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6 February 2026

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU to attend the **STAFFING COMMITTEE** Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, The Burys, Godalming on THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2026 at 7.00pm or at the conclusion of the preceding Full Council, whichever is later.

Andy Jeffery

Andy Jeffery
Chief Executive Officer

If you wish to speak at this meeting please contact Godalming Town Council on 01483 523575 or email office@godalming-tc.gov.uk

Committee Members: Councillor Crowe
Councillor S Downey – Vice Chair
Councillor Duce
Councillor Heagin – Chair
Councillor Weightman
Councillor Follows (*ex officio*)

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on the 4 December 2025, a copy of which has been circulated previously.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS

To receive from Members any declarations of interests in relation to any items included on the agenda for this meeting required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

4. WORK PROGRAMME

Members to review the committee's work programme, copy attached for the information of Members.

5. REVIEW OF POLICY DOCUMENTS

Members to consider the Officer report (attached for the information of Members) recommending amendments to the following policies, which have been reviewed against the Employment Rights Act 2025. The links below direct Members to the council's existing adopted policies, the revised policies are attached for the information of Members.

[Absence and Sick Pay Policy](#)
[Code of Conduct – Employee](#)

[DBS Data Handling Policy](#)
[Dignity at Work Policy](#)
[Disciplinary Procedure](#)
[Flexible Working Policy](#)
[Grievance Policy](#)
[Leave Policy](#)
[Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy](#)
[Social Media Policy](#)
[Staff Appraisal Scheme Policy](#)
[Training Statement of Intent](#)
[Whistleblowing Policy](#)

6. STAFF TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Members to receive a report from the Deputy Chief Officer (attached for the information of Members) setting out an approach for identifying and addressing staff training needs.

Members are asked to consider the report and, if agreed, to approve the proposed Training Needs Assessment (TNA) form, timescale and methodology for implementation.

7. MUSEUM EDUCATION & OUTREACH OFFICER

Members to consider the Job Description and Person Specification (attached for the information of Members) for the Museum Education & Outreach Officer and if approved are requested to agree the recruitment process.

8. COMMUNICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Members to identify which matters (if any), discussed at this meeting, are to be publicised.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee is scheduled to be held in The Pepperpot on Thursday, 16 April 2026 at 7.00pm.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brought forward by permission of the Chair. Requests to be submitted prior to commencement of the meeting.

IN PURSUANCE OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 S.1(2), THE COMMITTEE MAY WISH TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE MEETING AT THIS POINT PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEM(S) 11 & 12 BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED I.E STAFFING MATTERS.

11. REQUEST TO VARY APPROVED FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members to receive a report from the Committee Chair regarding a request to vary an employee's approved flexible working arrangement and are requested to consider recommendations from the Chair.

12. OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

Members to receive report from the Committee Chair on other staffing matters and are requested to consider recommendations from the Chair.

4. STAFFING COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME

TASK	PROGRESS	COMMENT	
Staff Meeting	Dates to be confirmed for 2026 service area visits	Doodle poll to seek dates	
Staffing Planning 2025-2028	Ongoing		
Review reporting chain within the Dignity at Work Policy when/if changes occur to the leadership positions within the Council	Ongoing	To ensure gender options within the reporting chain for staffing issues.	
Officers to undertake a review of GTC staffing policies to ensure alignment with the Employment Rights Bill as it is enacted, amended policies to be considered by Staffing Committee.	Deputy Chief Officer to conduct review	Item on this Agenda	
POLICY REVIEWS <i>to be updated following review on this agenda</i>	PERSON UNDERTAKING REVIEW	DATE ADOPTED/ LAST REVIEWED	REVIEW DATE
Leave Policy		4 July 2019/ Reviewed November 2023	Q4 2025
Disciplinary Procedure		13 January 2022 Reviewed 13 May 2024	Q1 2026
Grievance Policy		13 January 2022 Reviewed 13 May 2024	Q1 2026
Code of Conduct – IT Facilities	Removed from SC work program – tx to Audit as an assertion 10 risk	22 March 2018/ Reviewed 13 May 2024	Q1 2026
Social Media Policy		22 March 2018/ Reviewed 13 May 2024	Q2 2026
Training Statement of Intent		13 January 2022 Reviewed 13 May 2024	Q2 2026

POLICY REVIEWS <i>to be updated following review on this agenda</i>		PERSON UNDERTAKING REVIEW	DATE ADOPTED/ LAST REVIEWED	REVIEW DATE
Dignity at Work Policy			19 December 2019/ Reviewed 13 May 2024	Q2 2026
Employee Code of Conduct			13 September 2018/ Reviewed Feb 2023	Q1 2027
Absence & Sick Pay Policy and Procedure			4 July 2019/ Reviewed September 2024	Q3 2027
DBS Data Handling Policy			15 November 2018/ Reviewed November 2024	Q4 2027
Appraisal Scheme			Adopted 14 November 2024	Q4 2027
Modern Day Slavery Statement			17 April 2025	Q2 2028
Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy			Reviewed September 2025	Q3 2028

5. REVIEW OF STAFFING POLICIES: COMPLIANCE WITH EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT (ERA) 2025

1. Purpose of the Report

This report is presented to the Staffing Committee to enable a review of the Godalming Town Council's (GTC) staffing policies against the new ERA. The Act introduces changes to employment law, requiring councils to ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are compliant with the updated statutory requirements.

The report seeks Member approval for the recommended changes to staffing policies, to ensure the GTC fulfils its legal obligations, promotes best practice, and safeguards both the organisation and its employees.

2. Legislative Background

The Act introduces several mandatory changes to employment law, which all councils must implement. Key changes include:

2.1 Flexible Working

- Right to Request: All employees can request flexible working from day one of employment (previously 26 weeks' service required).
- Requests: Employees may make up to two statutory requests per year.
- Decision Timeframe: Employers must respond (including any appeal) within two months.
- Grounds for Refusal: Statutory grounds for refusal are clarified and must be stated.

2.2 Parental, Paternity, and Bereavement Leave

- Day-One Rights: Parental and paternity leave are now available from day one of employment (no qualifying period).
- Bereavement Leave: Expanded to include pregnancy loss (including miscarriage before 24 weeks and failed embryo implantation), not just the death of a child. At least one week's leave per bereavement, for each person lost.

2.3 Carer's Leave

- Statutory Right: All employees have a right to one week's unpaid carer's leave per year.

