,000		0.0%
9048 Recruitment advertising	0	0	500	500	500		0.0%
Earmarked Reserves :- Indirect Expenditure	551	11,505	347,334	335,829	0	335,829	3.3%
Net Expenditure	(551)	(11,505)	(347,334)	(335,829)			
Earmarked Reserves :- Income	0	0	0	0			0.0%
Expenditure	551	11,505	347,334	335,829	0	335,829	3.3%
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(551)	(11,505)	(347,334)	(335,829)			



AGENDA ITEM	8
REPORT TO	Policy & Resources Committee
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	Business Plan Review/Update

1. INTRODUCTION

Our business plan covers May 2023 to May 2027.

2. INFORMATION

Section II of the latest version 2.6 of the plan dated 25th February 2026 relating to the P&R Committee is attached, Appendix B. The Planning & Highways section of the plan was recently amended.

No amendments to this Committee's section have been undertaken for some time.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to review the updated plan and decide whether any amendments are required at this stage.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be financial implications to some of the plan's actions.

Business Plan 2023/2027 - v 2.6

PART 2 of the business plan sets out a programme of work to be carried out between the dates shown including intervals of review and projected delivery dates adopted at Full Council. PART 1 working group Notes

Section II – POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE							
	Project	Objective	Activity	Responsible Person	Key Review Dates	Committee	Project Delivery Date
1	Value for Money review	A review of council services and costs.	To be agreed. BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	TC & Cllrs	Ongoing	P&R	
2	Tye Management Plan (TMP)	Develop and adopt a 'refreshed' TMP	Draft plan drawn up by CR & CCLK, taken to P&R for agreement & then full Council in Sept '21 & adopted. KEEP UNDER REVIEW BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	Working Group	Annually	P&R	Ongoing
3	Plan to maintain the Tye assets	To agree a regime of ongoing maintenance of the grass downland, stock fencing, gates and barriers.	P&R to agree the maintenance budget yearly & prescribe programme of work to maintain this asset. Review Management Plan once Tye objectives & new scheme agreed. Agreed to maintain gates & fencing along Sth Cst Rd and Gorham Way, and in East Saltdean gates 3 to 7 and	TC/P&R	Annually	P&R/budget working group	Ongoing
				TC/P&R		P&R	Ongoing

AGENDA ITEM	9
COMMITTEE	Policy & Resources
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk & RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	To review the Smoke Free Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

We have a Smoke Free Policy in place that was taken from the official Smoke Free website. This followed legislation introduced on the 1st July 2007 making it illegal to smoke in all public enclosed or substantially enclosed area and workplaces.

2. INFORMATION

Our Policy is due its 3 year review and I propose making some minor additions which are listed below.

- No 1 Purpose – add the following sentence:-

For the purposes of this policy the term “smoking” includes the use of cigarettes, cigars, pipes and “E” electronic cigarettes/vaping.

- No 2 Policy – add the following wording in red and italics to the end of the following sentence:-

Smoking is prohibited in all enclosed and substantially enclosed premises in the workplace (*e.g., offices, hallways, restrooms*).

- Add a new item as follows:-

No 4. Breaks

Employees are not entitled to additional paid smoking breaks. Smoking is only permitted during scheduled, unpaid breaks and must be taken away from the curtilage of the building.

The draft Policy with the above amendments is attached, Appendix C.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the amended Smoking Policy it is taken to the next full Council meeting for adoption, with a 3-year review date.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Positive environmental impacts are as follows:- a reduction in litter and waste; improved air quality; lower cleaning and maintenance requirements; reduced fire risk.

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

Smoke Free Policy

1. Purpose

This policy has been developed to protect all employees, service users, customers and visitors from exposure to secondhand smoke and to assist compliance with the Health Act 2006.

Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease and other serious illnesses. Ventilation or separating smokers and non-smokers within the same airspace does not completely stop potentially dangerous exposure.

For the purposes of this policy the term "smoking" includes the use of cigarettes, cigars, pipes and "E" electronic cigarettes/vaping.

2. Policy

It is the policy of Telscombe Town Council that all our workplaces are smokefree, and all employees have a right to work in a smokefree environment. The policy shall come into effect on Sunday, 1 July 2007. Smoking is prohibited in all enclosed and substantially enclosed premises in the workplace (*e.g., offices, hallways, restrooms*). This includes company vehicles. In addition, Telscombe Town Council does not allow smoking at the front door or in the curtilage of the building, including the garden/patio and car park. This policy applies to all employees, consultants, contractors, customers or members, visitors and hirers.

3. Implementation

Overall responsibility for policy implementation and review rests with the Town Clerk. However, all staff are obliged to adhere to, and support the implementation of the policy. The person named above shall inform all existing employees, consultants and contractors of the policy and their role in the implementation and monitoring of the policy. They will also give all new personnel a copy of the policy on recruitment/induction.

Appropriate 'no smoking' signs will be clearly displayed at the entrances to and within the premises and in all smoke free vehicles.

4. Breaks

Employees are not entitled to additional paid smoking breaks. Smoking is only permitted during scheduled, unpaid breaks and must be taken away from the curtilage of the building.

5. Non-compliance

Local disciplinary procedures will be followed if a member of staff does not comply with this policy. Those who do not comply with the smokefree law may also be liable to a fixed penalty fine and possible criminal prosecution.

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



6. Help to Stop Smoking

The NHS offers a range of free services to help smokers give up. Visit gosmokefree.co.uk or call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 169 0 169 for details. Alternatively, you can text 'GIVE UP' and your full postcode to 88088 to find your local NHS Stop Smoking Service.

Signed _____ Date _____
Mayor of Telscombe
On behalf of Telscombe Town Council

Policy	Smoke Free Policy
Review Cycle	Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes
Date Last Adopted	March 2026
Previous Adoption Dates	1.2.18; 18.3.20; 15.3.23
Responsibility	Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council



AGENDA ITEM	10
REPORT TO	Policy & Resources Committee
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	To review and agree the updated Employment Handbook

1. INTRODUCTION

At a recent Employment Sub-Committee meeting it was agreed to update the wording in the Sickness and Absence Policy to reflect that sick pay is on a 12-month rolling basis. As the Sickness and Absence Policy is contained with the Employment Handbook, it was agreed to update the handbook too.

2. INFORMATION

The updated Sickness and Absence Policy was adopted at Full Council on 21st January 2026. The updated version has therefore been inserted in the attached draft Employment Handbook, Appendix D, along with the following updated Policies:- Member Officer Protocol Policy adopted on 19.11.25; Smoke Free Policy (to be agreed at this meeting); IT Policy adopted on 21.1.26 and Equal Opportunities Policy adopted 17.9.25.

Some of the handbook wording has been streamlined for clarity, while all headings and the substance of the content are unchanged.

Two other policies in the handbook are due to be reviewed in November 2026 being the Grievance and Disciplinary Policies while the Dignity at Work Policy is due to be reviewed in March 2027. There is a sentence in the Handbook which states that '*When any Policies are updated, the ones in this handbook will be superseded with the new ones which will be available to view on the TTC website or folder in the Town Clerk's office.*'

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the updated Employment Handbook is agreed and taken to full Council for adoption.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A



Telscombe Town Council

Employment Handbook

draft

Welcome to Telscombe Town Council – this document should be read in conjunction with your staff contract of employment and The National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service Joint Council for Local Government Services (“the Green Book”).

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Welcome to Telscombe Town Council

What We Do

Telscombe Town Council (TTC) is the first tier of local authority and as such has powers to raise monies through Council tax precepts to undertake and maintain local service provision on behalf of its residents.

Our current services include:

- Ensuring and maintaining a democratically elected body for the local area.
- Maintaining and delivering good quality open spaces and parks including the management of approximately 200 acres of common land, Telscombe Tye.
- Maintaining some streetlights, litter bins, bus shelters and other street furniture.
- Making democratically formed comments on planning applications and other schemes that may affect the local area.
- Ensuring good quality service provision for best value.
- Raising income for the town through the renting of civic accommodation.
- Working with partners to deliver community projects that benefit all residents of the area.

The Council is a corporate body and employees are employed by the Council as a whole, not by individual Councillors or Committees.

The Council operates through a committee structure to manage specific areas of its work. Employment matters are overseen by the Employment Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Policy and Resources Committee

The Handbook

This Handbook contains our current *policies and rules and has been designed to help you understand how the Employer is organised, what standards and procedures you are expected to follow and what you can expect from us in return. We hope this will help our new employees to feel part of the team more quickly and be a gentle reminder to us all of the right way to work here.

The Council is committed to providing a working environment that is both positive and supportive. Employees are encouraged to speak to their manager if they require assistance or if any personal or work-related matters are affecting their ability to carry out their duties.

Everyone is Welcome

Telscombe Town Council (TTC) actively supports Human Rights and Equality legislation. Our ethos is to respect and value people's differences, to help everyone achieve more at work as well as in their personal lives so that they feel proud of the part they play in our business success. Our Grievance Procedures ensure sympathetic handling and hopefully satisfactory resolution, for all aspects of employees concerns or dissatisfaction.

We believe that all decisions about people at work should be based on the individual's abilities, skills, performance and behaviour and our business requirements. Questions about an individual's race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, gender re-assignment, age, religion and belief or sexual orientation are never relevant to our business. Issues of disability should only be considered against the particular requirements of the job. Our Equal Opportunities Statement must be strictly adhered to by all our team. Discrimination, abuse or harassment will result in disciplinary action being taken including dismissal for serious cases.

****When any Policies are updated, the ones in this handbook will be superseded with the new ones which will be available to view on the TTC website or folder in the Town Clerk's office.***

Section 1

From the Start

Probationary Period

Starting a new job can be challenging and your employment is subject to the satisfactory completion of a probationary period, which is normally six months. This is the time for you to learn about your job and also for us to review your progress. During this period either you or TTC may terminate the employment by giving one weeks written notice. The probationary period may be extended for up to a further 6 months if we consider it appropriate to do so.

The full disciplinary and grievance procedure does not apply during the probationary period.

Upon the successful completion of the probationary period, you will continue on the terms and conditions received at the commencement of employment.

Medical Assessment

If we have concern for an employee's or applicant's health, we may require that a medical examination by a Doctor or Occupational Health Professional appointed by the Employer be undertaken. Any such examination will be undertaken at TTC's expense.

We will advise the applicant or employee on the medical advice received and will consider what, if any, appropriate action is to be taken. No applicant or employee with a disability will be unlawfully discriminated against.

Dress Code

The dress code for the TTC Civic Centre is smart casual but when attending meetings, we need to present a professional image and request that you wear appropriate business dress. In hot weather, whilst we understand the need to be cool, we would ask that generally accepted standards of modesty be preserved at all times.

Conduct

TTC takes pride in fostering good relationships with our residents and businesses. All employees must conduct themselves in a professional manner and demonstrate courtesy and respect in their dealings with residents, councillors and colleagues

Workstations

Employees are expected to maintain a tidy and organised workstation that reflects a professional working environment. Food should not be consumed at workstations. At the end of each working day, all confidential documents must be securely stored.

Smoking

TTC's adopted policy is as follows:-

Smoke Free Policy **DRAFT**



1. *Purpose* - This policy has been developed to protect all employees, service users, customers and visitors from exposure to second-hand smoke and to assist compliance with the Health Act 2006.

Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease and other serious illnesses. Ventilation or separating smokers and non-smokers within the same airspace does not completely stop potentially dangerous exposure.

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'smoking' includes the use of cigarettes, cigars, pipes and 'E' Electronic cigarettes/vaping.

2. *Policy* - It is the policy of Telscombe Town Council that all our workplaces are smokefree, and all employees have a right to work in a smokefree environment. The policy shall come into effect on Sunday, 1 July 2007. Smoking is prohibited in all enclosed and substantially enclosed premises in the workplace (**eg., offices, hallways, restrooms**). This includes company vehicles. In addition, Telscombe Town Council does not allow smoking at the front door or in the curtilage of the building, including the garden/patio and car park. This policy applies to all employees, consultants, contractors, customers or members, visitors and hirers.

3. *Implementation* - Overall responsibility for policy implementation and review rests with the Town Clerk. However, all staff are obliged to adhere to, and support the implementation of the policy. The person named above shall inform all existing employees, consultants and contractors of the policy and their role in the implementation and monitoring of the policy. They will also give all new personnel a copy of the policy on recruitment/induction. Appropriate 'no smoking' signs will be clearly displayed at the entrances to and within the premises and in all smoke free vehicles.

4. **Breaks – Employees are not entitled to additional paid smoking breaks. Smoking is only permitted during scheduled, unpaid breaks and must be taken away from the curtilage of the building.**

5. *Non-compliance* - Local disciplinary procedures will be followed if a member of staff does not comply with this policy. Those who do not comply with the smokefree law may also be liable to a fixed penalty fine and possible criminal prosecution.

6. Help to Stop Smoking

The NHS offers a range of free services to help smokers give up. Visit gosmokefree.co.uk or call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 169 0 169 for details. Alternatively, you can text 'GIVE UP' and your full postcode to 88088 to find your local NHS Stop Smoking Service.

Signed
On behalf of Telscombe Town Council

Date

Policy Adopted by Council on xx.3.26

Review due March 2029

Computer Use

Please see the Council's IT Policy under Section 9.

Respect

Employees are expected to treat colleagues, councillors, residents, and Council property with respect at all times.

Telephone rules

When answering the telephones, staff are expected to maintain the highest standards of courtesy and professionalism at all times. Staff should also limit any personal calls they make or receive, as much as possible.

Mobile Phones

Personal use of mobile telephones during working hours should be kept to a minimum. Personal calls and text messages should be made or received during authorised breaks and away from workstations.

The use of personal mobile phones for work-related calls should be avoided and will not normally be reimbursed unless expressly authorised in advance.

Flexibility at Work

As a small team we need to work well together and be flexible about our work. We will from time-to-time issue reasonable instructions which you will be expected to follow. This may be asking you to do different tasks to your normal work to enable us to meet our residents' and Councillors' expectations. We will not ask you to do anything that you are not capable of doing or to undertake anything that could be considered a health and safety risk.

Diversity/Religious Observance

The Council respects and values the diversity of religious beliefs and practices among employees. All staff have the right, in accordance with the law, to freedom of religion and to practice and express their faith peacefully. As part of our workplace culture, all employees, including those who do not follow a religion, are expected to treat the beliefs, values, and practices of others with respect.

In practice this implies:

- Respect for another person's expressed wish to be left alone;
- The avoidance of the imposition of religious views on individuals who are in vulnerable situations in ways which exploit these;
- The avoidance of violent action or language, threats, manipulation, improper inducements or the misuse of any kind of power;

- Respect for the right of others to disagree.

Failure to respect the religious beliefs, practices, or faiths of others may be treated as a breach of the Council's standards of conduct and, where applicable, could constitute harassment under law.

Dress Code:- TTC welcomes the variety of appearance brought by individual styles, customs and personal choices. The wearing of items arising from particular religious norms (e.g. hijab, kippah, mangal sutra and clerical collar) is seen as part of a welcome diversity. Only Health and Safety requirements may mean that for certain tasks specific items of clothing such as overalls, protective clothing etc need to be worn. If such clothing produces a conflict with an individual's religious belief, the issue will be sympathetically considered by the Town Clerk with the aim of finding a satisfactory resolution that does not compromise the health and safety of any Employer employees, customers or business partners.

Wearing slogans or symbols which are discriminatory (e.g. racist or sexist) is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with accordingly.

Religious Observance:- For many religious people the daily practice of corporate, personal or private prayer is a primary responsibility and one of the ways in which religious practice constitutes and sustains a sense of personal identity. Adherents of a religion should advise the Town Clerk if they have any special requirements in this regard. The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that if other staff are affected by an individual's spiritual needs, a reasonable degree of respect and understanding is exercised between them and a sensible solution found.

Where facilities are sought by employees, TTC will make reasonable effort to provide accommodation (with appropriate additional facilities, such as washing facilities, nearby).

Working Hours:- All staff, without exception, are required to work in accordance with their contract of employment, although there may be some flexibility over how the hours are worked. Where the hours conflict with religious beliefs please speak to Town Clerk and we will try to respond sympathetically whilst meeting the needs of the business.

Approved Absence for Religious Festivals:- Appropriate and sympathetic consideration will be given by the Town Clerk to requests for leave from employees specifically wishing to participate in their religious festivals where these are not covered by UK Public Holidays. Good communication, well in advance of the festival in question, is essential in fostering flexible and appropriate responses. Staff should advise the Town Clerk of leave requests for the coming year at the start of the leave year, or on joining TTC. The Town Clerk should follow the normal holiday request format for granting annual leave and in exceptional circumstances, unpaid leave, to facilitate these requests.

Whilst such requests will not be refused unreasonably without adequate explanation, it must be appreciated that the Town Clerk must always ensure the service to our residents does not suffer.

Section 2

Pay, Hours of Work, Expenses & Benefits

Pay

You will be paid monthly by BACS on or around the 25th of the month for pay earned during that same calendar month. Your salary is set out in accordance with the National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service of Local Council Clerks in England and Wales. As such you will have been appointed to a single salary point as set out in your contract.

You will be asked to supply your bank/building society account details when you start work with us. If these details change you should let us know as soon as possible so your payments go through smoothly.

General

We aim to maintain remuneration at all levels which:

- a) enables us to recruit and retain quality employees who will perform their roles effectively.
- b) motivate employees to achieve the objectives set by their managers so that their goals are met.
- c) Provide progression for employees assuming greater responsibility and duties that are more demanding.

Please note that an individual's salary is confidential and should not be discussed with anyone other than your manager except for the purposes of making a relevant pay disclosure.

Queries on Pay and Income tax

Any queries regarding pay should be discussed first with the Responsible Finance Officer.

The tax office for the Employer is HM Revenue & Customs, the Employer PAYE reference is 334/C6008.

Your starting salary will be notified in your Contract of Employment. Subsequent changes will be notified in writing.

Deductions from Pay

All deductions required by law or authorised by an employee will be made from your salary and shown on the employee's payslip. Other deductions from salary may be made including, but not limited to:

- an amount to cover losses sustained in relation to property or money of the Employer or of any client, customer, visitor or other employees during the course of your employment

caused through your act, carelessness, negligence or recklessness, or through breach of the employer's rules or instructions, or any dishonesty on your part.

- an amount equal to a day's salary or part day's salary for each day or part day of unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence is failing to appear for work at the appropriate time unless absence is due to genuine sickness or injury which has been notified to the employer in accordance with this contract, or leave for which prior permission has been granted, or genuine reasons outside your control which are acceptable to the employer.
- Overpayment of expenses.
- Motoring fines incurred by you on employer business.
- Personal expenditure incurred on employer's credit cards.
- Where you leave the employer the balance of any training assistance given under a study loan agreement.
- the amount of any overpayment to you.
- the amount of any loan made to you by the employer for any purpose.
- and/ or any other amount due to the employer from you.

Holiday Pay on Termination of Employment

On termination of employment for any reason, TTC reserves the right at its sole discretion either to require you to take all or part of any balance of annual holiday entitlement outstanding as part of the notice period, or to pay you in lieu of all or any part of such balance. If you have taken more than your holiday entitlement when you leave, a sum representing the amount of additional holiday will be deducted from your final salary.

Hours of work and time keeping

Our normal hours of work are 37 hours per week excluding meal breaks from 9.00am to 5.20pm Monday to Friday, or such other hours as are necessary for the proper performance of your duties. Your working hours are as detailed in your Contract of Employment. TTC reserves the right to amend your normal hours of work from time to time. You will be notified in writing of any such change.

It is your responsibility to attend work punctually. This means that you should be ready to commence work at the start of your start time, not arrive then. You may not leave work before your normal finishing time without the permission of your line manager.

Your normal lunch break will be 1 hour if working a full day, but must be a minimum of 30 minutes and maximum of 2 hours (in exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement of your line manager) between 12pm and 2.30pm. All arrangements should be agreed beforehand between staff to ensure appropriate service cover.

You may be required, from time to time, to work additional hours and it is a condition of your employment that you work any additional overtime required by TTC. This may also include

your working evenings and/or weekends and/or bank holidays. You shall not be entitled to receive any additional remuneration for work outside your normal hours unless agreed beforehand and in writing with the Town Clerk.

Start and Finish Time

The office must be staffed between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday and the Town Clerk is required to take into consideration full cover of TTC's services in consideration of the management of working hours. The Town Clerk will not be unnecessarily restrictive in approving leave and will be as consistent as possible in dealing with requests.

Within an employee's agreed contracted hours, the employee can work after 8.30 am and finish on or before 6.30pm. Any time worked outside this range or at weekends must be approved in advance by the Town Clerk. Your normal working hours will be as set out in your Contract of Employment and those for the Evening/Weekend Attendant will be outside the afore-mentioned hours.

TTC core hours are 9.00am to 4.30pm. Where an employee has not made a prior arrangement to commence work after 9.00am, or leave before 4.30pm, the Town Clerk may require an unpaid, flexi or annual leave half-day to be taken for that morning/afternoon.

Time Recording

Employees must record the hours they have worked which is done through either the computerised timesheet (G Drive) or written timesheet provided by the Line Manager. Individual employee's work records should be updated daily on workdays and submitted to their Line Manager on the employee's first working day of the subsequent week. A working week runs from Monday to Sunday. Working times (to the nearest 5 minutes) should be recorded on time sheets, as well as providing details of the jobs undertaken/leave/sick periods etc. Incorrect completion of time sheets or time recording on behalf of a colleague may be treated as a disciplinary offence. Timesheets may be reviewed with Line Managers at supervision sessions.

Time off in Lieu (TOIL) / Flexitime Scheme

TTC operates a flexitime scheme for calculating time worked in addition to an employee's contracted hours. These enable staff to work more flexibly and meet personal needs, but must be with prior agreement of the Town Clerk. Hours worked without prior agreement will not be credited.

The accounting period for the flexitime-scheme is based on the debit/credit accrued at the end of a calendar month period. Flexitime is calculated on the basis of a 37-hour week for full-time employees; for part-time employees, it is calculated pro-rata on the basis of the hours specified in the employee's contract of employment.

A maximum of 15 hours flexitime credit or 2.5 hours flexi time debit may be carried forward at the end of each calendar month. Credit in excess of 15 hours will be lost. Persistent debits in excess of 2.5 hours will lead to disciplinary action.

Subject to the monthly accrualment of time, two days or up to 2 half days may be taken as flexi leave during each calendar month with prior agreement of your line manager. Any accrualment not taken at the end of a financial year will be lost and any debit will be deducted from your salary.

At times, the Town Clerk may need to restrain the operation of flexi-time in order to meet the reasonable requirements of TTC as defined by management.

Travel to Meetings

On occasions an employee may attend meetings outside the office, travelling direct to that meeting from home, or to home from the meeting. On these occasions, any time over and above that normally spent travelling between TTC and home should be counted as time worked, and recorded as travel time.

Working Overnight

Staff who spend a night(s) away from home on behalf of TTC (for example, to attend a conference) will be entitled to claim 2 hours per overnight stay in addition to hours worked per day and travel time.

Expenses & Benefits

The Council will reimburse employees for reasonable and authorised expenses incurred in the course of their duties. Claims must be submitted on an Expense Claim Form (available from the Responsible Finance Officer) with all relevant receipts attached. Expenses should be agreed in advance with the Town Clerk or Responsible Finance Officer and submitted within one calendar month of being incurred. Reimbursement will normally be made via the Council's internet banking system within 10 working days of authorisation by Councillors.

TTC actively encourages all staff to use public transport/cycle or walk wherever possible. However, in special circumstances when car usage is required to undertake duties, mileage payments will be made in accordance with NJC's rates in force at the time. All claims should be accompanied by petrol receipts and/or mileage log.

The Council will cover any additional insurance premiums that arise from the use of a personal vehicle for Council duties. Employees must provide evidence of appropriate insurance coverage that allows their vehicle to be used for carrying out Council services or specific work-related tasks.

Pensions

All employees are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme which is a qualifying scheme under the Workplace Pension Regulations and you will be automatically enrolled if you are eligible for automatic enrolment. TTC will pay monthly contributions in force at the time. For further information speak to the Responsible Finance Officer.

Section 3

Equal Opportunities, Recruitment, Training and Development

TTC's adopted Equal Opportunities policy is as follows:-



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Introduction

Telscombe Town Council's aim is to ensure that all its employees, Councillors, job applicants, members of the public and organisations worked with are treated equally. The Town Council will ensure that all aspects of its governance and operation promotes equality of opportunity.

1.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds, known as 'protected characteristics':-

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

In addition the Council will not discriminate on the grounds of:-

- ethnic or national origin
- socio-economic status

2. Employees

All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed contract, agency workers or temporary, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

3. Responsibilities

The Council, its Councillors and employees all have a duty both morally and legally not to unfairly discriminate against individuals. They all hold a responsibility for the practical

application of the equality of opportunity across the Council. However, ultimate responsibility for achieving the Policy's objectives and for ensuring compliance with relevant statutes and codes of practice lies with the Council.

The Council recognises that training and development are crucial to ensure that Councillors and employees have the knowledge and appropriate behaviour to implement its Equal Opportunities Policy.

4. Breaches

The Council's Policy & Resources Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation, monitoring and review of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

If employees have any doubt about appropriate treatment under the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy, they should consult their line manager, the Town Clerk or the Mayor.

Where a Councillor has concerns about appropriate treatment under the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy, they should in the first instance seek advice of the Town Clerk.

Breaches of the provisions or spirit of this Policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Policy	Equal Opportunities
Review Cycle	Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes
Date Last Adopted	17 th September 2025
Previous Adoption Dates	18 th September 2019, 28 th September 2022
Responsibility	Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council

Adopted by Telscombe Town Council on 17.9.2025

Review due September 2028

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the advertising of jobs, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, benefits, facilities, pay, health and safety, conduct at work, grievance and disciplinary procedures and termination of employment, including redundancy.

Forms of Discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage for a reason related to one or more of the grounds set out in paragraph above. For example, rejecting an applicant because it is considered they would not 'fit in' on the grounds of their race would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with sex, it would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex.

Discrimination also includes victimisation (less favourable treatment because of action taken to assert legal rights against discrimination or to assist a colleague in that regard) and harassment.

Staff training

Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals and one-to-one meetings with managers. All employees will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within TTC and achieve their individual goals. All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

The Council will regularly review the composition and progression of staff at all levels to ensure equality of opportunity. Where necessary, measures will be taken to remove barriers and provide appropriate support, facilities, and working conditions to meet the needs of under-represented or disadvantaged groups.

Conditions of Service

The Council will regularly review its terms and conditions of employment, benefits and facilities to ensure they are accessible to all eligible employees and that no unlawful barriers prevent access. This applies to pay, bonus criteria, policies, and all other benefits provided by the Council.

Termination of Employment

The Council will monitor redundancy criteria and procedures to ensure they are fair, objective, and free from unlawful discrimination. Disciplinary procedures will be applied consistently and fairly to all employees, whether they result in warnings, dismissal, or other disciplinary measures.

Disability Discrimination

Employees who are disabled, or who become disabled during their employment with TTC, are encouraged to inform their manager. This will allow the Council to provide appropriate support. Employees may also wish to advise the Town Clerk of any reasonable adjustments to their working conditions or duties that would assist them in performing their role effectively.

The Town Clerk may consult with the employee and, where appropriate, their medical adviser(s) regarding possible reasonable adjustments. Any proposals will be carefully considered and accommodated where feasible and proportionate to the requirements of the role. In some cases, it may not be reasonable for the Council to implement a suggested adjustment. Where this occurs, the Council will provide the employee with an explanation of the reasons for its decision.

The Council will regularly review the physical features of its premises to ensure they do not place disabled employees, job applicants, or service users at a substantial disadvantage. Where reasonably practicable, the Council will take steps to improve access for disabled employees and service users.

Fixed-term Employees & Agency/Temporary Workers

The Council will monitor the use of fixed-term employees and agency workers to ensure they have appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. Where relevant, the Council will track their progress to ensure they are able to apply for permanent vacancies.

Part-time Workers

The Council will monitor the terms and conditions of part-time employees and their career progression to ensure they have fair access to benefits, training, and promotion opportunities.

Breach of Policy Procedure

If employees believe that they may have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds listed, employees are encouraged to raise the matter through TTC's grievance procedures.

If employees believe that they may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed they are encouraged to raise the matter with their line manager.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure.

Employees who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under TTC's disciplinary procedures.

As this policy applies equally to TTC's relationships with residents, Councillors, customers and suppliers, if, after investigation, employees are proven to have discriminated against or harassed a resident, Councillor, customer or supplier they will also be subject to disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

Recruitment & Selection

The Council is committed to ensuring that no job applicant is treated less favourably on any unlawful grounds. Recruitment procedures will be regularly reviewed by the Employment Sub-Committee to ensure selection is based on relevant skills and abilities and that recruitment reaches a diverse range of candidates.

The Employment Sub-Committee will take steps to ensure that information about vacancies reaches a wide audience, including under-represented groups within the community. To help ensure this policy is effective, the Sub-Committee may monitor applicants'

characteristics such as race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and age during the recruitment process.

Procedures for Short Listing

Before a vacancy is advertised, an up-to-date job description will be approved by the Employment Sub-Committee. Once approved, the vacancy will be advertised through appropriate media, external websites, and the Council's own website. All applications will be recorded and securely stored. Completed applications will be treated as confidential and applicants' personal information will be protected in accordance with data protection requirements.

Within ten working days of the closing date, all applications will be reviewed by the Town Clerk and appointed members of the Employment Sub-Committee. Shortlisting and interview procedures will ensure candidates are assessed objectively against the requirements of the job description and person specification. The Town Clerk will be responsible for removing all personal information from applications prior to the review.

Interviews will normally be conducted by the Town Clerk and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee. Interview questions and tasks will be based on the key requirements of the job description. All interviewers will use standard scoring sheets to record assessments. Candidates will be asked the same primary questions and given the same tasks, with supplementary questions used only where relevant, to ensure a fair and transparent selection process.

Disability

The needs of candidates and employees with a disability (as defined by law) will be considered to ensure that, wherever reasonably practicable, appropriate adjustments are made to support their recruitment, retention, and ongoing employment.

Personnel Records

Each employee has a personnel file containing information relevant to their employment, including records of appraisals, individual meetings, training and development. Employees have the right to access the information held about them and may request a copy of their file. Employee data is confidential and must not be disclosed, verbally or in writing, to anyone without a legitimate right to access it.

Training and Development

The Council recognises that its employees are its most valuable asset. The success of the organisation depends on having motivated staff with the right skills in the right roles. To support career development, job descriptions and personal objectives will be reviewed regularly to provide employees with a clear path for progression.

Induction

All new employees will receive an induction to the Council, its aims and objectives, their team, and their specific role, including how their work contributes to the organisation's activities. New employees will also be introduced to colleagues to help them settle in quickly. If you have any questions or are unsure about any aspect of your work, you are encouraged to seek guidance from your manager.

Ongoing Training

Once your induction training has finished and you have settled into your new role, you will be given opportunities to learn and develop existing and new skills.

External Training

Some training needs may not be addressed effectively through internal methods. In such cases, training delivered by external providers may be required. Your manager will seek advice to identifying training needs and recommend the most suitable training solutions.

Recoupment of Training Costs

Where the Council agrees to fund external training (including any paid time off for attendance, study leave, or examinations), repayment may be required if your employment ends within a set period. If your employment terminates within 12 months of the Council incurring the training costs, you will be required to repay the full amount. If your employment ends between 12 and 24 months after the expense is incurred, you will be required to repay 50% of the cost. Any repayment may be deducted from monies owed to you, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Town Clerk.

Professional Fees

Employees are entitled to reimbursement for the annual cost of maintaining any professional qualification or membership of a professional body that is specified as a requirement in their job description. Reimbursement will be made upon production of a certified paid invoice or proof of a paid direct debit, or alternatively the Council may pay the fee directly. Further details are available from your manager. If your employment terminates (for any reason) partway through the membership year, you must reimburse the Council for the pro-rata portion of the fee relating to the remaining period. Any repayment may be deducted from monies owed to you.

Appraisals

The Council is committed to developing the skills of its employees. As part of this commitment, each employee will have an annual review with their manager. This structured meeting provides an opportunity to review performance over the past year and to agree on personal development objectives for the year ahead. Any necessary documentation will be provided in advance to ensure the meeting is productive and beneficial for both employee and manager.

Section 4

Communication

Communications

The Council is committed to effective communication with all employees. Gathering feedback and ideas from staff is central to our strategy, and we welcome constructive suggestions on how we can improve the Council and create a better workplace.

All communication should be:

- Clear – easy to understand
- Consistent – dependable, constant
- Relevant – appropriate to audience
- Timely – at the right time
- Honest – believable, trustworthy
- Open – good and bad news

Effective communication helps employees stay informed and motivated, enabling them to play an active role in achieving the Council's objectives. It is also central to daily work, personal development, leadership, and people management.

Employees are expected to:

- Understand their communication responsibilities to colleagues, managers, and the organisation.
- Know how and where to access the information needed to perform their role.
- Actively participate in internal communication channels.
- Seek clarification when communications are unclear.
- Gather information to enhance their knowledge of their area of work.
- Respect and maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information.

Regular communication takes place through emails, Council, committee and team meetings, appraisals and one-to-ones.

Public Relations

If you are approached by the media, or suspect that you are speaking to a journalist, you must refer the enquiry to the Town Clerk. This ensures that all questions are handled accurately and appropriately, safeguarding the Council's reputation.

Section 5

Controlling Risks

General

All employees are responsible for protecting Council property, resources, and goods from loss, theft, or damage. Security procedures are in place to minimise risk and safeguard both the organisation and employees. Full co-operation in following and improving these procedures is required. Failure to comply with security rules may be treated as a breach of conduct.

The Council may use security measures, including monitoring communications, CCTV, and searches, to protect its operations and staff. Employees should report any suspicious activity to their manager immediately and are encouraged to suggest improvements to security procedures.

Goods In/Ordering

Employees should only accept deliveries or sign for goods if they are expecting them or have been specifically authorised to do so. Orders for goods or services should only be made by those authorised and in accordance with Council procedures.

Right of Search

In the interests of security and the protection of Council property, the Council reserves the right to conduct searches. This may include searches of employees, their bags, personal belongings, and vehicles on Council premises. Employees may request that a colleague be present during any such search. Unreasonable refusal to comply with a lawful search request may be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Visitors

Employees are responsible for ensuring that residents and visitors are appropriately supported while on Council premises. All visitors must be informed of the fire evacuation procedures and the location of emergency exits. Staff members expecting visitors are required to meet them on arrival and should ensure they are escorted while on site. Employees are also responsible for ensuring visitors are safely escorted from the premises at the conclusion of their visit.

Personal Property

Employees are advised not to bring valuables or significant sums of money onto Council premises. The Council cannot accept liability for loss of, or damage to, personal money, clothing, or other personal property brought onto the premises.

Building Security

Please ensure that all windows and doors are secured, and that all computers, lights, and electrical equipment are switched off before leaving the building.

Passwords/Codes

Each employee will be issued with an individual password to access the Council's computer systems. Passwords are confidential and must not be shared with any person other than the Town Clerk or authorised IT support where necessary. Passwords will be changed periodically in accordance with IT security requirements.

Employees will also be provided with access codes for the Civic Centre doors and these codes should not be disclosed to anyone apart from other employees. Employees will also be provided with a unique code for the intruder alarm system which is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to anyone other than the Town Clerk.