2.4 Agency Workers

- Equal Treatment: Agency workers must not be treated less favourably than permanent staff in relation to employment rights, unless objectively justified.

2.5 Sexual Harassment and Harassment by Third Parties

- Reasonable Steps: Employers must take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including by third parties (e.g., via social media).
- Protected Disclosures: Whistleblowing protections now explicitly cover disclosures about sexual harassment.

2.6 Written Statement of Reasons for Dismissal

- Qualifying Period: The right to a written statement of reasons for dismissal now applies after six months' service (reduced from two years) in certain cases, including dismissals related to spent convictions or protected disclosures.

2.7 Equality Representatives

- Statutory Rights: Trade union equality representatives are entitled to reasonable time off and facilities for their duties, including training and supporting staff.

2.8 Confidentiality Clauses

- Whistleblowing: Any contractual clause that seeks to prevent an employee from making a protected disclosure about harassment or discrimination is void.

2.9 Data Protection

- Personal Data: All employment-related personal data must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

2.10 Timescale for changes to be implemented

Most changes proposed in the report reflect good practice so could be implemented as soon as possible. This would ensure that GTC is legally compliant, provides clarity for staff, aligns with best practice, and reduces the risk of disputes, and protects GTC's reputation and supports staff confidence.

Exceptions to this approach are the following, which have a financial implication and a statutory implementation date of 6 April 2026:

- paternity leave and parental leave will become a day one right;
- statutory sick pay will be paid from the first day of illness; and
- the lower earnings limit on statutory sick pay will be removed.

3. **Policies Affected**

A review has been undertaken of the following policies:

Policy	Date of last review
Absence & Sick Pay Policy	19 September 2024
Code of Conduct – Employee	16 February 2023
Code of Conduct – IT Facilities	23 May 2024
DBS Data Handling Policy	13 February 2020
Dignity at Work Policy	23 May 2024
Disciplinary Procedure	23 May 2024
Flexible Working Policy	23 May 2024
Grievance Policy	23 May 2024
Leave Policy	23 May 2024
Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy	13 November 2025
Social Media Policy	23 May 2024
Staff Appraisal Scheme Policy	21 November 2024
Training Statement of Intent	23 May 2024
Whistleblowing Policy	24 April 2023

4. **Policy Specific Recommended Changes**

4.1. Absence & Sick Pay Policy

The policy requires some updates to ensure full compliance with the latest statutory requirements, particularly around statutory sick pay provisions, absence notification and return to work requirements.

4.1.1. Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Provisions

ERA Key Points:

- Employees are entitled to SSP from day one of absence due to illness (removal of waiting days).
- Fit notes can now be issued by a wider range of healthcare professionals, not just GPs.
- Employers must provide clear written information on sick pay rights and procedures.

Policy Recommendations:

- Update any reference to “waiting days” for SSP; confirm SSP is payable from the first day of absence.
- Ensure the policy states that fit notes may be provided by a range of healthcare professionals (not just GPs).
- Confirm the policy provides clear, accessible information on how to report sickness and claim sick pay.

4.1.2. Absence Notification and Evidence

ERA Key Points:

- Employees must notify their employer as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Employers cannot unreasonably refuse SSP if notification is late, provided there is a good reason.
- Evidence of incapacity (fit note) is required after 7 calendar days of absence.

Policy Recommendations:

- Ensure the policy allows for reasonable flexibility in notification, especially for those unable to notify immediately.
- Clarify that evidence of incapacity is required after 7 days, and that fit notes can be from a range of professionals.

4.1.3. Return to Work

ERA Key Points:

- Employers must consider reasonable adjustments for employees returning from sickness absence, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Return-to-work interviews are recommended but not mandatory.

Policy Recommendations:

- Include a statement that reasonable adjustments will be considered for employees returning from sickness absence.
- If return-to-work interviews are used, clarify their purpose and process.

4.1.4. Data Protection

ERA Key Points:

- Medical information must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Ensure the policy references the secure and confidential handling of medical and absence data.

4.1.5. *Written Statement of Terms*

ERA Key Points:

- All employees must receive a written statement of terms, including details of sick pay and procedures, on or before their first day of employment.

Policy Recommendations:

- Confirm the policy states that all employees will receive this information as part of their induction.

4.1.6. *Proposed Policy Amendments*

1. **SSP from Day One:** "Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is payable from the first day of absence due to illness, subject to eligibility."
2. **Fit Notes:** "A fit note may be provided by a GP, nurse, pharmacist, occupational therapist, or physiotherapist."
3. **Notification:** "Employees should notify their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable. Late notification will not automatically disqualify SSP if there is a good reason."
4. **Evidence:** "A fit note is required after 7 calendar days of absence."
5. **Return to Work:** "The Council will consider reasonable adjustments for employees returning from sickness absence. Return-to-work interviews may be conducted to support the employee's return."
6. **Data Protection:** "All medical and absence information will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR."
7. **Written Statement:** "All employees will receive written details of their sick pay and absence procedures on or before their first day of employment."

4.2. *Code of Conduct – Employee*

The policy requires updates to ensure full compliance with the latest statutory requirements, particularly around employee rights, equality, whistleblowing, and disciplinary procedures.

4.2.1. *Equality, Diversity, and Harassment*

ERA Key Points:

- Strengthened rights and protections against discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Employees must be informed of their rights and the Council's commitment to equality and dignity at work.
- Trade union equality representatives are entitled to reasonable time off and facilities for training and duties.

Policy Recommendations:

- Explicitly reference the Council's commitment to eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and to advancing equality of opportunity.
- Add a statement on supporting equality representatives and their statutory rights.

4.2.2. *Whistleblowing and Detriment*

ERA Key Points:

- Employees have the right not to suffer detriment or dismissal for making protected disclosures (whistleblowing) or for asserting statutory rights in good faith.
- The policy should reference GTC's Whistleblowing Policy and confirm protection from detriment.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a section referencing the Whistleblowing Policy and the right not to suffer detriment for raising concerns in good faith.

4.2.3. *Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures*

ERA Key Points:

- Employees must be informed of their rights to fair disciplinary and grievance procedures, including the right to be accompanied and to appeal.
- Dismissal for asserting statutory rights (e.g. equality, whistleblowing) is automatically unfair.