Any breach of these security requirements may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

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Section 6

Absence from Work

TTC's adopted Sickness & Absence policy is as follows:-



SICKNESS & ABSENCE POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 *The Council is committed to the care and well-being of its employees. The purpose of this policy is to ensure all staff members have access to information relating to sickness and absence and are aware of the steps they must follow when absent from work.*

1.2 *By managing sickness and absence, the Council will continue to provide a high-quality service to members of the public.*

1.3 *This policy covers:*

- *sickness leave*
- *sick pay*
- *unauthorised absence and lateness*
- *annual leave*
- *compassionate and/or emergency leave*
- *time off in lieu (TOIL)/flexitime*
- *medical/dental appointments*
- *severe weather & disruptions to travel*
- *maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave*
- *Jury service*
- *falsifying claims*

2 Sickness Leave

2.1 *As an Employer, we need to measure and record sickness absence and to know when and why we need to do something about it. We will therefore record and keep all records relating to absence. The Council will investigate and assess whether further action is necessary if periods of absence due to short-term self-certification sickness reach unacceptable levels, or if patterns emerge. As an employee, you need to know that you work for someone who cares about your health and welfare.*

2.2 *The Council recognises that there will be occasions when staff members are unable to work due to sickness. If you are ill and unfit for work, you must personally contact the Town Clerk as early as possible on the first day and certainly within 1 hour of starting your shift work pattern so that service levels can be maintained. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council accept notification of absence from a third party. Regular contact must be maintained with the Town Clerk during a period of absence.*

- 2.3 For absence of 7 days or less, employees are required to complete a self-certification document. (A copy of the self-certificate form can be found at the end of the handbook in section 13.)
- 2.4 If absence continues for more than 7 days (Saturday and Sunday included) a Doctor's 'Fit for Work' certificate must be supplied to the Town Clerk and thereafter additional 'Fit for Work' certificates must be sent to cover the whole period of sickness. Certificates should be posted or emailed to the Town Clerk as soon as possible.
- 2.5 Whilst an employee is absent due to sickness, they must do nothing to aggravate or delay recovery such as working for another employer or taking part in inappropriate social or sporting activities.
- 2.6 Employees who are frequently absent or on long-term sickness could be suffering from poor health which may require medical investigation. The Council will offer support and guidance in consultation with the employee and will consider referral to occupational health specialist services if deemed appropriate at TTC's expense.
- 2.7 The Council takes a sympathetic view towards ill health problems and will provide a supportive approach to employees who have been subject to long-term sickness. An employee returning to work following a period of long-term sickness will be supported on their return to work. The Town Clerk will discuss the advice on the Doctor's certificate with you and consider any comments made and/or any return-to-work tick boxes. The following options may be considered:-
- Phased return to work
 - Change of role or working pattern
 - Provision of specialist equipment
- If you return to work on reduced hours, your pay will reflect this. If TTC is not able to make any adaptations or adjustments to help you return to work, the Town Clerk will explain the reasons for this to you.
- 2.8 If you return to work but are on any form of medication that could affect your ability to carry out your normal duties, you must inform the Town Clerk.
- 2.9 Where an employee has returned from any period of sickness, a return-to-work interview will be conducted by the Town Clerk and a form completed. (A copy of the return-to-work form can be found at the end of the handbook in section 13.)
- 2.10 Whilst TTC will endeavour to support employees throughout periods of prolonged sickness, a heavy burden is thrown onto colleagues and TTC is unable to plan work effectively. In cases where an employee's absence reaches excessive levels or there is a lack of information about the circumstances of the sickness absence, TTC may request medical information about their condition from their GP. In cases of persistent repetition of or prolonged absence due to sickness or injury, TTC reserves the right to terminate your employment. In some situations, this may be before expiry of your sick pay. TTC would not decide to do this without meeting with you first.

- 2.11 Any medical information received by the Council will be treated as strictly confidential. Any expense in obtaining medical information from the GP will be met by the Council.
- 2.12 During all periods of absence, the Town Clerk as Line Manager will maintain contact with the employee.
- 2.13 During periods of long-term absence, holiday will accrue in line with the statutory allowance.

3 Sick Pay

- 3.1 SSP will be paid in accordance with legislation in force at the time of absence. After successful completion of the probationary period and subject to the correct notification, additional sick pay may be paid at TTC's absolute discretion as detailed in your Contract of Employment.
- 3.2 Sickness absence is calculated on a rolling 12-month basis. This means that an employee's sickness record will be reviewed by looking back over the previous 12 months from the most recent date of absence, rather than a fixed calendar year. The rolling 12-month period moves forward continuously which means that sickness absence is reassessed whenever a new absence occurs or when an ongoing absence continues. Older periods of sickness will therefore drop out of the calculation once they are more than 12 months old.
- 3.3 For the purposes of calculating a period of sickness absence, all calendar days are included. This means that weekends and public holidays falling within a period of sickness absence will be counted as part of the total absence, even where these are not the employee's normal working days. The same applies for full-time and part-time staff.
- 3.4 Once a particular year's sickness entitlement is exhausted (even if during the period of absence the anniversary of the employee's employment is passed), no further discretionary additional sick pay eligibility will accrue until the employee has been back at work for 60 working days. Periods of sickness absence separated by less than 20 working days may be deemed by the Council to be a continuation of the earlier period of leave (whether the employee's medical condition during both periods of absence are in fact related or not).
- 3.5 If you are absent due to incapacity caused by a third party or for an accident covered by insurance, any payments made by us under the additional sick pay scheme will be a loan and you or your personal representatives must include in any claim you make against a third party or Insurance company, a claim in respect of that loan.

4 Unauthorised absence and lateness

- 4.1 Unauthorised absence occurs when an employee fails to attend work and has not made arrangements with the Town Clerk.

- 4.2 *Where an employee returns to work following an unauthorised absence, they will be required to attend a meeting with the Town Clerk to explain their absence. The employee will be expected to take any unauthorised absence from their annual leave entitlement, or if no entitlement remains, pay will be deducted for the period of unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may result in disciplinary action being taken.*
- 4.3 *There may be occasions when it is unavoidable to be late for work. The employee should contact the Town Clerk to explain the reasons for any delay. The employee will be expected to make up any time lost at work due to lateness. Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action being taken.*

5 Annual Leave

- 5.1 *The annual leave period runs from 1st April to 31st March the following year. Effective from 1st April 2023, full-time employees are entitled to 23 days paid holiday per annum plus Statutory Bank and Public Holidays. Your leave will increase to 26 working days per year when you have completed five years continuous service. This is pro-rata for part-time employees. Details of annual leave entitlements are included in an employee's Contract of Employment.*
- 5.2 *It is normal practice for TTC's offices to be closed on UK public holidays. TTC reserves the right to deem any working day falling between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day a compulsory holiday, to be taken from your annual leave entitlement, where it is reasonable for efficiency to close the offices. You will be entitled to 2 extra statutory days to be taken at Christmas as notified to you by the Town Clerk.*
- 5.3 *Requests for annual leave are at the discretion of the Town Clerk, with consideration of the operational requirements of the Council being taken into account before a decision is made. For this reason, no bookings should be made before approval is received. Annual leave requests will not be unreasonably refused.*
- 5.4 *Where two or more employees request annual leave on the same dates and it is not operationally possible to grant all the requests, preference will be given based on the following:*
- *seniority of role/grade*
 - *length of service*
 - *parental/carer commitments*
- 5.5 *TTC expects employees to take all their holiday entitlement within the year it is accrued, however, in exceptional circumstances and with prior written agreement from the Town Clerk, a maximum of 5 days may be carried over into the next leave year. Any holiday not taken or carried over will be lost.*

6 Compassionate and/or emergency leave

- 6.1 *Compassionate leave is at the overall discretion of the Town Clerk. The Council recognises that each individual's respective relationships are different, however in*

order to achieve consistency, in general paid compassionate leave will be granted in the following circumstances:

- the death of a close family member i.e. spouse, civil partner, child, sibling, parent (or equivalent in-laws) or grand-parent
- the diagnosis of, or final stages of care for, a serious (life threatening) illness affecting a close family relative (as defined above)
- the employee falling victim to a serious crime
- fire/flood/burglary at the employee's home
- road traffic collisions or other distressing accidents/incidents involving the employee or a close family member

6.2 The length of paid compassionate leave granted is at the discretion of the Clerk, but is limited to a maximum of 5 days. Where a situation requires an extended period of leave beyond 5 days, other options should be discussed including use of TOIL, annual leave and/or a period of unpaid leave.

6.3 Requests for compassionate leave for situations not included above will be considered on an individual basis.

6.4 Requests for emergency leave are at the discretion of the Clerk. The Council recognises that each individual's personal circumstances will dictate what may be deemed as an emergency, however in order to achieve consistency, in general paid emergency leave of one day will be granted in the following circumstances:

- To provide assistance or make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- On the occasion of an unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant.

6.5 Employees are expected to use the day's paid emergency leave to make any ongoing care arrangements for dependents. Any additional requests for leave should be considered as requests for annual leave, and assessed using the Council's annual leave guidelines.

7 Time off in lieu (TOIL) / Flexitime Scheme

7.1 The standard Council working week is 37 hours. Employee's individual weekly working hours are detailed in their Contract of Employment.

7.2 TTC operates a flexitime scheme for calculating time worked in addition to an employee's contracted hours. This enables staff to work more flexibly and meet personal needs, but must be with prior agreement of the Town Clerk. Hours worked without prior agreement will not be credited.

7.3 Full details are contained within Section 2 the Employment Handbook.

8 Medical/Dental Appointments

- 8.1 *Employees are expected to arrange medical/dental appointments out of normal working hours wherever possible.*
- 8.2 *The Council recognises this is not always possible. Where it is necessary to make an appointment during normal working hours, employees are encouraged to make the appointments at either the start or end of the day where possible to minimise disruption to the work of the Council. The flexible working system allows you to make adjustments to your working hours to facilitate this. You must inform the Town Clerk of any such appointments in advance and arrangements for making up the time agreed.*
- 8.3 *In-patient appointments or procedures taking the whole day will be treated as sick leave in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.*

9 Severe Weather and Disruptions to Travel

- 9.1 *The Council acknowledges that employees may occasionally have problems travelling to and from work due to either severe weather conditions or major disruptions to public transport (for example, train strikes or accidents on the roads). Whilst we understand and are committed to protecting the health and safety of all our employees, we must also ensure that the business and our residents are not unduly disrupted by external factors.*
- 9.2 *You should make every effort to attend work. When severe weather conditions occur or where there are major disruptions to public transport, you should take steps to obtain advice on the position from the appropriate external agencies and allow extra time for your journey, making alternative travel arrangements where appropriate.*
- 9.3 *If you are unable to attend work or are going to be delayed by the weather conditions or public transport disruptions, you should contact the Town Clerk as soon as possible to discuss the position.*
- 9.4 *Where the Council accepts that you have used your best endeavours to attend work but you are unable to do so or you are late because of the severe weather conditions or the major disruptions to public transport, the Town Clerk will discuss the various options potentially available. At the Council's discretion, you may be required or permitted to:*
- *Make up the time at a later date.*
 - *Take any absence from work as part of your annual leave entitlement.*
 - *Take any absence from work as special unpaid leave (in this case, your pay will reduce accordingly to take account of the hours/days you have not worked).*
 - *Be paid as if you had attended work on the day(s) of absence.*
 - *Work from home or otherwise work remotely.*

The Council will base its decision on your individual circumstances, for example your distance from home to work, your mode of transport and how viable it is for you to work from home, and on the needs of the Council.

- 9.5 *If severe weather conditions or major disruptions to public transport occur during the working day which will cause problems for you travelling home, the Town Clerk will decide whether to allow you to leave work early (and to make up the time at a later date if necessary). The decision will be based on your individual circumstances, for example your distance from home to work, your mode of transport and how viable it is for you to take work with you and work from home for the rest of the day, and on the needs of the Council.*
- 9.6 *TTC is committed to protecting the health and safety of all its employees and this includes during severe weather conditions. Where there are major disruptions to public transport a reasonable approach will be taken to the situation. You also have a duty of care to take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions. This includes taking extra care when travelling to and from work in severe weather conditions and allowing more time for your journey, including making alternative travel arrangements where appropriate.*
- 9.7 *Unjustified or unacceptable absence or lateness may give rise to disciplinary action under the Council's disciplinary procedure.*

10 Maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave

10.1 *The Council recognises an employee's right to maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave as set out in the relevant legislation in force at the time.*

11 Jury Service

If you are called to Jury Service you should inform your manager immediately. The Court will send you a loss of earnings form which you should complete and return to the Court with a copy to the Town Clerk. You will be paid in full whilst carrying out your jury service but the loss of earnings payment made by the Court to you will be deducted from your salary.

If you attend Court and are told your services are not required that day, you must telephone us immediately and then return to work.

12 Falsifying Claims

12.1 *In the event of an employee taking time off fraudulently under any of the above sickness and absence policies, the Council will investigate and disciplinary action may be taken.*

Policy	Sickness & absence
Review Cycle	Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes
Date Last Adopted	21.1.26
Previous Adoption Dates	March 2021, March 2024
Responsibility	Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council

Policy Adopted by full Council on 21.1.26

Review due January 2029

Section 7

Health and Safety

Health and Safety

Both the Council and its employees have legal duties to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all persons at work. The Council owes a duty of care to its employees, however, maintaining a safe working environment is a shared responsibility. All employees are expected to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions. The following Health and Safety information sets out the Council's commitment and responsibilities in this regard:

Council Responsibilities:

The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to:

- Comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, associated regulations, and all other relevant health and safety legislation.
- Provide and maintain a safe, healthy, and risk-free working environment.
- Ensure that equipment, materials, and substances are handled, stored, and used safely.
- Provide suitable and sufficient welfare facilities for employees.
- Provide adequate information, instruction, training, and supervision to enable employees to work safely, avoid hazards, and contribute positively to the health and safety of all persons at work.

Employee Responsibilities:

Employees are required to support the Council in maintaining high health and safety standards by:

- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Using correctly, and in accordance with training and instruction, any equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), clothing, or footwear provided.
- Co-operating with the Council on all health and safety matters and complying with health and safety policies, procedures, and instructions.
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfering with, or misusing, anything provided in the interests of health, safety, or welfare.

Any breach of the Council's Health and Safety policies may result in disciplinary action. Employees must promptly report to the Town Clerk any situation that may present a risk to themselves or others, such as loose cables, unattended boxes, or obstructed exits. Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, employees should take reasonable steps to remove or reduce the hazard and maintain a safe working environment. Employees are also required to familiarise themselves with the location of all fire exits and to understand the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire or emergency evacuation.

First Aid

First Aid Boxes are kept in the kitchens.

Accidents

All accidents, no matter how minor, must be reported immediately to the Town Clerk and logged in the accident/incident book, which can be found in the Office. These records are reviewed regularly to prevent similar accidents occurring in the future.

Eye Care

TTC will cover expenses for eye tests for employees every two years or as deemed necessary by an optician. If spectacles are prescribed and are required to perform your role, e.g. for VDU work, TTC will make a reasonable contribution (£50) to the cost.

Evacuation Procedures

Upon commencing employment, you will receive full information on the emergency procedures for your workplace. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with fire and safety instructions, including the location of fire extinguishers and emergency exits. Fire exits must never be obstructed, as you could be held personally liable.

In the event of a fire alarm, leave the building immediately. If you discover a fire, raise the alarm, close doors and windows if safe to do so, and keep others clear. Do not attempt to collect personal belongings. Proceed directly to the designated Assembly Point for registration. Do not run, panic, or re-enter the building until it has been declared safe.

Manual Handling

Many injuries that happen at work are caused by failure to move or handle objects safely. You can protect yourself and minimise the risks by following these guidelines:

- Assess how heavy or awkward the item is and if appropriate ask for help.
- Plan how to hold the object and get a good grip (wear gloves if necessary).
- Stand close to the object with your feet apart and spread your weight evenly, bend your knees and lift with your legs keeping your back in a natural line.
- Lift smoothly and keep the load close to your body. Avoid twisting your body.

- When carrying an object keep your arms tucked in and make sure you can see where you are going.
- If equipment is provided make sure you use it correctly.

Lone Working

Employees who are working alone must ensure that another member of staff is aware they are working alone, where they are and what time they expect to finish. Lone workers must make sure that they have some means of communication in the event of an emergency and that they know where the emergency exits are.

TTC will try to ensure that intruders cannot access the premises by putting procedures in place for checking that windows and external doors are locked, etc.

Managers should try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable and where it is necessary, they must ensure that arrangements are in place so that someone is aware of the lone worker's whereabouts at all times. Managers must ensure that workers can obtain assistance if required and that they are provided with adequate information and training to understand the risks and the safe working procedures associated with working alone. Managers must also ensure that any employee working alone is capable of undertaking the work on their own and that the job can be done safely by one person.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

It is the responsibility of TTC to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and well-being of all employees. Employees who are under the influence of drugs and or alcohol whilst at work may adversely influence their own safety and that of their colleagues.

Aim: Our aim is to establish clear and comprehensive rules, which will apply to all employees. We aim to provide a supportive environment to those with a drug or alcohol related problem, which are committed to changing their behaviour.

Definition: Alcohol covers all alcoholic beverages. Drugs include all Class A, B and C substances, drugs that are only legally available on prescription and solvents which are misused.

Rules: The taking of alcohol and drugs is strictly prohibited **before** working hours where appropriate functioning at work would be adversely affected and at **all times during** working hours. For the avoidance of doubt, working hours include meal and other breaks.

Special Circumstances: Where employees are entertaining clients or attend social functions outside of the normal working day, TTC accept that moderate amounts of alcohol may be consumed.

TTC insists that employees stay within the legal limit whilst driving a car and would strongly advise that no alcohol at all should be taken if driving.

Where employees are taking medication for a pre-diagnosed condition, the type of drug and its possible contra indications must be reported by the employee to the Town Clerk.

Confidentiality: An employee who has a drug or alcohol related problem may approach management in confidence, within the provisions of the law, and receive help and support. Any absence during a rehabilitation period will be treated as normal sickness.

Disciplinary Action: Any employee who is found to be under the influence of drugs and or alcohol during working hours will be suspended on full pay pending a disciplinary hearing which may result in the employee's dismissal for gross misconduct.

Any employee found to be in possession of, or dealing in illegal substances will be suspended on full pay pending a disciplinary hearing, which may result in the employee's dismissal for gross misconduct.

Stress

The Council values its employees and is committed to supporting their health, safety, and wellbeing. We aim to provide a working environment that minimises stress and prevents excessive workloads or other harmful conditions.

If you feel that stress is affecting your health or work, whether caused by work or personal circumstances, please raise this with the Town Clerk. If it involves the Town Clerk, speak to the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee. A confidential meeting will be arranged to discuss the issue and identify ways to provide support, which may include reviewing workload, work environment, or other measures.