Policy Recommendations:

- Reference the right to fair disciplinary and grievance procedures, including the right to be accompanied and to appeal.
- State that dismissal for asserting statutory rights is automatically unfair.

4.2.4. *Data Protection*

ERA Key Points:

- Personal data must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Reference the Council's commitment to data protection in handling personal and sensitive information.

4.2.5. *Proposed Policy Amendments*

1. **Equality and Dignity at Work:** "The Council is committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and to advancing equality of opportunity for all employees, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and ERA."
2. **Whistleblowing:** "Employees are encouraged to raise concerns in good faith and are protected from detriment or dismissal for making protected disclosures. See the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for further details."
3. **Disciplinary and Grievance Rights:** "Employees have the right to fair disciplinary and grievance procedures, including the right to be accompanied and to appeal. Dismissal for asserting statutory rights is automatically unfair."
4. **Equality Representatives:** "Trade union equality representatives are entitled to reasonable time off and facilities for training and duties, as set out in ERA."
5. **Data Protection:** "All personal and sensitive information will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR."

4.3. Code of Conduct – IT Facilities

This policy is withdrawn as a staffing policy to be replaced by the IT, Cyber Security & Acceptable Use Policy, which will cover both staff and members and is being reviewed by the Audit Committee.

4.4. DBS Data Handling Policy

The policy aligns with the core requirements of ERA, Data Protection Act 2018, and UK GDPR. However, to ensure full compliance with the latest statutory requirements, updates are recommended, particularly around employee rights, data subject access, and the handling of agency worker data.

4.4.1. Data Subject Rights and Transparency

ERA Key Points:

- Employees (including agency workers) have enhanced rights to access, rectify, and erase their personal data, including DBS information.
- Employees must be informed of their rights regarding how their data is used, stored, and protected.
- The policy should reference the right to request access to DBS data and the process for doing so.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a section outlining employees' rights to access, correct, or request erasure of their DBS data, and how to make such a request.
- Reference the Council's Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy for further information on data rights.

4.4.2. Agency Workers

ERA Key Points:

- Agency workers must not be treated less favourably in the handling of their DBS data than comparable employees, unless objectively justified.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a clause confirming that agency workers' DBS data will be handled with the same care and rights as permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.

4.4.3. Data Protection and Lawful Processing

ERA & Data Protection Act 2018 Key Points:

- Processing of criminal records data must be necessary, proportionate, and in line with employment and safeguarding law.
- Consent is not required if processing is necessary for employment or safeguarding purposes, but transparency is essential.

Policy Recommendations:

- Clarify that DBS data is processed under legal obligations for safeguarding and employment, not solely on the basis of consent.
- Reference the legal bases for processing, including compliance with employment and safeguarding law.

4.4.4. Retention and Disposal

ERA & Data Protection Act 2018 Key Points:

- Data must not be kept longer than necessary, and retention periods should be clearly stated.
- Data subjects must be informed of retention periods and their right to request erasure.

Policy Recommendations:

- Ensure retention periods are clearly stated and justified.
- Add a statement that individuals will be informed of how long their data will be kept and their right to request erasure.

4.4.5. *Data Security and Breach Notification*

ERA & Data Protection Act 2018 Key Points:

- Appropriate technical and organisational measures must be in place to protect DBS data.
- Data subjects must be notified if their data is unlawfully disclosed or lost.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement on the Council's commitment to data security and the process for notifying data subjects in the event of a breach.

4.4.6. *Proposed Policy Amendments*

1. **Data Subject Rights:** "Individuals have the right to access, correct, or request erasure of their DBS data. Requests should be made in writing to the Town Clerk. For more information, see the Council's Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy."
2. **Agency Workers:** "DBS data relating to agency workers will be handled with the same care and rights as for permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists for different treatment."
3. **Lawful Processing:** "DBS data is processed under legal obligations for safeguarding and employment purposes, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and ERA. Consent is not required where processing is necessary for these purposes."
4. **Retention and Erasure:** "DBS data will be retained only as long as necessary, in line with the Council's Document Retention Policy. Individuals will be informed of retention periods and may request erasure of their data when it is no longer required."
5. **Data Security and Breach Notification:** "The Council is committed to maintaining the security of DBS data. In the event of a data breach, affected individuals will be notified promptly in accordance with legal requirements."

4.5. *Dignity at Work Policy*

To ensure full compliance with the latest statutory requirements some targeted updates are recommended, particularly around the rights of equality representatives, prevention of sexual harassment, whistleblowing, and contractual confidentiality.

4.5.1. *Equality Representatives and Trade Union Rights*

ERA Key Points:

- Trade union equality representatives are entitled to reasonable time off and facilities for their duties, including advancing equality and preventing harassment and victimisation.
- The policy should reference these rights and the Council's support for equality representatives.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement supporting the statutory rights of equality representatives, including time off and access to facilities.

4.5.2. *Prevention of Sexual Harassment*

ERA Key Points:

- Employers must take "reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment, which may include assessments, publishing plans, and clear reporting/complaints procedures.
- Regulations may specify what constitutes "reasonable steps" (e.g., regular risk assessments, staff training, clear reporting channels).

Policy Recommendations:

- Explicitly reference the Council's commitment to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including regular review of procedures and staff training.

4.5.3. Whistleblowing and Protected Disclosures

ERA Key Points:

- Employees are protected from detriment or dismissal for making protected disclosures, including those relating to sexual harassment.
- Any contractual confidentiality clause that would prevent an employee from making a disclosure about harassment or discrimination is void.

Policy Recommendations:

- Reference the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and confirm that employees are protected when raising concerns about harassment or discrimination.
- State that no confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination.

4.5.4. Agency Workers

ERA Key Points:

- Agency workers must not be treated less favourably in relation to dignity at work, unless objectively justified.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a clause confirming that agency workers are covered by the policy and will not be treated less favourably.

4.5.5. Data Protection

ERA Key Points:

- Personal data must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Ensure the policy references the secure and confidential handling of all personal data during investigations.

4.5.6. Proposed Policy Amendments

1. **Equality Representatives:** "The Council supports the statutory rights of trade union equality representatives, including reasonable time off and access to facilities for their duties, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025."
2. **Prevention of Sexual Harassment:** "The Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including regular risk assessments, staff training, and clear reporting procedures, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025."
3. **Whistleblowing and Confidentiality:** "Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about harassment or discrimination in good faith and are protected from detriment or dismissal for doing so. No confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination. See the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for further details."
4. **Agency Workers:** "Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists."
5. **Data Protection:** "All personal data collected during investigations will be handled securely and confidentially, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR."

4.6. Disciplinary Procedure

Below are the key compliance checks and recommended amendments to ensure GTC's Disciplinary Procedure aligns with the latest statutory requirements in the Employment Rights Act 2025 (ERA 2025).

4.6.1. *Timescales*

ERA 2025 Key Points:

- Employers must set out clear timescales for each stage of the disciplinary process (investigation, hearing, appeal), with a maximum of 10 working days per stage unless otherwise agreed.

Policy Recommendations:

- Insert clear timescales for each stage of the process (10 working days per stage, unless agreed otherwise).

4.6.2. *Representation*

ERA 2025 Key Points:

- Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, trade union representative, or certified workplace advocate.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add "certified workplace advocate" to the list of permitted companions.

4.6.3. *Outcome letters*

ERA 2025 Key Points:

- Outcome letters must include statutory minimum content: findings, sanction, rationale, appeal rights, and signposting to support.

Policy Recommendations:

- Update template outcome letters and policy wording to include all statutory content.

4.6.4. *Whistleblowing*

ERA 2025 Key Points:

- Disciplinary action must not be taken against staff for making protected disclosures (whistleblowing).

Policy Recommendations:

- Add explicit protection for whistleblowers and cross-reference the Whistleblowing Policy.

4.6.5. *Data Protection and confidentiality*

ERA 2025 Key Points:

- All records must be kept in accordance with statutory retention and access rights.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement on statutory retention and access of disciplinary records.

4.6.6. *Proposed Policy Amendments*

1. **Timescales:** "Each stage of the disciplinary process (investigation, hearing, appeal) will normally be completed within 10 working days, unless otherwise agreed with the employee."

2. **Right to be Accompanied:** “Employees have the right to be accompanied at any formal disciplinary meeting by a work colleague, trade union representative, or certified workplace advocate.”
3. **Outcome Letters:** “Outcome letters will include: the findings, any sanction, the rationale for the decision, the right of appeal, and signposting to support.”
4. **Whistleblowing Protection:** “No disciplinary action will be taken against any employee for making a protected disclosure under the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy.”
5. **Data Protection:** “All disciplinary records will be kept securely and in accordance with statutory retention and access rights under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.”

4.7. Flexible Working Policy

ERA introduces some important clarifications and requirements, particularly regarding the grounds for refusal, the process for handling requests, and the treatment of agency workers. Below are recommended amendments to ensure full compliance.

4.7.1. *Statutory Right to Request Flexible Working*

ERA Key Points:

- All employees have the right to request flexible working from day one of employment.
- Employees may make up to two statutory requests in any 12-month period.
- Employers may only refuse a request on specific statutory grounds and must act reasonably in doing so.
- The decision process (including any appeal) must be completed within two months, unless an extension is agreed.
- Agency workers are not covered by the statutory right to request flexible working.

Policy Recommendations:

- Confirm the right to request flexible working from day one of employment.
- Ensure the policy clearly lists the statutory grounds for refusal, as updated in ERA.
- Confirm the two-month decision timeframe (including appeal).
- Clarify that agency workers are excluded from the statutory right but may make non-statutory requests.

4.7.2. *Grounds for Refusal*

ERA Key Points:

- The grounds for refusal are:
 - burden of additional costs;
 - detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
 - inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
 - inability to recruit additional staff;
 - detrimental impact on quality;
 - detrimental impact on performance;
 - insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
 - planned structural changes; and
 - any other grounds specified by the Secretary of State in regulations.

Policy Recommendations:

- Ensure the policy lists all these grounds, using the updated statutory wording.

4.7.3. Reasonable Adjustments

ERA Key Points:

- Requests for flexible working as a reasonable adjustment for disability are not subject to the two-requests-per-year limit.

Policy Recommendations:

- Retain and clarify the exemption for reasonable adjustments.

4.7.4. Appeals

ERA Key Points:

- There is no statutory right of appeal, but best practice (ACAS Code) recommends offering one.

Policy Recommendations:

- Retain the appeal process as best practice.

4.7.5. Data Protection

ERA Key Points:

- All personal data must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Retain the data protection section.

4.7.6. Proposed Policy Amendments

1. **Statutory Right:** "All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working from day one of employment. Agency workers are not covered by this statutory right but may make non-statutory requests."
2. **Grounds for Refusal:** "Requests may only be refused for one or more of the following statutory reasons:
 - the burden of additional costs;
 - inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
 - inability to recruit additional staff;
 - detrimental impact on quality;
 - detrimental impact on performance;
 - insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
 - planned structural changes; and
 - any other grounds specified by the Secretary of State in regulations."
3. **Decision Timeframe:** "The Council will complete the process (including any appeal) within two months of receiving a request, unless an extension is agreed with the employee."
4. **Reasonable Adjustments:** "Requests for flexible working as a reasonable adjustment for disability are not subject to the two requests per year limit."
5. **Appeals:** "Although there is no statutory right of appeal, the Council offers an appeal process in line with best practice."

4.8. Grievance Policy

ERA introduces some new and clarified requirements, particularly around protected disclosures (whistleblowing), confidentiality, sexual harassment, and the treatment of agency workers. Below are recommended amendments to ensure full compliance.

4.8.1. Protected Disclosures and Whistleblowing

ERA Key Points:

- Employees are protected from detriment or dismissal for making protected disclosures, including those relating to sexual harassment.
- Any contractual confidentiality clause that would prevent an employee from making a disclosure about harassment or discrimination is void.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a section referencing the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and confirm that employees are protected when raising concerns about harassment, discrimination, or other protected matters.
- State that no confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination.

4.8.2. Prevention of Sexual Harassment

ERA Key Points:

- Employers must take "reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment, which may include assessments, publishing plans, and clear reporting/complaints procedures.
- Regulations may specify what constitutes "reasonable steps" (e.g. regular risk assessments, staff training, clear reporting channels).

Policy Recommendations:

- Reference the Council's commitment to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including regular review of procedures and staff training.

4.8.3. Agency Workers

ERA Key Points:

- Agency workers must not be treated less favourably in relation to grievance procedures, unless objectively justified.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a clause confirming that agency workers are covered by the policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.