Employees are also encouraged to seek professional advice, such as from a GP or counsellor. To provide appropriate support, it is important that the Council is informed of any stress-related issues affecting your ability to work. Reasonable adjustments will be considered in line with health and safety obligations and the Equality Act 2010.

Section 8

Resolving Problems

The Council is committed to ensuring that workplace concerns are addressed through clear, transparent and fair procedures. The following arrangements support the effective operation of the Council and promote consistency and fairness for all employees. The Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures apply to employees but are provided for guidance only and do not form part of the Contract of Employment.

General

Employees are encouraged to raise grievances or complaints informally wherever possible; however, concerns may also be pursued through the formal Grievance Procedure where appropriate. Likewise, Managers will generally address minor performance or conduct issues through day-to-day supervision. Early, constructive discussion of concerns will often lead to swift resolution and help avoid further difficulties.

Investigations

It is not always necessary to hold an investigatory meeting but where it is, everyone is required to co-operate fully with the investigation relating to disciplinary or grievance procedure.

Suspension

TTC may suspend you on full basic pay. Suspension is not a disciplinary penalty and carries no implication of guilt. Whilst on suspension you must be available for work or meetings as required during normal working hours. During a period of suspension your passwords will be barred and if you normally have access to the computer system, it will be denied.

Grievance Procedure

TTC recognises that from time-to-time employees may seek redress for grievances relating to their employment. In this respect, TTC's adopted policy is as follows:-

GRIEVANCE POLICY



1. Introduction

1.1 *This policy is based on the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice and guide on discipline and grievances at work. It aims to encourage and maintain good relationships between the Council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. A grievance may be any concern, problem or complaint employees wish to raise with the Council. This Policy sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their*

concerns. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

2 Informal Procedure

2.1 Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Where possible, any grievance should be raised informally with the employee's line manager, or if this is inappropriate, it should be raised with the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee.

2.2 In the case of the Town Clerk raising a grievance, this should in the first instance be raised with the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee, unless the complaint is about the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee, in which case the Mayor should handle the Clerk's concerns.

2.3 Where a grievance about a fellow employee is raised informally, after listening to the employee who has made the complaint to understand their concern, the next step should generally be to talk privately to the person complained about. This is to clarify the situation and can help move things forward towards a resolution. If those involved are willing, in some circumstances an independent mediator could help.

3 Formal Procedure

3.1 If the employee does not consider it appropriate to raise the grievance informally, or if requested by the person the employee spoke to informally, then the employee should submit a formal grievance in writing to their line manager, or if this is inappropriate to the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee.

3.2 If relating to the Town Clerk, the formal grievance letter should be addressed to the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee or likewise if the Town Clerk is making the grievance this should also be addressed to the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee, unless the complaint is about the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee, in which case the letter should be addressed to the Mayor.

3.3 The Employment Sub-Committee will appoint a Grievance Panel of three members to investigate the grievance.

Similarly, the Employment Sub-Committee will appoint an Appeal Panel of three members to investigate an appeal.

Each panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members. No Councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the panel.

4 Policy Conditions

This Policy confirms:

- Employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. Employees may also alter their choice of companion if they wish.

The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employees' case for his/her grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case.

- *The Council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date.*
- *Any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council.*
- *An employee has the right to appeal against the decision about his/her grievance. The appeal decision is final.*
- *Information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the Council in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.*
- *Recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure can only be taken with the agreement of all parties present.*
- *If an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after completion of the disciplinary procedure.*
- *If a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if he/she raised the grievance in good faith.*
- *The Council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the Councils and the employee's consent.*
- *Discretion and confidentiality will be upheld at all times throughout the process. If required the Chair of the Grievance panel may wish to seek external professional support during this process.*

5 Upon Receipt of a Grievance Letter

Generally, within a reasonable period of time, e.g., 10 working days of receipt of a written grievance, the employee will be asked in writing to attend a grievance meeting. The letter will include the following:

- *The names of the Grievance Panel Chairman and other members*
- *A summary of the employee's grievance based on his/her written submission*

- *The date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will be within 10 working days of when the Council received the grievance.*
- *The employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official or alternative person of their choice.*
- *A copy of the Council's grievance policy*
- *Confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of his/her witnesses at least five working days before the meeting*
- *Confirmation that the employee will provide the Council with any supporting evidence at least five working days before the meeting*

6 The grievance meeting

6.1 At the grievance meeting:

- *The Chairman will introduce the members of the panel to the employee.*
- *The employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence.*
- *The panel may ask the employee what action he/she would like to happen as a result of raising the grievance and bear this in mind when preparing a response.*
- *Any member of the panel and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness called by prior arrangement with the panel*
- *The employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case.*
- *A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the panel.*
- *The grievance committee will discuss the investigation and findings and agree on a response to the grievance.*
- *The Chairman will provide the employee with the panel's decision, in writing, within ten working days of the meeting. The letter will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the Council will take and of the employee's right to appeal.*

7 The appeal

7.1 If an employee is dissatisfied with the outcome of his/her grievance investigation, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Grievance Panel Chairman. An appeal must be received within five working days of the employee receiving the panel's decision and must specify the grounds of the appeal.

7.2 Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g:

- *The employee thinks the Council's procedure was not applied properly.*
- *The employee thinks the action proposed by the panel was inadequate/inappropriate*
- *New evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting*

7.3 The appeal will be heard by an Appeal Panel consisting of three members of the Employment Sub-committee who have not been involved in the case. The appeal panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members.

Generally, within a reasonable period of time, e.g., 5 working days of receipt of a written appeal, the employee will be asked in writing to attend an appeal meeting.

The letter will include the following:

- The names of the Appeal Panel Chairman and other members
- A summary of the employee's appeal based on his/her written submission
- The date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will be within 10 working days of when the Council received the appeal.
- The employee will be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

7.4 At the appeal meeting, the Chairman will:

- Introduce the panel members to the employee
- Explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the grievance panel.
- Explain the action that the appeal panel may take.
- The employee (or his/her companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of his/her appeal.
- The Chairman will inform the employee that he/she will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, within five working days of the appeal meeting.
- The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the grievance panel or substitute its own decision.
- The decision of the appeal panel is final.

Policy	Grievance
Review Cycle	Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes
Date Last Adopted	November 2023
Previous Adoption Dates	January 2021
Responsibility	Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council

Adopted by Council on 15.11.23

Review due November 2026

Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary process has been designed to help and encourage you to achieve and maintain good standards of conduct, attendance and job performance. On occasions people may fall short of the expected standards of behaviour or performance in these circumstances disciplinary action may be taken. In this respect, TTC's adopted policy is as follows:-



DISCIPLINARY POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 *This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice. It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. The policy is designed to help Council employees improve unsatisfactory conduct and performance in their job. Wherever possible, the Council will try to resolve its concerns about employees' behaviour informally, without starting the formal procedure.*

1.2 *The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.*

2. Informal Procedure

2.1 *Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Before starting a formal disciplinary procedure, it is recommended to try and resolve the issue informally with the employee and/or their line manager and/or employment sub-committee chairman. After talking to the employee and any other staff involved and listening to their point of view, consideration will be given to improvements to be made and setting up a training or development plan if it's a performance issue. If it is a capability issue, the Council's capability policy will be referred to.*

3. Formal Procedure

- *The Council will fully investigate the facts of each case.*
- *Employees will be informed in writing about the nature of the complaint against them and given the opportunity to state their case.*
- *Employees may be accompanied or represented by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official at any disciplinary, investigatory or appeal meeting. An employee may also alter their choice of companion if they wish. The companion is permitted to address such meetings, to put the employee's case and confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case.*
- *The Council will give employees reasonable notice of any meetings in this procedure. The employee must make all reasonable efforts to attend any meeting. Failure to attend any meeting may result in it going ahead in the employee's absence and a decision being*

taken. An employee who does not attend a meeting will be given the opportunity to be represented and to make a written submission.

- If the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date.
- Any changes to specified time limits in the Council's procedure must be agreed by the employee and the Council.
- Information about an employee's disciplinary matter will be restricted to those involved in the disciplinary process. A record of the reason for disciplinary action and the action taken by the Council is confidential to the employee. The employee's disciplinary records will be held by the Council in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the disciplinary procedure are prohibited, unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition.
- Employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action. The appeal decision is final.
- If an employee who is already subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure, raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after the completion of the disciplinary procedure.
- Disciplinary action taken by the Council can include an oral warning, written warning, final written warning or dismissal.
- Except for gross misconduct when an employee may be dismissed without notice, the Council will not dismiss an employee on the first occasion that it decides there has been misconduct.
- If an employee is suspended following allegations of misconduct, it will be on full pay and only for such time as is necessary. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction. The Council will write to the employee to confirm any period of suspension and the reasons for it.
- The Council may consider mediation at any stage of the disciplinary procedure where appropriate (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process that requires the Council's and the employee's consent.

4. Examples of misconduct

4.1 Misconduct is employee behaviour that can lead to the employer taking disciplinary action. The following list contains some examples of misconduct:

- Unauthorised absence
- Poor timekeeping
- Misuse of the Council's resources and facilities including telephone, email and internet

- *Inappropriate behaviour*
- *Refusal to follow reasonable instructions*
- *Breach of health and safety rules*

5. Examples of gross misconduct

5.1 *Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it is likely to lead to dismissal without notice. The following list contains some examples of gross misconduct:*

- *Bullying, discrimination and harassment*
- *Incapacity at work because of alcohol or drugs*
- *Violent behaviour*
- *Fraud or theft*
- *Gross negligence*
- *Gross insubordination*
- *Serious breaches of health and safety rules*
- *Serious and deliberate damage to property*
- *Use of the internet or email to access pornographic, obscene or offensive material*
- *Disclosure of confidential information*

6. Disciplinary investigation

6.1 *The Council's Policy & Resources Committee will appoint a minimum of two investigators who will be responsible for undertaking the investigation – a fact-finding exercise to collect all relevant information. The investigators will be independent and will normally be Councillors.*

6.2 *If the Policy & Resources Committee considers that there are no Councillors who are independent (for example, because they all have direct involvement in the allegations about the employee), it will appoint someone from outside the Council.*

6.3 *The investigators will be appointed as soon as possible after the allegations have been made. The Policy & Resources Committee will inform the investigators of the terms of reference of the investigation. The terms of reference should deal with the following:*

- *What the investigation is required to examine*
- *Whether a recommendation is required*
- *How the findings should be presented. For example, an investigator will often be required to present the findings in the form of a report*
- *Who the findings should be reported to and who to contact for further direction if unexpected issues arise or advice is needed.*

6.4 *The investigators will be asked to submit a report within 20 working days of appointment. In cases of alleged unsatisfactory performance or allegations of minor misconduct, the*

appointment of an investigator may not be necessary and the Council may decide to commence disciplinary proceedings at the next stage (see 6 below).

- 6.5 The Policy & Resources Committee will first notify the employee in writing of the alleged misconduct and ask him/her to attend a meeting with the investigators. The employee will be given at least five working days' notice of the meeting with the investigators so that he/she has reasonable time to prepare for it. The letter will explain the investigatory process and that the meeting is part of the process. The employee should be provided with a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure. The Council will also inform the employee that when he/she meets with the investigators, he/she will have the opportunity to comment on the allegations of misconduct.
- 6.6 Employees may be accompanied or represented by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official at any investigatory meeting. An employee may also alter their choice of companion if they wish.
- 6.7 If there are other persons (e.g. employees, Councillors, members of the public or the Council's contractors) who can provide relevant information, the investigators should try to obtain it from them in advance of the meeting with the employee.
- 6.8 The investigators have no authority to take disciplinary action. Their role is to establish the facts of the case as quickly as possible and prepare a report that recommends to the Policy & Resources Committee whether or not disciplinary action should be taken.
- 6.9 The investigators' report will contain their recommendations and the findings on which they were based. They will recommend either:
- The employee has no case to answer and there should be no further action under the Council's disciplinary procedure.
 - The matter is not serious enough to justify further use of the disciplinary procedure and can be dealt with informally.
 - The employee has a case to answer and there should be action under the Councils' disciplinary procedure.
- 6.10 The investigators will submit the report to the Policy & Resources Committee which will decide whether further action will be taken.
- 6.11 If the Council decides that it will not take disciplinary action, it may consider whether mediation would be appropriate in the circumstances.

7. The disciplinary meeting

7.1 If the Policy & Resources Committee decides that there is a case to answer, it will appoint a sub-committee of three Councillors. The sub-committee will appoint a Chairman from one of its members. The investigators shall not sit on the sub-committee. No Councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee. The employee will

be invited, in writing, to attend a disciplinary meeting. The sub-committee's letter will confirm the following:

- The names of its chairman and other two members
- Details of the alleged misconduct, its possible consequences and the employee's statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting
- A copy of the investigation report, all the supporting evidence and a copy of the Council's disciplinary procedure
- The time, date and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the hearing (at least 15 working days) so that he/she has sufficient time to prepare for it
- That witnesses may attend on the employee's and the Council's behalf and that both parties should inform each other of their witnesses' names at least five working days before the meeting
- That the employee and the Council will provide each other with all the supporting evidence at least five working days before the meeting. If witnesses are not attending the meeting, witness statements will be submitted to the other side at least five working days before the meeting
- That the employee may be accompanied by a companion – a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. An employee may also alter their choice of companion if they wish.

7.2 The disciplinary meeting will be conducted as follows:

- The Chairman will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee
- The investigators will present the findings of the investigation report
- The chairman will set out the council's case and present supporting evidence (including any witnesses)
- The employee (or the companion) will set out his/her case and present evidence (including any witnesses)
- Any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question the investigators and any witness
- The employee (or the companion) will have the opportunity to sum up his/her case
- The Chairman will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision with reasons, in writing, within five working days of the meeting. The Chairman will also notify the employee of the right to appeal the decision
- The disciplinary meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the sub-committee

8. **Disciplinary Action**

8.1 If the sub-committee decides that there should be disciplinary action, it may be any of the following:

Oral warning

An oral warning is issued for most first instances of minor misconduct. The Council will notify the employee:

- *The reason for the warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement*
- *That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action*
- *The employee's right of appeal*
- *That a note confirming the oral warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for six months*

Written warning

If there is a repetition of earlier misconduct which resulted in an oral warning, or for different and more serious misconduct, the employee will normally be given a written warning. A written warning will set out:

- *The reason for the written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement*
- *That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action*
- *The employee's right of appeal*
- *That a note confirming the written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for 12 months*

Final written warning

If there is further misconduct during the period of a written warning or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious, the employee will be given a final written warning. A final written warning will set out:

- *The reason for the final written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement*
- *That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal*
- *The employee's right of appeal*
- *That a note confirming the final written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for 18 months*

Dismissal

The Council may dismiss:

- For gross misconduct
- If there is no improvement within the specified time period in the conduct which has been the subject of a final written warning
- If another instance of misconduct has occurred and a final written warning has already been issued and remains in force

6.1 The Council will consider very carefully a decision to dismiss. If an employee is dismissed, he/she will receive a written statement of the reasons for his/her dismissal, the date on which the employment will end and details of his/her right of appeal.

6.2 If the sub-committee decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file. Action is imposed as a result of the disciplinary meeting will remain in force unless and until it is modified as a result of an appeal.

9. The Appeal

9.1 An employee who is the subject of disciplinary action will be notified of the right of appeal. His/her written notice of appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving written notice of the disciplinary action and must specify the grounds for appeal.

9.2 The grounds for appeal include:

- A failure by the Council to follow its disciplinary procedure
- The sub-committee's decision was not supported by the evidence
- The disciplinary action was too severe in the circumstances of the case
- New evidence has come to light since the disciplinary meeting

9.3 The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members who have not previously been involved in the case. This includes the investigators. The appeal panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members.

9.4 The employee will be notified, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the notice of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The employee will be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a companion – a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. An employee may also alter their choice of companion if they wish.

9.5 At the appeal meeting, the Chairman will:

- Introduce the panel members to the employee

- Explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the Policy & Resources Committee
 - Explain the action that the appeal panel may take
- 9.6 The employee (or the companion) will be asked to explain their grounds for appeal.
- 9.7 The Chairman will inform the employee that he/she will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing within five working days of the appeal hearing.
- 9.8 The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the Policy & Resources Committee, substitute a less serious sanction or decide that no disciplinary action is necessary. If it decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's personnel file.
- 9.9 If an appeal against dismissal is upheld, the employee will be paid in full for the period from the date of dismissal and continuity of service will be preserved. The appeal panel's decision is final.

Policy	<i>Disciplinary</i>
Review Cycle	<i>Every 3 years (in November), or earlier in the event of legislative changes</i>
Date Last Adopted	<i>20th March 2024</i>
Previous Adoption Dates	<i>November 2021; January 2018</i>
Responsibility	<i>Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council</i>

Policy adopted by Council on 20.3.24

Review due November 2026

Notes for colleagues

We are pleased for colleagues to support each other through these proceedings but you are not obliged to do so. Having a colleague present helps to ensure that matters are dealt with fairly and the Council values this support. You are asked to respect the confidentiality of these proceedings. Reasonable paid time off will be granted to enable an employee to accompany a colleague and no employee will be disadvantaged for undertaking this role.

Criminal Offences

Should you commit a criminal act; the matter will be referred to the police.

Bullying and Harassment

The organisation encourages an environment in which everyone is entitled to work without harassment, victimisation and bullying.

Harassment occurs where there is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of either violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. If behaviour has the effect of causing an individual to feel humiliated, threatened or undermined because of a protected characteristic, it will constitute harassment and is unacceptable. Such conduct should cease immediately.

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

In this respect, TTC's adopted Dignity at Work policy is as follows:-

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY



Purpose & Scope

In support of the Council's values to respect others and create a harmonious working environment, Telscombe Town Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment by, or of, any of its employees, officials, members, contractors, visitors to the Council or members of the public from the community which it serves.

The Council is committed to the elimination of any form of intimidation in the workplace and this policy reflects the nature in which the Council intends to undertake all of its business. It outlines the specific procedures available to all employees in order to protect them from bullying and harassment. It should be read in conjunction with the Council's policies on Grievance and Disciplinary handling, as well as the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

In support of and as a commitment to this, Telscombe Town Council has signed up to the Civility & Respect Pledge.

Definitions

Bullying may be characterised as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour; an abuse or use of power or authority which tends to undermine an individual or a group of individuals, gradually eroding their confidence and capability, which may cause them to suffer stress. Forms of bullying can include but are not limited to:

- * *repeated aggression (whether verbal, psychological or physical), conducted by an individual or group against another individual or group;*
- * *persistently criticising, condemning and/or humiliating an individual;*

- * *conduct or behaviour which is offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, abusive of power or that results in unfair sanctions;*
- * *giving someone tasks to do in the full knowledge that they cannot be achieved;*
- * *unpleasant or over-repeated jokes about a person;*
- * *removing responsibility without good reason or knowingly withholding work-related information;*
- * *behaviour which causes an individual to feel ignored, marginalised or excluded, including exclusion from social media which has the effect of isolating or criticising/complaining about a staff member*

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This usually covers, but is not limited to, harassment on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability or age. Forms of harassment can include, but are not limited to:

- * *persistent requests for social activities (after it has been made clear that such requests are unwelcome) or other persistent unwelcome attention or pressure of a personal or sexual nature;*
- * *offensive, suggestive patronising or belittling remarks;*
- * *intimate questions;*
- * *foul or obscene language;*
- * *inappropriate jokes, 'banter', teasing, innuendos, nicknames, ridicule or insults;*
- * *inappropriate comments about clothes, physical appearance, body, or abilities;*

Both bullying and harassment are behaviours which are unwanted by the recipient. Bullying and harassment in the workplace can lead to poor morale, low productivity and poor performance, sickness absence, lack of respect for others, turnover, damage to the Council's reputation and ultimately, Employment Tribunal or other court cases. It is the impact of the behaviour or conduct on the recipient that is most relevant.

Bullying and harassment may occur face-to-face, by telephone, in meetings or through written communication, including e-mail and social media. It may occur on or off work premises, during work hours or non-work time.

Reporting Procedures

In the first instance, all incidents must be reported to the staff member's line manager. In the case of the most senior employee, all incidents must be reported to the Chairman of the Employment Sub-Committee. A comprehensive note of the incident must be made to include:-

- * date
- * time
- * type of incident
- * details of incident
- * if known, the name of the person accused of harassment and/or bullying (and if that person is not a staff member, their home address if known)
- * the names of any witnesses to the incident (and if witnesses are not staff members, their home address if known)

If the incident relates to correspondence received, either written or electronic (i.e. SMS text messages, direct social media messages or email), the correspondence should be retained as evidence and no response should be made.

If the incident relates to a telephone call which is recorded, or where a message has been left on an answering service, the message or recording should be retained as evidence and no response should be made.

If the incident relates to cyber-stalking or social media, screen shots should be retained as evidence and no response should be made.

Resolution

Informal Approach

If a staff member encounters bullying or harassment by another staff member, it is vital that they make the person responsible aware that their remarks or conduct are offensive to them. This should be done in a simple, straightforward way.

It is recognised that complaints of harassment or bullying are often of a sensitive or worrying nature and that it may be difficult to speak directly to the other person involved. If this is the case, the staff member should put their request in writing and hand it or email it to the harasser or bully. Staff members wishing to address this kind of behaviour may seek advice from their line manager in the first instance, or Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee on how to address the matter. If appropriate, an informal meeting with both parties may be held by the Town Clerk in order to address the matter in a conciliatory and constructive manner. Both parties need to agree to this approach.

If the informal approach fails or if the staff member believes that the harassment or bullying is of a very serious nature, they must bring the matter to the attention of their line manager in the first instance, or the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee via a written formal complaint, including information referred under the reporting procedures.

If you are being bullied by your line manager, or you do not want to try and resolve the situation in this way, you should raise the issue with the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee. The Chair will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally.

Formal Approach

Employees – Where the employee feels unable to resolve the matter informally any complaint about harassment or bullying can be raised confidentially and informally, initially with your line manager or if the matter involves them, with the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee.

Others - Any other party to the Council, other than an employee, who feels he or she is being bullied or harassed should refer to the Council's Complaints Procedure if an informal approach cannot be taken to resolve matters.

Members of the public - If it is alleged that a member of the public has bullied a staff member, following investigation the Council reserves the right to impose sanctions against that member of the public, including:

- Blocking the member of the public's email address and accepting no further emails
- Blocking the member of the public's phone number
- Banning the member of the public from the Council offices or other Council owned buildings
- The Council will not tolerate verbal abuse to staff members and approve that they can put the phone down if abuse continues despite a request to cease, or if it is someone at the Civic Centre, that they can close the reception window and pull down the blind. All incidents will subsequently be dealt with as detailed in this policy.

Councillors - The Council considers bullying and harassment of staff members by Councillors equally unacceptable. If a complaint is made and a grievance regarding bullying or harassment by a Councillor is upheld, this will be reported to the monitoring officer.

Possible Outcomes

If the Town Clerk does not consider an incident serious enough to report to the police, they may decide to attempt to resolve the problem directly with the aim to receive an apology and guarantee of no future repeat of the behaviour which gave rise to the incident. However, if the Town Clerk considers an incident serious enough to report to the police, the Council will take advice from the police with regard to any appropriate sanction, excluding any sanction related to internal disciplinary action.

Bullying and harassment are considered examples of serious misconduct which will be dealt with through the Council's disciplinary or grievance procedure.

In cases where allegations are made regarding an employee of the Council, this may result in the Council's Disciplinary/Grievance Procedure being invoked.

The Monitoring Officer at Lewes District Council will deal entirely with any complaints involving the conduct of Councillors and will advise of and implement any sanctions where required. The Council will consider any adjustments to support you and manage the relationship with the Councillor the allegations relate to during the investigation.

In extreme cases, the Council may be required to refer details of any harassment to the Police.

False or malicious allegations

If a staff member brings a complaint of harassment or bullying they will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if after a full investigation, the Council has grounds to believe that the complaint was brought by a staff member with malicious intent, or is deemed vexatious in nature, they may be subject to disciplinary action under the Council’s disciplinary policy and procedure.

Policy	<i>Dignity at Work (previously Bullying & Harassment Policy)</i>
Review Cycle	<i>Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes</i>
Date Last Adopted	<i>20th March 2024</i>
Previous Adoption Dates	<i>March 2021</i>
Responsibility	<i>Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council</i>

Policy adopted by Council on 20.3.24

Review due March 2027

Section 9

IT Security Regulations and Data Protection Policy

TTC's adopted IT Policy is as follows:-



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INTRODUCTION

Telscombe Town Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations and communications. This policy applies to all councillors, staff, and other authorised users, regardless of their working location or pattern, including those who are home-based, office-based, or work on a flexible or part-time basis. It sets out the expectations for the appropriate use of IT equipment and systems provided by the council.

Computer use

Hardware

1.1.1 *Council computer equipment is provided for Council purposes, however, reasonable limited personal use is permitted (reasonable interpreted as in the opinion of the Clerk). Any personal use of our computers and systems should not interrupt daily council work in any way. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are asked to restrict any personal use to official lunch breaks or before or after working hours.*

1.1.2 All councillors, staff, and other authorised users must lock their computers when leaving their desks to prevent unauthorised access. This applies to all council and personal devices used for work. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action.

1.1.3 All computer and other electronic equipment supplied should be treated with good care at all times. Computer equipment is expensive, and any damage sustained to any equipment will have a financial impact on the council.

1.1.4 Computer and electronic hardware should be kept clean, and every precaution taken to prevent food and drink being dropped or spilled onto it.

1.1.5 A database of computer and mobile equipment issued will be kept.

1.1.6 Equipment should not be dismantled or reassembled without seeking advice.

1.1.7 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are not to purchase any computer or mobile equipment (including software), unless previously authorised by the council.

1.1.8 Personal disks, USB stick, CDs, DVDs, data storage devices etc cannot be used on council computers without the prior approval of the Clerk.

1.1.9 Any faults or necessary repairs must be reported to the Clerk.

Equipment

2.1 Portable equipment

2.1.1 Portable equipment includes laptop computers, netbooks, tablets, mobile and smart phones with email capability and access to the internet etc.

2.1.2 It is particularly emphasised that council back-up procedures specific to portable equipment should be followed at all times.

2.1.3 All portable computers must be stored safely and securely when not in use in the office, i.e. when travelling or when working from home. Portable equipment (unless locked in a secure cabinet or office) should be kept with or near the user at all times; should not be left unattended when away from council premises and should never be left in parked vehicles.

2.1.4 It is important to ensure all portable devices are protected with encryption in case they are lost or stolen. All smartphones or tablets that hold council data, including emails and files, must be protected with a pin code.

2.1.5 Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is a security process that requires users to verify their identity using two or more independent methods—for example, entering a password (something you know) and confirming a code sent to your mobile device (something you have). This significantly reduces the risk of unauthorised access to systems and sensitive data.

2.1.6 If an item of portable equipment is lost or damaged this should be reported to the Clerk.

2.1.7 To protect confidential information, unless it is a requirement of the job and this has been authorised, it is forbidden for photographs or videos to be taken on council premises, without the prior written permission of the Clerk. This includes mobile telephones with camera function, camcorder, tape or other recording device for sound or pictures - moving or still.

2.1.8 Under no circumstances should any non-public meeting or conversation be recorded without the permission of those present. This does not affect statutory rights (under The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014).

In addition, the council does not permit webcams (which may be pre-installed on many laptops) to be used in the workplace, other than for conference calls for council purposes. If there is any doubt as to whether a device falls under this clause, advice should be sought from the Clerk.

2.2 Use of own devices

2.2.1 The Council recognises that some councillors, staff, and other authorised users may wish to use their own smartphones, tablets, laptops etc to access networks for normal council purposes, including reading their emails. Any such use of personal devices will be at the discretion of the council, but consent for standard systems (MS Windows, Mac OS X, Linux - in commercial configurations) will normally be permitted. Such devices should be kept up to date so that any vulnerabilities in the operating system or other software on the device are appropriately patched or updated.

2.2.2 However, the same security precautions apply to personal devices as to the council's desktop equipment. For continuity purposes, calls made to external parties such as external stakeholders must be made on council landlines or mobile phone numbers to ensure that only these numbers are used and/or stored by the recipient, rather than personal numbers. Any emails sent from own devices should be sent from a council email account and should not identify the individual's personal email address.

2.2.3 Councillors, staff, and other authorised persons that use council systems are expected to use all devices in an ethical and respectful manner and in accordance with this policy. Accessing inappropriate websites or services on any device via the IT infrastructure that is paid for or provided by the council carries a high degree of risk, and, for employees, may result in disciplinary action, including summary dismissal (without notice). For Workers or Contractors, we may terminate the worker agreement. This is irrespective of the ownership of the device used. An example would be downloading copyright music illegally or accessing pornographic material.

2.2.4 In cases of legal proceedings against the council or external stakeholders, the council may need to temporarily take possession of a device, whether council-owned or personal to retrieve the relevant data.

2.2.5 Wherever possible the user should maintain a clear separation between the personal data processed on the council's behalf and that processed for their own personal use, for example, by using different apps for council and personal use. If the device supports both work and personal profiles, the work profile must always be used for work-related purposes.

2.2.6 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who intend to use their own devices via the council's infrastructure must ensure that they:

- use a strong password or finger print to protect their device(s) from being accessed. For smartphones and tablets this should lock the device after failed login attempts;
- configure their device(s) to automatically prompt for a password after a period of inactivity;
- password protect any documents containing confidential information that are sent as attachments to an email, and notify the password separately (preferably by a means other than email);
- ensure secure WiFi networks are used;
- ensure that work-related data cannot be viewed or retrieved by family or friends who may use the device;
- inform the Clerk if their device(s) is/are lost, stolen, or inappropriately accessed where there is risk of access to council data or resources. To prevent phones being used, they will need to retain the details of their IMEI number and the SIM number of the device as their provider will require this to deactivate it.

2.2.7 Prior to the disposal of any device that has work data stored on it, and in the event of a user leaving the council, councillors, staff, and other authorised users are required to allow the IT provider access to the device to ensure that all passwords, user access shortcuts and any identifiable data are removed from the device.

2.2.8 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users must take responsibility for understanding how their device(s) work in respect to the above rules if they are accessing council services via their own IT equipment. Risks to the user's personal device(s) include data loss as a result of a crash of the operating system, bugs and viruses, software or hardware failures and programming errors rendering a device inoperable. The council will use reasonable endeavours to assist, but councillors, staff, and other authorised users are personally liable for their own device(s) and for any costs incurred as a result of the above.

Health and safety

3.1.1 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who work in council offices will be provided with an appropriate workstation.

3.1.2 The council has a duty to ensure that regular appropriate eye tests, carried out by a competent person, are offered to employees using display screen equipment.

3.1.3 Any VDU user who feels that their workstation requires changes to make it compliant must speak to the Clerk. If any hazards are detected at a workstation, including 'noises' from the IT equipment, this should be reported immediately to the Clerk.

Password and Authentication Policy

4.1.1 All user accounts must be protected by strong, secure passwords. In addition to strong passwords, Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) should be enabled wherever possible. MFA requires users to provide two or more independent forms of verification—for example, a password (something you know) and a code sent to your computer or phone (something you have). This significantly reduces the risk of unauthorised access to systems and personal data.

4.1.2 Access to Passwords & Storage

- Passwords are personal and must not be shared under any circumstances.
- Only the assigned user of an account may access or use the associated password.
- In certain cases (e.g., incident response or employee offboarding), access to system credentials may be granted to the Clerk.
- Administrative credentials must be stored securely and only accessible to authorised

4.1.3 Password Change Requirements

- Immediately change password if compromise is suspected.

4.1.5 Password Access Control and Logging

- Attempts to access unauthorized passwords will be treated as a security incident.

4.1.6 Responsibility

- Users are responsible for creating and maintaining secure passwords for their accounts.

Monitoring

5.1.1 The council reserves the right to monitor and maintain logs of computer usage and inspect any files stored on its network, servers, computers, or associated technology to ensure compliance with this policy as well as relevant legislation. Internet, email, and computer usage is continually monitored as part of the council's protection against computer viruses, ongoing maintenance of the system, and when investigating faults.

5.1.5 The council will monitor the use of electronic communications and use of the internet in line with the Investigatory Powers (Interception by Councils etc for Monitoring and Record-keeping Purposes) Regulations 2018.

5.1.6 Monitoring of an employee's email and/or internet use is in the council's legitimate interests and is to ensure that this policy is being complied with.

5.1.7 The information obtained through monitoring may be shared internally, including with relevant councillors and IT staff if access to the data is necessary for performance of their roles. The information may also be shared with external HR or legal advisers for the purposes of seeking professional advice. Any external advisers will have appropriate data protection policies and protocols in place.

5.1.8 The information gathered through monitoring will be retained only long enough for any breach of this policy to come to light and for any investigation to be conducted.

5.1.9 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users have a number of rights in relation to their data, including the right to make a subject access request and the right to have data rectified or erased in some circumstances.

5.1.10 Such monitoring and the retrieval of the content of any messages may be for the purposes of checking whether the use of the system is legitimate, to find lost messages or to retrieve messages lost due to computer failure, to assist in the investigation of wrongful acts, or to comply with any legal obligation.

5.1.11 The council reserves the right to inspect all files stored on its computer systems in order to assure compliance with this policy. The council also reserves the right to monitor the types of sites being accessed and the extent and frequency of use of the internet at any time, both inside and outside of working hours to ensure that the system is not being abused and to protect the council from potential damage or disrepute.

5.1.12 Any use that the council considers to be 'improper', either in terms of the content or the amount of time spent on this, may result in disciplinary proceedings.

5.1.13 All computers will be periodically checked and scanned for unauthorised programmes and viruses.

Remote working

6.1.1 Increased IT security measures apply to those who work away from their normal place of work (e.g. whilst travelling, working from home) as follows:

- if logging into the council's systems or services remotely, using computers that either do not belong to the council or are not owned by the user, any passwords must not be saved, and the user must log out at the end of the session deleting all logs and history records within the browser used. If the configuration of the device does not clearly support these actions (for example at an internet café), council services should not be accessed from that device;
- the location and direction of the screen should be checked to ensure confidential information is out of view. Steps should be taken to avoid messages being read by other people, including other travellers on public transport etc;
- any data printed should be collected and stored securely;
- all electronic files should be password protected and the data saved to the council's system/services when accessible;
- papers, files or computer equipment must not be left unattended at non council premises unless arrangements have been made with a responsible person for them to be kept in a locked room or cabinet if they are to be left unattended at any time;
- any data should be kept safely and should only be disposed of securely;
- papers, files, data sticks/storage, flash drive or backup hard drives should not be left unattended in cars, except where it is entirely unavoidable for short periods, in which case they

must be locked in the boot of the car. If staying away overnight, council data should be taken into the accommodation, care being taken that it will not be interfered with by others or inadvertently destroyed;

- where possible the ability to remotely wipe any mobile devices that process sensitive information should be retained in the case of loss or theft;
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who work away from the office with sensitive data should be equipped with a screen privacy filter for mobile devices and should use this at all times when accessing such data away from the office.

6.1.2 Those issued with a 'dongle' to enable internet access from a laptop via 3G or 4G networks whilst away from their normal workplace should note that the cost of internet access can be very high. Dongles should therefore be used for essential council purposes only, especially if abroad.

6.1.3 Similarly, use of paid for Wi-Fi access, for example at airports should be carefully monitored and restricted to essential council use.

Email

7.1.1 Council email facilities are intended to promote effective and speedy communication on work-related matters. Although we encourage the use of email, it can be risky. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users need to be careful not to introduce viruses onto council systems and should take proper account of the security advice below.

7.1.2 On occasion, it will be quicker to action an issue by telephone or face to face, rather than via protracted email chains. Emails should not be used as a substitute for face to face or telephone conversations. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are expected to decide which is the optimum channel of communication to complete their tasks quickly and effectively.

7.1.3 These rules are designed to minimise the legal risks run when using email at work and to guide councillors, staff, and other authorised users as to what may and may not be done. If there is something which is not covered in the policy, councillors, staff, and other authorised users should ask our IT provider rather than assuming they know the right answer.