4.8.4. Data Protection

ERA Key Points:

- Personal data must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Retain and, if necessary, strengthen the reference to secure and confidential handling of all personal data during grievance investigations.

4.8.5. Equality Representatives

ERA Key Points:

- Trade union equality representatives are entitled to reasonable time off and facilities for their duties, including supporting employees in grievance matters.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement supporting the statutory rights of equality representatives, including time off and access to facilities.

4.8.6. Proposed Policy Amendments

1. **Protected Disclosures and Confidentiality:** "Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about harassment, discrimination, or other protected matters in good faith and are protected from detriment or dismissal for doing so. No confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination. See the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for further details."
2. **Prevention of Sexual Harassment:** "The Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including regular risk assessments, staff training, and clear reporting procedures, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025."
3. **Agency Workers:** "Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists."
4. **Equality Representatives:** "The Council supports the statutory rights of trade union equality representatives, including reasonable time off and access to facilities for their duties, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025."
5. **Data Protection:** "All personal data collected during grievance investigations will be handled securely and confidentially, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR."

4.9. Leave Policy

ERA introduces several changes, particularly regarding bereavement leave, qualifying periods for parental and paternity leave, and clarifications on agency worker rights. Below are recommended amendments to ensure full compliance.

4.9.1. Bereavement Leave (formerly Parental Bereavement Leave)

ERA Key Points:

- The term "Parental Bereavement Leave" is replaced with "Bereavement Leave".
- Bereavement leave now covers pregnancy loss (including miscarriage before 24 weeks and failed embryo implantation), not just the death of a child.
- Employees are entitled to at least one week's leave for bereavement other than the death of a child.
- Leave is available for each person lost, not just per event.

Policy Recommendations:

- Update all references from "Parental Bereavement Leave" to "Bereavement Leave".
- Expand eligibility to include pregnancy loss and failed embryo implantation.
- Clarify entitlement: at least one week per bereavement, and for each person lost.

4.9.2. Parental and Paternity Leave: Removal of Qualifying Period

ERA Key Points:

- The qualifying period for both parental leave and paternity leave is removed; these rights apply from day one of employment.

Policy Recommendations:

- Remove any reference to a qualifying period for parental or paternity leave.
- Ensure the policy states these rights are available from day one.

4.9.3. Agency Workers

ERA Key Points:

- Agency workers are entitled to the same rights to leave as employees, unless objectively justified.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement confirming agency workers' rights to leave, unless a legitimate reason exists for different treatment.

4.9.4. Carer's Leave

ERA Key Points:

- The right to one week's unpaid carer's leave per year is confirmed.
- The policy should reference the statutory right and clarify any discretionary enhancements.

Policy Recommendations:

- Ensure the statutory right to one week's unpaid carer's leave is clearly stated.

4.9.5. Data Protection

ERA Key Points:

- All personal data must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Retain or strengthen references to data protection in the handling of leave requests and records.

4.9.6. Proposed Policy Amendments

1. **Bereavement Leave:** "Employees are entitled to Bereavement Leave in the event of the death of a child, pregnancy loss (including miscarriage before 24 weeks and failed embryo implantation), or the death of another close relative, as defined in the ERA. At least one week's leave is available per bereavement, and for each person lost."
2. **Parental and Paternity Leave:** "There is no qualifying period for parental or paternity leave; these rights apply from day one of employment."
3. **Agency Workers:** "Agency workers are entitled to the same rights to leave as employees, unless a legitimate reason exists for different treatment."
4. **Carer's Leave:** "All employees have a statutory right to one week's unpaid carer's leave per year to provide or arrange care for a dependant, as set out in the Carer's Leave Act 2023 and ERA."
5. **Data Protection:** "All personal data relating to leave requests will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR."

4.10. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

ERA introduces clarifications and requirements, particularly regarding the right to a written statement of reasons for dismissal, the treatment of agency workers, and data protection. Below are recommended amendments to ensure full compliance.

4.10.1. Written Statement of Reasons for Dismissal

ERA Key Points:

- The right to a written statement of reasons for dismissal now applies after six months' service (reduced from two years) where dismissal is related to a spent

conviction or a protected disclosure under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement confirming that, where a job offer is withdrawn or employment is terminated due to a spent conviction, the individual will be provided with a written statement of reasons if requested and they have at least six months' service.

4.10.2. Agency Workers

ERA Key Points:

- Agency workers must not be treated less favourably in recruitment or consideration of criminal records, unless objectively justified.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a clause confirming that agency workers are covered by the policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.

4.10.3. Data Protection

ERA Key Points:

- All personal data, including criminal records, must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Disclosure of information must not contravene data protection legislation, even where other disclosure is permitted.

Policy Recommendations:

- Strengthen references to data protection, ensuring all criminal record data is processed lawfully, fairly, and securely, and only shared with those who need to know.

4.10.4. Dismissal

ERA Key Points:

- The policy should reference the updated qualifying period for protection against dismissal related to spent convictions (now six months).

Policy Recommendations:

- Update references to the qualifying period for protection against dismissal for spent convictions to six months.

4.10.5. Proposed Policy Amendments

1. **Written Statement of Reasons for Dismissal:** "Where an offer of employment is withdrawn or employment is terminated due to a spent conviction, the individual will be provided with a written statement of reasons if requested and they have at least six months' service, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025."
2. **Agency Workers:** "Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff in relation to the consideration of criminal records, unless a legitimate reason exists."
3. **Data Protection:** "All personal data, including criminal records, will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Information will only be shared with those who need to know as part of the recruitment process."
4. **Dismissal:** "Protection against dismissal for a spent conviction applies after six months' service, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025."

4.11. Social Media Policy

ERA introduces new and clarified duties, especially regarding sexual harassment, protected disclosures (whistleblowing), agency worker rights, and contractual confidentiality. Below are recommended amendments to ensure full compliance.

4.11.1. *Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Harassment by Third Parties*

ERA Key Points:

- Employers must take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including online and via social media.
- Employers must not permit third parties (e.g. members of the public) to harass staff via social media and must take all reasonable steps to prevent this.
- Regulations may specify what constitutes “reasonable steps” (e.g. risk assessments, clear reporting channels, staff training).

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a section confirming the Council’s commitment to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and harassment by third parties, including online.
- Reference regular review of procedures, staff training, and clear reporting mechanisms for online harassment.

4.11.2. *Protected Disclosures and Whistleblowing*

ERA Key Points:

- Employees are protected from detriment or dismissal for making protected disclosures, including those relating to sexual harassment or discrimination, even if made via social media.
- Any contractual confidentiality clause that would prevent an employee from making a disclosure about harassment or discrimination is void.

Policy Recommendations:

- Reference the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy and confirm that employees are protected when raising concerns about harassment or discrimination, including via social media.
- State that no confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination.

4.11.3. *Agency Workers*

ERA Key Points:

- Agency workers must not be treated less favourably in relation to social media policy and disciplinary action, unless objectively justified.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a clause confirming that agency workers are covered by the policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.

4.11.4. *Data Protection*

ERA Key Points:

- All personal data, including social media monitoring and investigations, must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Retain or strengthen references to data protection in the handling of social media monitoring and investigations.

4.11.5. *Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures*

ERA Key Points:

- Employees must be informed of their rights to fair disciplinary and grievance procedures, including the right to be accompanied and to appeal.

Policy Recommendations:

- Reference the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures in relation to breaches of the Social Media Policy.

4.11.6. *Proposed Policy Amendments*

1. **Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Harassment by Third Parties:** "The Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and harassment by third parties, including via social media. This includes regular risk assessments, staff training, and clear reporting procedures, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025."
2. **Protected Disclosures and Confidentiality:** "Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about harassment or discrimination in good faith, including via social media, and are protected from detriment or dismissal for doing so. No confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination. See the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for further details."
3. **Agency Workers:** "Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists."
4. **Data Protection:** "All personal data relating to social media monitoring and investigations will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR."
5. **Disciplinary and Grievance:** "Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, which include the right to be accompanied and to appeal."

4.12. *Staff Appraisal Scheme Policy*

ERA introduces new and clarified requirements, particularly regarding equality representatives, agency worker rights, and data protection. Below are recommended amendments to ensure full compliance.

4.12.1. *Equality Representatives*

ERA Key Points:

- Trade union equality representatives are entitled to reasonable time off and facilities for their duties, including supporting staff in appraisal and performance management processes.
- The policy should reference these rights and the Council's support for equality representatives.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement supporting the statutory rights of equality representatives, including time off and access to facilities.

4.12.2. *Agency Workers*

ERA Key Points:

- Agency workers must not be treated less favourably in relation to appraisal and performance management, unless objectively justified.
- The policy should clarify that agency workers are covered by the scheme and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a clause confirming that agency workers are covered by the policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.

4.12.3. Data Protection

ERA Key Points:

- All personal data, including appraisal records, must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Retain or strengthen references to data protection in the handling of appraisal and performance review records.

4.12.4. Reasonable Adjustments

ERA Key Points:

- The Council must consider reasonable adjustments for disabled employees in the appraisal process, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement confirming that reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled employees during appraisals and performance reviews.

4.12.5. Proposed Policy Amendments

1. **Equality Representatives:** "The Council supports the statutory rights of trade union equality representatives, including reasonable time off and access to facilities for their duties, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025."
2. **Agency Workers:** "Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff in relation to appraisal and performance management, unless a legitimate reason exists."
3. **Data Protection:** "All personal data relating to appraisals and performance reviews will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR."
4. **Reasonable Adjustments:** "The Council will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled employees during appraisals and performance reviews, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and ERA."

4.13. Training Statement of Intent

ERA introduces new and clarified requirements, particularly regarding the statutory rights of trade union equality representatives, agency worker access to training, and the need for reasonable adjustments. Below are recommended amendments to ensure full compliance.

4.13.1. Equality Representatives

ERA Key Points:

- Trade union equality representatives are entitled to reasonable time off and facilities for their duties, including arranging and attending training on equality matters.
- The policy should reference these rights and the Council's support for equality representatives.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement supporting the statutory rights of equality representatives, including time off and access to facilities for training and equality activities.

4.13.2. Agency Workers

ERA Key Points:

- Agency workers must not be treated less favourably in relation to access to training and development, unless objectively justified.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a clause confirming that agency workers are covered by the policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff unless a legitimate reason exists.

4.13.3. Reasonable Adjustments

ERA Key Points:

- The Council must consider reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and members in relation to training, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement confirming that reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled staff and members to enable access to training.

4.13.4. Data Protection

ERA Key Points:

- All personal data, including training records, must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add or strengthen references to data protection in the handling of training records and information.

4.13.5. Proposed Policy Amendments

1. **Equality Representatives:** “The Council supports the statutory rights of trade union equality representatives, including reasonable time off and access to facilities for their duties and for attending training, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025.”
2. **Agency Workers:** “Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff in relation to access to training and development, unless a legitimate reason exists.”
3. **Reasonable Adjustments:** “The Council will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and members to enable access to training, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and ERA.”
4. **Data Protection:** “All personal data relating to training will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.”

4.14. Whistleblowing Policy

Introduces new and clarified requirements, particularly regarding protected disclosures about sexual harassment, contractual confidentiality, agency worker rights, and the right to be accompanied. Below are recommended amendments to ensure full compliance.

4.14.1. Protected Disclosures: Sexual Harassment

ERA Key Points:

- Disclosures about sexual harassment are now explicitly protected under whistleblowing law.

- The definition of protected disclosures includes allegations that sexual harassment has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.

Policy Recommendations:

- Explicitly state that disclosures about sexual harassment are protected under this policy.

4.14.2. Contractual Confidentiality Clauses

ERA Key Points:

- Any contractual clause that seeks to prevent an employee from making a protected disclosure about harassment or discrimination (including the employer's response) is void.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a statement that no confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination.

4.14.3. Agency Workers

ERA Key Points:

- Agency workers must not be treated less favourably in relation to whistleblowing protections, unless objectively justified.

Policy Recommendations:

- Add a clause confirming that agency workers are covered by the policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.

4.14.4. Right to be Accompanied

ERA Key Points:

- Employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at meetings relating to whistleblowing investigations.

Policy Recommendations:

- Ensure the policy states this right clearly.

4.14.5. Data Protection

ERA Key Points:

- All personal data, including whistleblowing records, must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Policy Recommendations:

- Retain or strengthen references to data protection in the handling of whistleblowing records.

4.14.6. Proposed Policy Amendments

- 1. Protected Disclosures: Sexual Harassment:** "Disclosures about sexual harassment are protected under this policy, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025."
- 2. Contractual Confidentiality Clauses:** "No confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination, or the Council's response to such disclosures."