7.1.4 All councillors, staff, and other authorised users who need to use email as part of their role will normally be given their own council email address and account. The council may, at any time, withdraw email access, should it feel that this is no longer necessary for the role or that the system is being abused.

7.1.5 Email messages sent on the council's account should be for council use only. Limited personal communications are permitted provided they do not encroach upon working time or interrupt council business in any way. Employees and other authorised users are asked to restrict their personal use to official lunch breaks or before or after working hours, and to use their personal email accounts, rather than council addresses.

Use of the Internet

8.1 Copyright

8.1.1 Much of what appears on the Internet is protected by copyright. Any copying without permission, including electronic copying, is illegal and therefore prohibited. The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 set out the rules. The copyright laws not only apply to documents but also to software. The infringement of the copyright of another person or organisation could lead to legal action being taken against the council and damages being awarded, as well as disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken against the perpetrator.

8.1.2 It is easy to copy electronically, but this does not make it any less an offence. The council's policy is to comply with copyright laws, and not to bend the rules in any way.

8.1.3 Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should not assume that because a document or file is on the Internet, it can be freely copied. There is a difference between information in the 'public domain' (which is no longer confidential or secret information but is still copyright protected) and information which is not protected by copyright (such as where the author has been dead for more than 70 years).

8.1.4 Usually, a website will contain copyright conditions; these warnings should be read before downloading or copying.

8.1.5 Copyright and database right law can be complicated. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should check with the Clerk if unsure about anything.

8.2 Trademarks, links and data protection

8.2.1 The council does not permit the registration of any new domain names or trademarks relating to the council's names or products anywhere in the world, unless authorised to do so. Nor should they add links from any of the council's web pages to any other external sites without checking first with the Council.

8.2.2 Special rules apply to the processing of personal and sensitive personal data. For further guidance on this, see the council's data protection policy, a copy of which is on the website.

8.3 Accuracy of information

8.3.1 One of the main benefits of the internet is the access it gives to large amounts of information, which is often more up to date than traditional sources such as libraries. Be aware that, as the internet is uncontrolled, much of the information may be less accurate than it appears.

9. Use of social media

9.1.1 Social media includes blogs; Wikipedia and other similar sites where text can be posted; multimedia or user generated media sites (YouTube); social networking sites (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, etc.); virtual worlds

(Second Life); text messaging and mobile device communications and more traditional forms of media such as TV and newspapers. Care should be taken when using social media at any time, either using council systems or at home.

9.1.2 *Personal use of social networking/media and chat sites should be restricted to breaks during working hours, or after hours with permission.*

9.1.3 *The council recognises the importance of councillors, staff, and other authorised users joining in and helping to shape sector conversation and enhancing its image through blogging and interaction in social media. Therefore, where it is relevant to use social networking sites as part of the individual's position, this is acceptable.*

However, inappropriate comments and postings can adversely affect the reputation of the council, even if it is not directly referenced. If comments or photographs could reasonably be interpreted as being associated with the council, or if remarks about external stakeholders could be regarded as abusive, humiliating, sexual harassment, discriminatory or derogatory, or could constitute bullying or harassment, the council will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users should be aware that parishioners or other local organisations may read councillors, staff, and other authorised users' personal weblogs, to acquire information, for example, about their work, internal council business, and employee morale. Therefore, even if the council is not named, care should be taken with any views expressed.

9.1.4 *To protect both the council and its interests, everyone is required to comply with the following rules about social media, whether in relation to their council role or personal social networking sites, and irrespective of whether this is during or after working hours:*

- *Contacts from any of the council's databases should not be downloaded and connected with on LinkedIn or other social networking sites with electronic address book facilities, unless this has been authorised.*
- *Any blog that mentions the council, its current work, councillors, employees, other users associated with the council, partner organisations, local groups, suppliers, parishioners, should identify the author as one of its councillors or employees and state that the views expressed on the blog or website are theirs alone and do not represent the views of the council. Even if the council is not mentioned, care should be taken with any views expressed on social media sites and any views should clearly be stated to be the writer's own (e.g. via a disclaimer statement such as: "The comments and other content on this site are my own and do not represent the positions or opinions of my employer/ the council.") Writers must not claim or give the impression that they are speaking on behalf of the council.*
- *Any employee who is developing a site or writing a blog that will mention the council, our current or potential plans, councillors, staff, and other authorised users or partners must inform the council that they are writing this and gain agreement before going 'live'.*
- *The council expects councillors, staff, and other authorised users to be respectful about the council and its current or potential employees, councillors, clerks, and authorised users and not to engage in any name calling or any behaviour that will reflect negatively on its reputation.*

Any unauthorised use of copyright materials, any unfounded or derogatory statements, or any misrepresentation is not viewed favourably and could constitute gross misconduct.

- *Photos or videos that include employees or other workers wearing uniforms or clothing displaying the council's name or logo should not be posted on social media if they could reflect negatively on the individual, their role, their colleagues, or the council. Additionally, photos, videos, or audio recordings must not be taken on council premises without explicit permission.*
- *Comments posted by councillors, staff, and other authorised users on any sites should be knowledgeable, accurate and professional and should not compromise the council in any way.*
- *Inappropriate conversations with external stakeholders should not take place on any social networking sites, including forums.*
- *Any writing about or displaying photos or videos of internal activities that involves current councillors, staff, and other authorised persons, might be considered a breach of data protection and a breach of privacy and confidentiality. Therefore, their permission should be gained prior to uploading any such material. Details of any kind relating to any events, conversations, materials or documents that are meant to be private, confidential or internal to the council should not be posted. This may include manuals; procedures; training documents; non-public financial or operational information; personal information regarding other councillors, staff, and other authorised users; anything to do with a disciplinary case, grievance, allegation of bullying/harassment or discrimination, or legal issue; any other secret, confidential, or proprietary information or information that is subject to confidentiality agreements. This does not affect statutory requirements to publish information including under the Freedom of Information Act.*
- *Councillors, staff, and other authorised users must be aware that they are personally liable for anything that they write or present online (including on an online forum or blog, post, feed or website). Councillors should always be mindful of the Members Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action for comments, content, or images that are defamatory, embarrassing, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous, or that can create a hostile work environment. They may also be sued by other organisations, and any individual or council that views their comments, content, or images as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous or creating a hostile work environment. In addition, other councillors, staff, and other authorised users can raise grievances for alleged bullying and/or harassment.*
- *Postings to websites or anywhere on the internet and social media of any kind, or in any press or media of any kind, should not breach copyright or other law or disclose confidential information, defame or make derogatory comments about the council or its councillors, staff, and other authorised users, or disclose personal data or information about any individual that could breach data protection legislation.*
- *Contacts by the media relating to the council, should be referred to the Clerk.*
- *Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who use sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook must ensure that the information on their profile is accurate and up to date and must update their profile on leaving the council.*

- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who use X.com, LinkedIn, or other social media/networking sites for council development purposes must ensure they provide the council with login details, including password(s), so that these sites can be accessed and updated in their absence.
- Councillors, staff, and other authorised users who have left the council must not post any inappropriate comments about the council or its councillors, staff, and other authorised users on LinkedIn, Facebook, X.com or any other social media/networking sites.
- During your employment/ involvement with the council, you may create or obtain access to a variety of professional contacts and confidential information. This includes, but is not limited to, contacts made through professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn, where those contacts have been established or maintained in your capacity as a councillor, member of staff, or other authorised user. All such contacts will be considered council property and may be subject to disclosure upon request.

9.1.5 Note that the council may, from time to time, monitor external postings on social media sites. Any employee who has a profile (for example on LinkedIn or Facebook) must not misrepresent themselves or their role with the council. Councillors, staff, and other authorised users are also advised that social media sites are not an appropriate place to air council concerns or complaints: these should be raised with the council or formally through the grievance procedure.

9.1.6 It is important to note that external stakeholders contact details and information remain the property of the council. In addition, councillors, staff, and other authorised users leaving the council will be required to delete all council-related data including external stakeholders contact details from any personal device/equipment.

Misuse

Misuse of IT systems and equipment is not in line with the council's standards of conduct and will be taken seriously. Any inappropriate or unauthorised use may lead to formal action, including disciplinary proceedings or, in serious cases, dismissal.

Policy	<i>IT Policy</i>
Review Cycle	<i>Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes</i>
Date Last Adopted	<i>21st January 2026</i>
Previous Adoption Dates	<i>November 2020, November 2017, November 2023 (previously called Email & Internet Usage Policy)</i>
Responsibility	<i>Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council</i>

Adopted by Full Council on 21.1.26

Review due January 2029

We do monitor this policy and breaches can lead to disciplinary action. Personal use must be outside your normal working hours and subject to our rules.

Data Protection

TTC's adopted Data Protection policy is as follows:-



DATA PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 *The Council holds and processes information about employees, Councillors, residents and customers and other data subjects for administrative and commercial purposes.*
- 1.2 *When handling such information the Council and all staff or others who process or use the information, seeks to ensure compliance with the Data Protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 (the Act) and in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).*

2. Data protection principles

2.1 *This Policy is based on the core principles of the Act as follows:*

- *be processed fairly and lawfully*
- *be obtained for a specified and lawful purpose and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with the purpose*
- *be adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose*
- *be accurate and up-to-date*
- *not be kept for longer than necessary for the purpose*
- *be processed in accordance with the Data Subject's rights*
- *be kept safe from unauthorised processing, and accidental loss, damage or destruction*
- *not be transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area, unless that country has the equivalent levels of protection for personal data, except in specified circumstances*

3. Responsibilities

3.1 *Telscombe Town Council is the Data Controller and must ensure that any processing of personal data for which they are responsible complies with the Act.*

3.2 *The Clerk is the person who acts on behalf of the Council and is responsible for data protection compliance as follows:*

- *fully observing conditions regarding the fair collection and use of information*
- *meeting the Council's legal obligations to specify the purposes for which information is used*

- *collecting and processing relevant information, only to the extent that is required to fulfil operational needs/to comply with legal requirements*
- *ensuring the quality of information used*
- *applying strict checks to determine the length of time that information is held*
- *ensuring that the rights of the people whom information is held are able to be fully exercised under the Act*
- *taking appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal information*
- *ensuring that personal information is not transferred abroad without suitable safeguards*
- *ensuring that everyone managing and handling personal information*
 - *fully understands that they are contractually responsible for following good practice in terms of protection*
 - *is adequately trained to do so*
 - *are appropriately supervised*
 - *The Councillors signature block will contain a link to the Council's website which will guide people to the GDPR Policy.*

4. Storage and retention

- 4.1 *Personal data is kept in paper-based systems and/or on a password-protected computer system.*
- 4.2 *The Council will keep different types of information for differing lengths of time, depending on legal and operational requirements in accordance with Council's Document Retention Scheme.*
- 4.3 *Good records management plays a vital role in ensuring that the Council is able to meet its obligations to provide information and to retain it in a timely and effective manner in order to meet the requirements of the data protection legislation. Data must only be used for the purpose it was gathered for and should be deleted when it is no longer needed for that purpose.*

5. Access to information

- 5.1 *Any employees, Councillors, residents, customers and other data subjects have a right to:*
- *ask what personal information the Council holds*
 - *ask what this information is used for*
 - *be provided with a copy of the information*

- be given details of the purposes for which the Council uses the information and any other persons organisations to whom it is disclosed
- ask that any incorrect data held is corrected

5.2 If it is felt by the data subject that any personal information held is incorrect the individual may request that it be amended. The Council must advise the individual within 21 days whether or not the amendment has been made.

6. **Breach of Policy**

6.1 Compliance with the Act is the responsibility of all Councillors, residents, customers and members of staff. Any deliberate or reckless breach of the policy may lead to disciplinary action and where appropriate, legal proceedings.

6.2 Any individual who believes that the Council has breached any of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 should raise the matter with the Clerk. Alternatively, a complaint can be made to the Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Appendix - Guidelines for Staff Members and Councillors

During the course of your duties with Telscombe Town Council, you will be dealing with information such as names/addresses/phone numbers/email addresses of members of the public. You may be told or overhear sensitive information while working for the Town Council.

The Data Protection Act 2018 gives specific guidance on how this information should be dealt with by organisations such as Telscombe Town Council. In short, to comply with the law, personal information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully.

To help you meet the terms of the Data Protection Act while working for Telscombe Town Council, the following guidelines have been drawn up. Please read them carefully and ask the Data Protection Officer (Town Clerk) if you are in any doubt about any of them.

Sharing members'/clients' personal information

"Personal information" includes details such as addresses/phone numbers and health details supplied by members of the public.

Such information may be shared between staff and Councillors at Telscombe Town Council to carry out work responsibilities only and should not be given to anyone outside the Council without explicit consent from the member/client.

It is the responsibility of all staff and councillors to ensure that they comply with the requirements of this policy and any associated policies or procedures.

If such a situation arises, please ask your line manager or the Town Clerk for advice.

Unlawful disclosure of personal information

Under the Data Protection Act you are committing a criminal offence if you disclose personal information 'knowingly or recklessly' to anyone you are not supposed to, so please be careful.

Give consideration to any conversations you are having containing personal or sensitive information that could possibly be overheard by people who should not have access to such information.

Use of files, books and other paper records

In order to prevent unauthorised access and accidental loss or damage to personal information held on paper, please take good care of the files, books and other paper records you use while on duty, and ensure that they are stored securely before you leave the building.

Use of email

Be sure before sending emails that they contain no personal or sensitive information that the recipients should not have access to. This is a particular risk when forwarding emails or adding in new recipients to an email chain. Any emails received to your Council domain address cannot be forwarded to anyone outside the Council's domain without prior consent of the email originator. Similarly, any emails received to a personal or alternative email domain address cannot be forwarded to a Council domain address without prior consent of the email originator.

Disposal of scrap paper

Be aware that names/addresses/phone numbers and other information written on scrap paper are also considered to be confidential. Such notes must be shredded.

Policy	<i>Data Protection</i>
Review Cycle	<i>Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes</i>
Date Last Adopted	<i>November 2023</i>
Previous Adoption Dates	<i>November 2020; November 2017</i>
Responsibility	<i>Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council</i>

Policy Adopted at Council on 15.11.23

Review Due November 2026

Section 10

How We Do Business

TTC has strived hard to build a good reputation. The following sets out requirements for employees which are designed to maintain the reputation for integrity and protect employees from accusations of partiality in commercial matters.

TTC's adopted Councillor Officer Protocol policy is as follows:-



COUNCILLOR OFFICER PROTOCOL POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Protocol is to guide Councillors and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another. The Protocol's intention is to build and maintain good working relationships between Councillors and Officers as they work together. Employees who are required to give advice to Councillors are referred to as "Officers" throughout.

A strong, constructive and trusting relationship between Councillors and Officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the Council.

This Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the Code of Conduct which applies to Councillors and the employment terms and conditions of Officers. The shared objective is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government.

The following extract from the Local Government Association guidance on the 2020 Model councillor Code of Conduct states that:

"Both Councillors and Officers are servants of the public and are indispensable to one another. Together they bring the critical skills, experience and knowledge required to manage an effective local authority.

At the heart of this relationship, is the importance of mutual respect. Councillor-Officer relationships should be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between Councillors and Officers should observe reasonable standards of courtesy, should show mutual appreciation of the importance of their respective roles and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

Councillors provide a democratic mandate to the local authority and are responsible to the electorate whom they represent. They set their local authority's policy framework, ensure that services and policies are delivered and scrutinise local authority services.

Chairs and Vice Chairs of committees have additional responsibilities. These responsibilities will result in increased expectations and relationships with Officers that are more complex. Such Councillors must still respect the impartiality of Officers and must not ask them to undertake work of a party-political nature or compromise their position with other Councillors or other Officers.

Officers provide the professional advice and managerial expertise and information needed for decision making by Councillors and to deliver the policy framework agreed by Councillors. They are responsible for implementing decisions of Councillors and the day-to-day administration of the local authority.

The roles are very different but need to work in a complementary way. It is important for both sides to respect these differences and ensure that they work in harmony. Getting that relationship right is an important skill. That is why the code requires Councillors to respect an Officer's impartiality and professional expertise. In turn Officers should respect a Councillor's democratic mandate as the people accountable to the public for the work of the local authority. It is also important for a local authority to have a Councillor-Officer

protocol which sets out how this relationship works and what both Councillors and Officers can expect in terms of mutual respect and good working relationships.”

This Protocol covers:

- *The respective roles and responsibilities of the Councillors and the Officer;*
- *Relationships between Councillors and Officers;*
- *Where/who a Councillor or an Officer should go to if they have concerns;*
- *Who is responsible for making decisions.*

BACKGROUND

This Protocol is intended to assist Councillors and Officers, in approaching some of the sensitive circumstances which arise in a challenging working environment.

The reputation and integrity of the Council is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of Councillors and the Officer working together to support each other's roles. The aim is effective and professional working relationships characterised by mutual trust, respect and courtesy. Overly close personal familiarity between Councillors and Officers is not recommended as it has the potential to damage this relationship.

ROLES OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

The respective roles of Councillors and Officers can be summarised as follows:

- *Councillors and Officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one another, but their responsibilities are distinct.*
- *Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only for their term of office.*
- *Officers are responsible to the Council. Their job is to give advice to Councillors and to the Council, and to carry out the Council's work under the direction and control of the Council and relevant committees.*

Councillors

Councillors have four main areas of responsibility:

- *To determine Council policy and provide community leadership;*
- *To monitor and review Council performance in implementing policies and delivering services;*
- *To represent the Council externally; and*
- *To act as advocates for their constituents.*

All Councillors have the same rights and obligations in their relationship with the Officer, regardless of their status and should be treated equally. Councillors should not involve themselves in the day to day running of the Council. This is the Officer's responsibility, and the

Officer will be acting on instructions from the Council or its committees, within an agreed job description.

In line with the Councillors' Code of Conduct, a Councillor must treat others with respect, must not bully or harass people and must not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.