3. **Agency Workers:** “Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff in relation to whistleblowing protections, unless a legitimate reason exists.”
4. **Right to be Accompanied:** “Employees and agency workers have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at meetings relating to whistleblowing investigations.”
5. **Data Protection:** “All personal data relating to whistleblowing will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.”

4.15. Full Policy Wording

All policies, including proposed textual changes, are included in the Appendices, as follows:

Appendix A	Absence & Sick Pay Policy
Appendix B	Code of Conduct – Employee
Appendix C	DBS Data Handling Policy
Appendix D	Dignity at Work Policy
Appendix E	Disciplinary Procedure
Appendix F	Flexible Working Policy
Appendix G	Grievance Policy
Appendix H	Leave Policy
Appendix I	Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
Appendix J	Social Media Policy
Appendix K	Staff Appraisal Scheme Policy
Appendix L	Training Statement of Intent
Appendix M	Whistleblowing Policy

5. **Rationale for Change**

The proposed changes to GTC’s staffing policies are required for the following practical reasons:

- **Legal Compliance:** The introduction of the ERA brings new statutory requirements that GTC must adhere to. Updating the policies ensures the Council remains compliant with current employment law and will avoid potential legal challenges.
- **Consistency with Best Practice:** Aligning GTC’s policies with latest guidance demonstrates a commitment to sector best practice and supports a fair, transparent, and supportive working environment.
- **Risk Reduction:** Proactively updating GTC’s staffing policies reduces the risk of disputes, grievances, and claims against the Council. It also helps protect the Council’s reputation and ensures robust governance in its employment practices.

6. **Implications for Staff**

The changes to GTC’s staffing policies will enable staff to gain new rights, such as updated leave entitlements, flexible working options, or enhanced protection in certain situations, as set out in the ERA.

The proposed changes are designed to make the Council workplace fairer and clearer for everyone, while ensuring GTC meets its legal duties.

7. **Implications for the Council**

The proposed changes will have the following impacts on the Council:

- **Workload or Administration:** There may be a short-term increase in administrative work as existing procedures are updated and communicated to staff. Ongoing administration is expected to return to normal levels once the changes are embedded.
- **Financial Implications:** At present, no significant financial impact is anticipated. Any minor costs associated with training or policy updates can be met from existing budgets.

These implications are considered manageable and proportionate, ensuring the Council remains compliant and continues to support good employment practice.

8. Equality, Legal and Risk Considerations

The proposed changes are designed to support equality and fair treatment for all staff, ensuring GTC's policies are inclusive and non-discriminatory. By updating its staffing policies in line with the ERA, the Council reduces its legal risk through compliance with current legislation and best practice.

9. Consultation Undertaken

No formal consultation has been undertaken at this stage. The proposed changes are required to ensure legal compliance with the ERA and to align with established best practice guidance from ACAS, NALC and SLCC. As these amendments are necessary to meet statutory obligations and do not introduce discretionary changes, wider consultation is not considered appropriate at this point. Should further changes be proposed in future that go beyond statutory requirements, appropriate consultation with staff and stakeholders will be undertaken.

10. Officer Recommendation

It is recommended that Members:

- approve the revised staffing policies as set out in this report;
- adopt the updated policies with effect from 6 April 2026, which will ensure compliance; and
- delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to make any minor drafting amendments required to finalise the documents.

ABSENCE & SICK PAY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

Godalming Town Council (the Council) is committed to maintaining the health, well-being and attendance of all employees. We value the contribution our employees make to the delivery of quality services to our community. So, when any employee is unable to be at work for any reason, we miss that contribution. This absence policy explains what we expect from managers and employees when handling absence.

Additionally, this policy outlines the payments made to an employee when they are absent due to sickness – this includes injury and disability. The policy aims to ensure fair, equitable and consistent treatment of staff.

This policy has been developed in consultation with employees and the Council welcome the continued involvement of employees in implementing this policy.

All employees will receive written details of their sick pay and absence procedures on or before their first day of employment.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. The Council's Absence and Sick Pay Policy is based on the following principles:
2. As a responsible employer the Council undertake to provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness in accordance with their Contract of Employment.
3. Regular, punctual attendance is an implied term of every employee's contract of employment – the Council ask each employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.
4. Open communication between managers and employees is encouraged.
5. The Council will consider any advice given by the employee's GP on the 'Statement of Fitness for Work'. For example, a GP might advise that an employee is 'partially fit for work' or 'fit for work with adjustments' on the FIT note and set out recommended adjustments or support.
6. The Council will use an occupational health adviser, where appropriate, to gain information and guidance in relation to the health condition, in particular to help identify the nature and likely duration of an employee's illness and to advise of any recommended support required by the employee.
7. The Council's disciplinary procedure may be invoked if the absence procedures are not followed or if the Absence and Sick Pay Policy & Procedure s misused.

8. The Council respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with ~~the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR all data protection legislation~~ and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

If an employee is going to be absent from work due to sickness they should ~~Speak to their manager or deputy within 30 minutes of their normal start time~~ notify their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable. Late notification will not automatically disqualify SSP if there is a good reason. They should also:

- Give a clear indication of the reason for absence (and the nature of the illness if applicable) and
- A likely return date.

The manager will check with the employee if there is any information they need about their current work. If the employee does not contact their manager by the required time the manager will attempt to contact the employee at home.

CERTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

Employees must self-certify for the first seven calendar days of sickness absence by completing the Council's sickness self-certification form and submitting this to their Manager upon their return to work. (Blank sickness self-certification forms are available from the Support Services Executive or electronically from the 'staffing committee' folder on the 'work' drive). Employees are required to provide a 'Statement of Fitness for Work' (FIT note) from their ~~GP or consultant~~ GP, nurse, pharmacist, occupational therapist, or physiotherapist for any absence due to sickness of over seven calendar days upon their return to work. For ongoing absence, you will be required to send your FIT Notes to your Manager once you receive them.

A FIT note (or equivalent if abroad) is required for any sickness absence which occurs while the employee is on annual leave (and where the employee wishes to substitute sick leave for the annual leave).

If absence is likely to be protracted, ie more than four weeks continuously, there is a shared responsibility for the Council and the employee to maintain contact at agreed intervals.