Officers can expect Councillors:

- to give strategic leadership and direction and to seek to further their agreed policies and objectives with the understanding that Councillors have the right to take the final decision on issues based on advice.*
- to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the Council.*
- to work constructively in partnership with Officers acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities.*
- to understand and support the respective roles and responsibilities of Officers and their associated workloads, pressures and reporting lines.*
- to treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy.*
- to act with integrity, to give support and to respect appropriate confidentiality.*
- to recognise that Officers do not work under the instruction of individual Councillors or groups.*
- not to subject them to bullying, intimidation, harassment, or put them under undue pressure.*
- to treat all Officers, partners (those external people with whom the Council works) and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.*
- not to request Officers to exercise discretion which involves acting outside the Council's policies and procedures.*
- not to authorise, initiate, or certify any financial transactions or to enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the Council or in their role as a Councillor without proper and lawful authority.*
- not to use their position or relationship with Officers to advance their personal interest or those of others or to influence decisions improperly.*
- to comply at all times with the Councillors' Code of Conduct, the law, and such other policies, procedures, protocols and conventions agreed by the Council.*
- respect the impartiality of Officers and do not undermine their role in carrying out their duties.*

- do not ask Officers to undertake work, or act in a way, which seeks to support or benefit a particular political party or gives rise to an Officer being criticised for operating in a party-political manner.
- do not ask Officers to exceed their authority where that authority is given.

Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Council and Committees

Chairs and Vice-Chairs have additional responsibilities as delegated by the Council. These responsibilities mean that they may have to have a closer working relationship with employees than other Councillors do. However, they must still respect the impartiality of

Officers and must not ask them to undertake work or anything else which would prejudice their impartiality.

Officers

The primary role of Officers is to advise, inform and support all members and to implement the agreed policies of the Council.

Officers are responsible for day-to-day managerial and operational decisions within the Council, including directing and overseeing the work of any more junior Officers. Councillors should avoid inappropriate involvement in such matters.

In performing their role, Officers will act professionally, impartially and with neutrality. Whilst Officers will respect a Councillor's view on an issue, the Officer should not be influenced or pressured to make comments, or recommendations which are contrary to their professional judgement or views.

Officers must:

- *implement decisions of the Council and its committees which are lawful, which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and are duly recorded. This includes respecting the decisions made, regardless of any different advice given to the Council or whether the decision differs from the Officer's view.*
- *work in partnership with Councillors in an impartial and professional manner.*
- *treat Councillors fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy.*
- *treat all Councillors, partners and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.*
- *assist and advise all parts of the Council. Officers must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the authority as expressed in the Council's formal decisions.*
- *respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the Council's standards protocol.*

- *be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for Councillors, the media or other sections of the public.*
- *act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times.*
- *provide support and learning and development opportunities for Councillors to help them in performing their various roles in line with the Council's training and development policy.*
- *not seek to use their relationship with Councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.*
- *to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the Council.*

Officers have the right not to support Councillors in any role other than that of Councillor, and not to engage in actions incompatible with this Protocol.

In giving advice to Councillors, and in preparing and presenting reports, it is the responsibility of the Officer to express his/her own professional views and recommendations. An Officer may report the views of individual Councillors on an issue, but the recommendation should be the Officer's own. If a Councillor wishes to express a contrary view they should not pressurise the Officer to make a recommendation contrary to the Officer's professional view, nor victimise an Officer for discharging his/her responsibilities.

There are exceptional circumstances where a Councillor can fulfil the role of Officer, for example where there is a vacancy. This can only be done if the Councillor is not paid for the role and should only ever be short-term while the Council seeks to fill a vacancy. There will need to be a particular clear understanding of when the Councillor is acting as a Councillor and when acting as the Proper Officer.

The Relationship: General

Councillors and Officers are indispensable to one another. However, their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are accountable to the public, whereas Officers are accountable to the Council as a whole.

At the heart of this Protocol is the importance of mutual respect and also of civility. Councillor/Officer relationships are to be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between Councillors and Officers should observe standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position nor seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

Individual Councillors should not actively seek to undermine majority decisions of the corporate body, as this could then bring them into conflict with Officers who have been charged with promoting and implementing the Council's collectively-determined course of action.

Councillors should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an Officer, or of Officers collectively, in a manner that is incompatible with this Protocol at meetings held in

public or on social media. This is a long-standing tradition in public service. An Officer has no means of responding to criticisms like this in public.

A Councillor who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an Officer should:

- avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the Officer at all times
- ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive
- ensure that any criticism is made in private
- take up the concern with the Chair

Neither should an Officer raise with a Councillor matters relating to the conduct or capability of another Councillor or Officer or to the internal management of the Council in a manner that is incompatible with the objectives of this Protocol.

Potential breaches of this Protocol are considered below.

Expectations

All Councillors can expect:

- A commitment from Officers to the Council as a whole, and not to any individual Councillor, group of Councillors or political group;
- A working partnership;
- Officers to understand and support respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- A timely response from Officers to enquiries and complaints;
- Officer's professional and impartial advice, not influenced by political views or personal preferences;
- Timely, up to date, information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities or positions that they hold;
- Officers to be aware of and sensitive to the public and political environment locally;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality from Officers and other Councillors;
- Training and development opportunities to help them carry out their role effectively;
- Not to have personal issues raised with them by Officers outside the Council's agreed procedures;
- That Officers will not use their contact with Councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.

Officers can expect from Councillors:

- A working partnership;

- An understanding of, and support for, respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- Leadership and direction;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality;
- Not to be bullied or to be put under undue pressure;
- That Councillors will not use their position or relationship with Officers to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly;
- That Councillors will at all times comply with the Council's adopted Code of Conduct.

Some General Principles

Close personal relationships between Councillors and Officers can confuse their separate roles and get in the way of the proper conduct of Council business, not least by creating a perception in others that a particular Councillor or Officer is getting preferential treatment. Special relationships with particular individuals are not recommended as it can create suspicion that an employee favours that Councillor above others.

The Proper Officer (usually called the Clerk) is the head of paid services and has a line-management responsibility to all other staff. Communications should be made directly with the Proper Officer, unless it is agreed by the Proper Officer that such communications may take place directly with other Officers over a particular matter. Councillors should not give instructions directly to the Proper Officer's staff without the express approval of the Proper Officer.

COUNCILLORS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TO COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Councillors are free to approach Officers to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as members of the Council. This can range from a request for general information about some aspect of the Council's activities to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent. Such approaches should normally be directed to the Officer.

The legal rights of Councillors to inspect Council documents are covered partly by statute and partly by the common law. The common law right of Councillors is based on the principle that any member has a prima facie right to inspect Council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the member properly to perform their duties as a member of the Council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.

The exercise of this common law right depends therefore upon the Councillor's ability to demonstrate that they have the necessary "need to know". In this respect a member has no right to "a roving commission" to go and examine documents of the Council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient. The crucial question is the determination of the "need to know". This question must be determined by the Officer.

In some circumstances (e.g. a Committee member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that Committee) a Councillor's "need to know" will normally be presumed. In other

circumstances (e.g. a Councillor wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties) a Councillor will normally be expected to justify the request in specific terms. Any Council information provided to a Councillor must only be used by the Councillor for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the Councillor's duties as a member of the Council.

For completeness, Councillors do, of course, have the same right as any other member of the public to make requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence between an individual Councillor and an Officer should not normally be copied (by the officer) to any other Councillor. Where exceptionally it is necessary to copy the correspondence to another Councillor, this should be made clear to the original Councillor. In other words, a system of "silent copies" should not be employed. Acknowledging that the "BCC" system of e-mailing is used, it should be made clear at the foot of any e-mails if another Councillor has received an e-mail by adding "CC councillor X."

Official letters or emails on behalf of the Council should normally be sent out under the name of the Officer, rather than under the name of a Councillor. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government Minister,) for a letter or email to appear over the name of the Chair, but this should be the exception rather than the norm.

Letters or emails which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council should never be sent out in the name of a Councillor.

Correspondence to individual Councillors from Officers should not be sent or copied to complainants or other third parties if they are marked "confidential". In doing so, the relevant Officer should seek to make clear what is to be treated as being shared with the Councillor in confidence only and why that is so.

PRESS AND MEDIA

Councils are accountable to their electorate. Accountability requires local understanding. This will be promoted by the Council, explaining its objectives and policies to the electors and customers. Councils use publicity to keep the public informed and to encourage public participation. The Council needs to tell the public about the services it provides. Good effective publicity should aim to improve public awareness of the Council's activities.

Publicity is a sensitive matter in any political environment because of the impact it can have. Expenditure on publicity can be significant. It is essential to ensure that decisions on publicity are properly made in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and the Council's Media Protocol.

The Officer may respond to press enquiries but should confine any comments to the facts of the subject matter and the professional aspects of the function concerned. On no account must an Officer expressly or impliedly make any political opinion, comment or statement. Any press release that may be necessary to clarify the Council's position in relation to disputes, major

planning developments, court issues or individuals' complaints should be approved by the Officer.

The Chair (or Chair of a Committee) may act as spokespersons for the Council in responding to the press and media and making public statements on behalf of the Council but should liaise with the Officer on all forms of contact with the press and media.

The Council may also appoint individual Councillors as spokespeople where there is an area of particular expertise but this should only be done with the agreement of the Council.

The Council must comply with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1986 ("the Act") regarding publicity. All media relations work will comply with the national Code of Practice for Local Government Publicity. The Code is statutory guidance and the Council must have regard to it and follow its provisions when making any decision on publicity.

The LGA has produced useful guidance on the Publicity Code - <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/short-guide-publicity-during-pre-election-period>

For more detailed information and guidance regarding the role of Councillors in connection with the use of social media, reference should be made to the Council's Social Media Protocol where there is one in place.

IF THINGS GO WRONG

Procedure for officers:

From time to time the relationship between Councillors and the Officer (or other employees) may break down or become strained. Whilst it is always preferable to resolve matters informally, it is important that the Council adopts a formal grievance protocol or procedure.

The principal Council's monitoring officer may be able to offer a mediation/conciliation role or it may be necessary to seek independent advice. The Chair of the Council should not attempt to deal with grievances or work-related performance or line management issues on their own. The Council should delegate authority to a small group of Councillors to deal with all personnel matters.

The law requires all employers to have disciplinary and grievance procedures. Adopting a grievance procedure enables individual employees to raise concerns, problems or complaints about their employment in an open and fair way.

Where the matter relates to a formal written complaint alleging a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, the matter must be referred to the principal Council's monitoring officer in the first instance in line with the Localism Act 2011. The Council may, however, try to resolve any concerns raised informally before they become a formal written allegation.

Procedure for Councillors:

If a Councillor is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of the Officer or another employee, the matter should be reported to the Chair and then raised with the Officer

in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it may be necessary to invoke the Council's disciplinary procedure.

Policy	<i>Member Officer Relations Policy – AMENDED TO Councillor Officer Protocol Policy on 19.11.25</i>
Review Cycle	<i>Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes</i>
Date Last Adopted	<i>19th November 2025</i>
Previous Adoption Dates	<i>18th November 2020; 16th November 2022</i>
Responsibility	<i>Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council</i>

Policy adopted by Council on 19.11.25

Review due September 2028

Whistle Blowing

The Council seeks to promote a culture of openness, integrity and accountability in its relationships with employees, Councillors and members of the public. Clear and honest communication is fundamental to ensuring that any malpractice is identified and properly addressed. This procedure outlines the framework available to employees, casual and temporary staff, agency workers, freelancers, trainees, home workers and contractors who need to raise concerns in confidence.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), which came into force on 1 July 1999 and is now incorporated into the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended), provides a statutory framework for the protection of workers who make qualifying disclosures in the public interest. The Act sets out a framework to promote the responsible and protected disclosure of concerns on the following matters:

- That a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed.
- That a person has failed, is failing, or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation which they are subject to.
- That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.
- That the health and safety of an individual has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered.
- That the environment has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged.
- That information tending to show any matter falling within the matters above has been, is being, or is likely to be concealed.

This procedure is distinct from the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and is not intended to be used to raise concerns relating solely to an individual's own terms and conditions of employment, which should normally be addressed through the Grievance Procedure. Individuals must have a reasonable belief that the information disclosed tends to show wrongdoing and that the disclosure is in the public interest.

Any individual who deliberately makes an allegation that they know to be untrue, or who acts maliciously, may be subject to disciplinary action. The Council will not tolerate victimisation or retaliation against any person who raises a concern under this procedure.

Your protection

No employee will be disadvantaged for raising a concern where they reasonably believe the information disclosed indicates wrongdoing and that the disclosure is in the public interest. Protection applies even if the concern is not substantiated, provided it was raised in good faith and on reasonable grounds. However, the Council will not protect any individual who deliberately raises a matter they know to be untrue or who acts with malicious intent.

Your confidence

The Council will not tolerate any form of victimisation or retaliation against an individual who raises a concern in accordance with this procedure. Any employee found to have subjected another person to detriment for raising a concern may be subject to disciplinary action. If you wish to raise a concern in confidence, every reasonable effort will be made to protect your identity. Your identity will not be disclosed without your consent unless there is a legal obligation to do so. In some circumstances, it may not be possible to investigate or resolve a matter without revealing your identity (for example, where your evidence is required in legal proceedings or a disciplinary hearing). In such cases, this will be discussed with you before any disclosure is made.

Concerns raised anonymously will be considered; however, the ability to investigate and take action may be limited where insufficient information is provided.

How to raise your concern

Stage 1: Internal Line Management

If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with the Town Clerk. This may be done orally or in writing. It will help if you state the facts of the matter clearly. You can outline how you would like it to be investigated. If you have a direct or personal interest in the matter, you should also tell us at this stage. If you are writing, remember to give details of how you can be contacted.

Stage 2: Alternative Contacts

If you feel unable to raise the matter with someone in management, for whatever reason, please speak to a member of the Employment Sub-Committee.

If you want to raise the matter in confidence, we will ensure that practical measures are put in place to protect your identity. We will contact you by the most secure means. We will not disclose your identity without your consent, unless we are required to do so by law.

Once you have reported your concern, TTC will look into it to assess initially what action should be taken. You may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. If your concern falls more appropriately within other policies, we will tell you.

We will institute the appropriate enquiries and/or investigations. We will:

- tell you who is handling the matter and how you can contact him or her;
- say whether your further assistance may be requested;
- and, if you request, you will be written to, with a summary of your concern and an outline of how TTC proposes to handle it.

While the purpose of the policy is to enable us to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. If requested, we will confirm our response to you in writing. Please note, however, that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe a duty of confidentiality owed by us to someone else.

If you are dissatisfied

If you are unhappy with TTC's response, remember you can go to the other level detailed in this policy. While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, the matter will be handled fairly and properly. By using this policy, you will help us to achieve this.

Section 11

Operating Procedures

Wastage

The Council is committed to minimising waste to ensure that all services are delivered efficiently and economically. Employees are encouraged to support this policy by using resources responsibly in the course of their normal duties. This includes avoiding unnecessary or excessive use of materials, services, time, and energy. For example, ensure that lighting, heating, and equipment are switched off when not required.

Damage or Losses

Any damage to Council property, stock, or equipment, including non-statutory safety equipment, caused by carelessness, negligence, or deliberate vandalism may result in the employee being required to pay all or part of the repair or replacement costs.

Likewise, losses arising from failure to comply with Council rules, procedures, or instructions, or from negligent or substandard work, may require reimbursement. If payment is not made voluntarily, the Council reserves the contractual right to recover the amount through deductions from your salary.

Inventions / Discoveries

Any invention or discovery made by an employee will ordinarily belong to the employee. However, an invention or discovery will be deemed the property of the Council if it is created:

- As part of your normal duties, where it would be reasonable to expect that such duties might give rise to an invention.
- Outside your normal duties, but in connection with work specifically assigned to you, where it is reasonable to expect that the work might result in an invention.
- During your duties, where you have a particular obligation to promote the Council's interests arising from the nature of your role or specific responsibilities.

Housekeeping

Both from the point of view of safety and appearance, all work areas must be kept clean and tidy at all times. Where appropriate, such as lunch breaks, food should be consumed in a refreshment area and not at your work station.

Refreshment Making Facilities

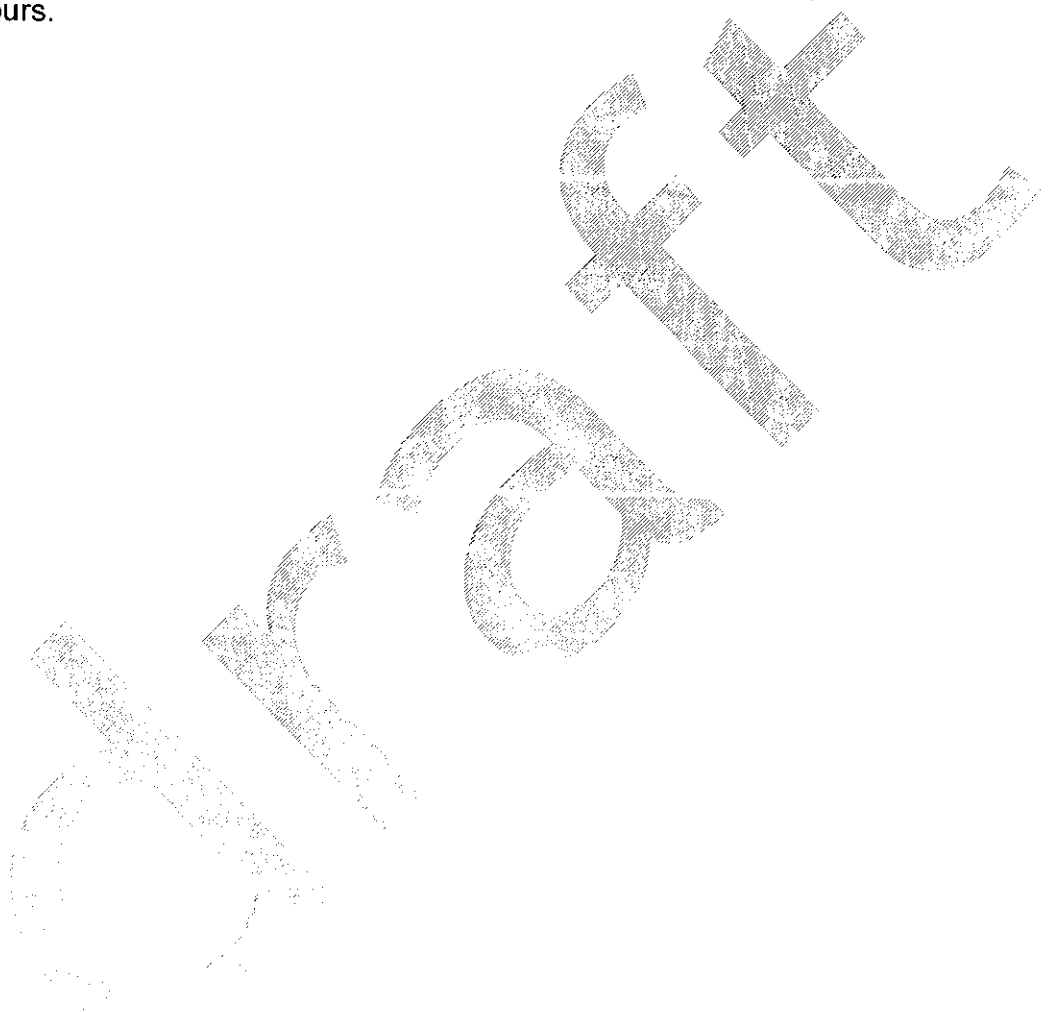
We provide refreshment making facilities for your use, which must be kept clean and tidy at all times (the downstairs kitchen).

Mail

All mail received by the Council may be opened, including that addressed to employees. Employees should not use the Council address for private mail. Employees should not post personal mail at the Council's expense, except where a formal reimbursement arrangement has been agreed in advance.

Buying or Selling Goods

You are not allowed to buy or sell goods on your own behalf on our premises or during your working hours.



Section 12

Leaving TTC

Notice period

We understand that you may decide to leave your position. If you do, we would appreciate receiving as much notice as possible in writing, addressed to the Town Clerk.

During the probationary period, both you and the Town Council (TTC) are required to provide one week's notice. Following the successful completion of probation, the minimum notice period for both you and the Employer is four weeks. After this, please refer to your contract of employment to confirm the specific length of your notice period and any associated terms and conditions, as these may vary for certain roles.

Return of Property

Before your employment ends, you are required to return to TTC all property belonging to the Council that is in your possession. This includes, but is not limited to, keys, identification cards, documents, records, lists, work in progress, disks, tapes, software, and any other materials or equipment. You must not retain any copies of such items without the Council's prior written consent. If requested by the Council, you will be required to sign a declaration confirming that you have complied fully with this requirement.

Retirement

The Council does not operate a normal retirement age and employees will not be required to retire upon reaching a specific age. Instead, TTC operates a flexible retirement policy, allowing employees to choose to retire voluntarily at a time that suits them.

Employees are encouraged to inform their manager of their intention to retire as early as possible. They are required to provide notice of termination in accordance with the notice period specified in their contract of employment.

Duty of Confidentiality

Your contract of employment contains a confidentiality clause which continues to apply after your employment with the Council has ended.

If you are unsure about your obligations under this clause, please speak to the Town Clerk for clarification.

Final Salary P45

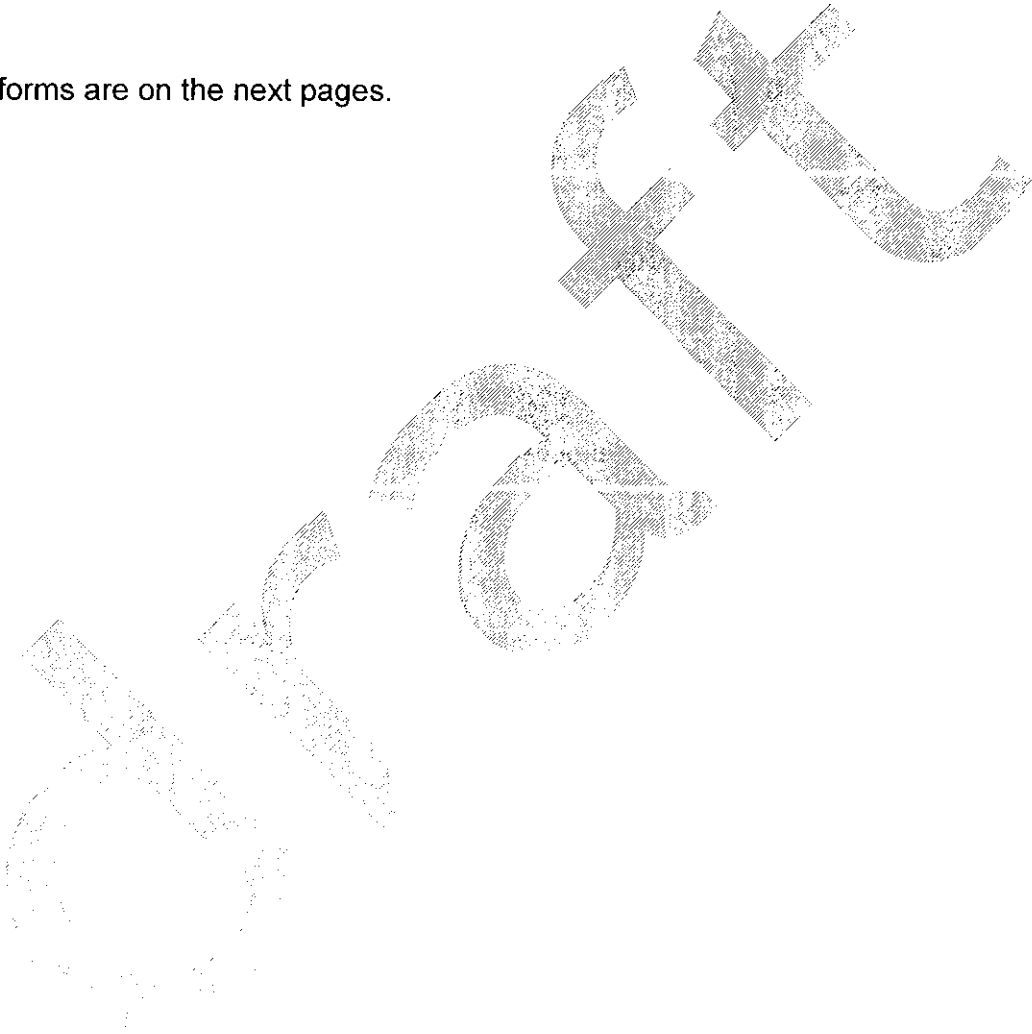
Your final salary will be calculated to reflect any necessary adjustments, including any overpayments made to you, sums owed by you or to you, and any outstanding holiday entitlement. Your P45 will be issued at the same time and sent to your home address.

Section 13

Return to Work Form

Self-Certificate Form

The above forms are on the next pages.



TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

Absence Management

Return to Work Form

Use this form when an employee first returns to work following absence

Employee Name	
Line Manager's Name	
Today's date	
Period of Absence - From To	
Reason for Absence	
Was GP Assistance sought?	
Will further GP assistance be Needed? (Will time off for an appointment be required?)	
Does the employee need any support to ease the process of return to work?	
Has Line Manager agreed to take any action? If so record action Have handover notes been given to the employee (if required) from cover arrangements made during the absence?	
Has the employee submitted notification of sick leave, plus self-certification or a Doctor's FIT note?	

I agree the information in this form is correct

Signed, Employee

Signed, Line Manager

To be kept on Employee's file

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

Self-Certification of Sick Leave

Name

I wish the period of absence detailed below to be treated as self-certified sick leave

From (first day)

To (last day)

Last day of illness if 7 calendar days or less. If absence exceeds 7 calendar days a Doctor's certificate will be required.

I did / did not visit a Doctor*

I did / did not visit a hospital during my absence*

Please give date of visit
**delete as appropriate*

I understand that I must produce a Doctor's statement from the 8th calendar day of a continuing period of sickness absence

Nature of illness (If accident, give description of cause)
.....

To be completed only if you have had an injury at work

I wish the absence from to inclusive to be treated as an injury at work (or industrial disease contracted at work).

The injury occurred on at.....

I certify that the information supplied above is true.

Signed Date



AGENDA ITEM	11
COMMITTEE	Policy & Resources
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	To note update regarding Tye hedge planting scheme and agree return of unused grant

1. INTRODUCTION

It was agreed at the committee meeting on 12th November to apply for a grant from the International Tree Foundation (ITF) for hedge planting along the fence line of the Tye adjacent to the South Coast Road which was done. The grant has now been approved and the funds received.

2. INFORMATION

At the Committee meeting held on 14th January, it was noted that consent from the Planning Inspectorate was not required for the planting. The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) was consulted and confirmed that no planning consent was necessary; however, the SDNPA Ranger did not support the proposed hedgerow due to the open downland character of the Tye, challenging ground conditions (shallow chalk soils, sea winds and salt spray) and concerns regarding establishment and aftercare.

Notwithstanding this advice, as the grant application had previously been approved and funds received, it was agreed to proceed with the planting. A working group consisting of Cllrs Clarkson, Gallagher, O'Connor and the Town Clerk met to facilitate the planting. It was agreed to amend proposed plants and to use more coastal-tolerant species which was approved by The International Tree Foundation (ITF). This resulted in a cost saving. The total grant awarded was £2,196.89 (inc VAT), but the actual cost of plants and associated materials (net of VAT) was £1,372.62, leaving a balance of £824.29 to be returned.

Volunteers have been invited to participate and planting is scheduled to take place from Friday 13th to Sunday 15th March.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to note the update and agree to return the unused grant amount of £824.29 to the ITF by bank transfer.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The ITF have confirmed their bank details as follows:- Acct No 00019119, sort code 40-52-40.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Hedges provide shelter, nesting sites and food for a variety of wildlife including birds, insects, small mammals and pollinators. A diverse mix of native plants can attract species that may not otherwise have suitable habitats in the area. They also act as wildlife corridors, linking fragmented habitats and allowing species to move safely between them and can absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in plant tissues. This helps mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas concentrations in the air.



AGENDA ITEM	12
COMMITTEE	Policy & Resources
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	To report fencing work undertaken on the Tye at Gorham Way as authorised by the Town Clerk & Committee Chair under their delegated authority

1. INTRODUCTION

At the last committee meeting on 14th January, it was agreed to accept the estimate from Ace Landscapes to undertake repairs to some gates on Telscombe Tye and fit spurs to posts to fencing along Gorham Way.

2. INFORMATION

A complaint was subsequently received regarding broken rails to fencing along Gorham Way. Ace Landscapes inspected the site and advised that nine rails and one post required replacement. They provided a quote of £507.72 plus VAT and confirmed that the works can be undertaken concurrently with the previously approved installation of post spurs.

In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, I consulted with the Chair of the Committee, Cllr Clarkson, and it was agreed under delegated authority to instruct Ace Landscapes to proceed with the works.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to note the action taken and that repairs have been completed.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

We have funds in an earmarked reserve for the Tye to cover the work, nominal code 9014-910.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

n/a



AGENDA ITEM	13
COMMITTEE	Policy & Resources
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	To consider estimate for Tye fencing along the South Coast Road

1. INTRODUCTION

At the committee meeting on 12th November, a specification for some gate replacements on the Tye and spurs to be fitted to loose fencing posts along Gorham Way was agreed and put out to tender. Estimates were considered at the last Committee meeting on 14th January and Ace Landscapes' estimate in the sum of £5,502.09 plus VAT was accepted.

2. INFORMATION

Following a complaint of broken rails along Gorham Way, an estimate from Ace Landscapes was approved by the Committee Chair and Town Clerk in the sum of £507.xx as reported under the last agenda item.

Unfortunately, further damage was reported regarding broken posts to fencing along the South Coast Road, and a section was leaning over. Contractors were asked to quote for the work, but we only received one estimate from Ace Landscapes in the sum of £1,521.79 plus VAT, see attached Appendix E.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to approve the estimate from Ace Landscapes in the sum of £1,521.79 plus VAT.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

We have an earmarked reserve for the Tye, nominal code 9014-910, to cover the work.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

n/a

Appendix E



ACE LANDSCAPES
Unit 3
270 Old Shoreham Road
Hove
East Sussex
BN3 7EG

Email: accounts@acelandscapes.co.uk
Tel: 0333 772 3981

Quote

QT00151

Telscombe Town Council **Site** telscombe tye **Date** 02 February 2026
Expiry Date 04 March 2026
VAT Number 492 5129 76

To cut down over ground vegetation to allow access to fence line.

To remove and dispose of 11 existing fence post that have snapped and also remove stock wire fencing within the section. Chestnut rails will be saved and reused.

to supply 11 new posts and reinstall fence including new stock wire fencing

to replace 5 broken/missing rails and dispose of the broken ones

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Amount
Fence repairs	1	1,521.79	1,521.79
		Subtotal	1,521.79
		Total 20% VAT	304.36
		Total GBP	1,826.15

THANKYOU FOR THE INTEREST IN OUR COMPANY.
Quotation is valid for 14 Days



AGENDA ITEM	14
COMMITTEE	Policy & Resources
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	To note position regarding a property in Tye Close adjoining the Tye and agree action to be taken

1. INTRODUCTION

Works have commenced on a parcel of land at the end of Tye Close, East Saltdean, adjoining Telscombe Tye, which has previously received planning permission. During the works, actions have been taken that affect Council-owned land and assets without our permission.

2. INFORMATION

The Council has recently been made aware of the following:

- Council-owned fencing located on the Tye has been removed without the Council's knowledge or consent.
- A trench has been dug along the fence line.
- Heras fencing has been erected on the Tye.

Both the removal of the Council's fencing and the installation of Heras fencing on Council land have been undertaken without permission and are therefore unauthorised. Lewes District Council Planning Enforcement has been notified of the situation. However, no response has been received to date.

In addition, correspondence has been sent via email to the landowner. As the Council does not currently hold a postal address for the individual, contact has been made electronically. No response has been received at the time of writing.

Photographic evidence of the works undertaken is attached for information, appendix F. The matter now requires consideration as to whether the Council should obtain legal advice with a view to potential enforcement action or recovery of costs.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to:

1. Note the unauthorised removal of Council-owned fencing and erection of Heras fencing on Council land.
2. Note that Lewes District Council Planning Enforcement has been notified and that attempts have been made to contact the landowner.
3. Consider resolving to seek formal legal advice regarding:
 - Trespass onto Council-owned land

- Recovery of costs for removal/reinstatement of fencing;
- Any potential injunctive or enforcement action necessary to protect Council assets and land.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council's legal fees budget (nominal code 4050-101) has been fully utilised for the current financial year. However, the Council holds an earmarked reserve for legal and professional fees (nominal code 9045-910), which currently stands at just over £5,500.

Should Members decide to seek legal advice or pursue formal action, funding would need to be allocated from this earmarked reserve.

There may also be future financial implications relating to reinstatement of Council fencing, removal of unauthorised fencing, professional or enforcement costs, potential recovery of costs from the landowner (subject to legal advice).

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Telscombe Tye is an area of open space valued by residents, and any unauthorised works risk damage to grassland, biodiversity, and the visual character of the area. Failure to address such actions may set a precedent for further encroachment onto Council-owned open space.

Appendix F

1A Tye Close

Before: 31.01.2025



Now: 10.02.2026



Before : 04.05.2024



Before : LDC Presentation to Planning Committee 12.06.24

Looking across site – north to south



Now: 10.02.2026



Now: 10.02.2026





AGENDA ITEM	15
COMMITTEE	Policy & Resources
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk/RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	Update on key deposits for Tye gate padlock and agree way forward

1. INTRODUCTION

At the last committee meeting on 14th January, it was noted that the Council installed a padlock on the gate along Bridleway 8 leading onto the Tye to prevent unauthorised vehicular access onto the Tye, while still allowing approved users to gain access where appropriate. However, due to acts of vandalism/sabotage to the padlock, the Council decided not to renew or replace it and the Council wrote to keyholders requesting the return of their keys so that their deposits could be refunded.

2. INFORMATION

The Council is still holding two deposits of £100 each (£200 in total) in an earmarked reserve. This is because no response was received from those particular keyholders when previously asked to return the Council owned keys for return of their deposit. It was therefore agreed at the last meeting to write one last time to the residents in question requesting return of the keys so their deposit could be refunded. They were given a deadline of 21 days to return the key, otherwise the deposit would be forfeited due to the non-return of Council property.

I confirm that the 21 days has elapsed and neither resident has returned their key.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to agree that the two deposits have been forfeited due to non-return of the Council owned keys and that a virement is made of the £200 to the earmarked reserve for Telscombe Tye, nominal code 9014-910.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If a virement is agreed, the earmarked reserve for bridleway 8 gate key deposits, nominal code 9043-910, will be removed.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

n/a

AGENDA ITEM	16
REPORT TO	Amenities & Civic Centre Committee
REPORT FROM	Stella Newman, Town Clerk & RFO
MEETING DATE	4 th March 2026
SUBJECT	Update regarding use of Canva for newsletter production and agree action to be taken

1. INTRODUCTION

It was reported to the last meeting that Microsoft have advised us that Microsoft Publisher will no longer be supported after October 2026. After that time, it will no longer be included in Microsoft 365 and existing on-premises suites will no longer be supported. Microsoft 365 subscribers will no longer be able to open or edit Publisher files in Publisher. Until then, support for Publisher will continue.

2. INFORMATION

Alternatives were discussed at the last meeting including Canva. The Admin Assistant set up a trial subscription to Canva and found it to be a possible alternative to Publisher. As it is a web-based application, only one subscription would be needed, at a cost of £100 per year. Although other alternatives were discussed, but it was agreed at the last meeting to sign up to Canva.

However, the Admin Assistant has now tried setting up our newsletter using Canva and has found that she is unable to insert photographs into articles. She has tried one of the alternatives mentioned at the last meeting, Libre, and has found this to be more appropriate, although neither Canva or Libre offer the same versatility as Publisher.

It would seem therefore that Libre is the better option if we want to include photos in our newsletter.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to use Libre for producing the newsletter which is free of charge to set up an account and to decide whether we still sign up to Canva.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

n/a

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

We have allowed a figure of £200 in the budget line for newsletter/publicity, nominal code 4030-101, to take account of having to pay a subscription for a suitable publishing programme.