Exceptionally, if the Council is concerned about the frequency of an employee's absence, or their account of their reasons for absence, the employee may be required to submit a FIT note, rather than self-certificates, from their first day of absence. In such cases the Council will meet the cost of any fee charged. The Council's disciplinary procedure may be invoked if the absence procedures are not followed or if the Absence and Sick Pay Policy and Procedure is misused.

Sick pay may be withheld where the sickness absence reporting procedure and certification requirements have not been followed in full.

'MAY BE FIT FOR SOME WORK'

If the GP advises on the FIT note that an employee 'may be fit for work', or fit for work with adjustments'. For example, a GP might advise that an employee is 'partially fit for work' or 'fit for work with adjustments' on the FIT note and set out recommended adjustments or support. The recommendations will be discussed with the employee and if reasonable will be put into place. Examples of adjustments or support include a phased return to work or amended duties.

This discussion will take place as an informal meeting between the manager and the employee. In certain circumstances, the manager may need to seek advice and/or recommend an occupational health referral).

If it is not possible to provide the support an employee needs for an adjustment or support to enable them to return to work, (for example, by making the necessary workplace adjustments), the Statement will be used in the same way as if the GP advised that the employee was 'not fit for work'.

RETURN TO WORK DISCUSSIONS

Managers will discuss absences with employees when they return to work to establish:

- The reason for, and cause of absence
- ~~Any reasonable support or adjustments required by the employee.~~
- That the employee is fit to return to work.

If an employee's GP has advised that they 'may be fit for work with adjustments or support' the return to work ~~discussion can also be used to discuss this.~~ the Council will consider reasonable adjustments for employees returning from sickness absence. Return-to-work interviews may be conducted to support the employee's return.

A FORMAL REVIEW WILL BE TRIGGERED BY:

- Frequent short-term absences;
- Long-term absence; or
- Any other pattern of absence that causes the manager concern.

The review will look at any further action required to improve the employee's attendance and well-being and will be conducted as a formal meeting (with the employee having the right to be accompanied). A written record of the review will be kept.

Further absence management procedures will be followed as appropriate to the circumstances.

ABSENCE AS A RESULT OF DISABILITY

Where you experience sickness absence as a result of a disability it will be treated in line with the provisions contained within the Equality Act 2010 (formerly as part of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). This will include considering whether any reasonable adjustments can be made.

SICK PAY

1. Statutory Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is payable from the first day of absence due to illness, subject to eligibility.

2. Contractual Sick Pay:

If an employee is absent from work due to illness (this includes injury and other disability), and subject to compliance with Absence and Sick Pay Policy and Procedure, they will be paid Occupational Sick Pay in accordance with their contract of employment and in line with the National Agreement of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, a copy of which is available at the Council Offices.

- a. The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence is calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day by the number of days of paid absence during the preceding twelve months. (NB: for sick pay purposes; a month is equivalent to 22 working days, pro rata for part time staff).

- b. In the case of full pay periods, sick pay will be an amount which when added to Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefit receivable will secure the equivalent of normal pay. In the case of half pay periods, sick pay will be the amount equal to half normal earnings plus an amount equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefit receivable, so long as the total sum does not exceed normal pay.
- c. The Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefits to be taken into account for the calculation of sick pay are those to which an employee is entitled on the basis the employee has satisfied so far as is possible:
 - i. the conditions for the reporting of sickness as required by the council;
 - ii. the claiming of benefits;
 - iii. the obligation to declare any entitlement to benefits and any subsequent changes in circumstances affecting such entitlement.
- d. Sick pay will not be paid for absences which are not covered by an appropriate sickness certificate. The Council reserves the right to withhold pay for periods of unauthorised absence.

3. Phased Return:

The employee's salary will be calculated on a pro rata basis to reflect their hours worked during a phased return. The remainder of the time will be recorded as sickness absence, and paid as Sick Pay if eligible.

4. Third Party Damages:

An employee who is absent as a result of an accident shall not be entitled to an allowance if damages may be received from a third party in respect of the accident.

- a. In this event, The Staffing Committee would authorise a payment to the employee equivalent to the sickness payment which would normally be paid under the National Agreement of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. The employee will sign an agreement to refund to the Council the equivalent payment from the amount of damages paid to them by the third party, or a proportion of the payment if the damages paid do not cover the full amount.
- b. Any period of absence in this case, where a refund of the payment advanced is repaid in full, will not be recorded as sickness absence. If the payment is only repaid in part, then the period of absence not refunded will be recorded as sickness absence.

5. Pay During Notice Period

- a. Where notice is given to an employee that their employment is to be terminated by the Council whilst they are on sick leave, pay during the notice period will be notice pay (i.e. full pay) and not sick pay.
- b. If an employee resigns their post whilst they are on sick leave, they will remain on sick pay during their notice period and conditions of the sick pay policy apply in the usual way.

6. Non-payment of Sick Pay: Sick pay may not be paid when the absence is due to:

- an employee's own misconduct or neglect;
- deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery;
- active participation in professional sport;
- injury while working in the employee's own time on their account for private gain or for another employer

The above decision will be made by The Staffing Committee. The employee shall be advised of the grounds for suspension of Sick Pay and shall have a right of appeal. Such appeals will be heard by an independent panel chaired by the Mayor, plus two other elected councillors not serving on the Staffing Committee. If the panel concludes that the grounds were justified, then the employee shall forfeit the right to any further payment in respect of that period of absence.

6. Occupational disease/accident at work:

Absence in respect of normal sickness is entirely separate from absence through occupational disease, accident or assault arising out of or in the course of employment with the Council. Periods of absence in respect of one shall not be set off against the other for the purpose of calculating entitlements.

7. Infectious Disease:

An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease shall be entitled to receive normal pay and the period of absence will not be recorded as sickness absence under this policy.

8. Car User Allowance/Travel Allowance:

If an employee is absent from work due to sickness for a period exceeding three months the following element of their pay will stop:

- Essential Car User Allowance
- Work Place First Aider Payment
- Out of hours enhancement payment

9. Related Information:

Statutory Sick Pay Information (<https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>)

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.



EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT

A Guide for the Town Council's Staff

1. OUTLINE OF THE CODE

1.1. Status of the Code

As a local government officer your conduct must be beyond reproach and you must do nothing that might give rise to the suspicion, however ill-founded, that you are in any way influenced by improper motives.

All employees of the Council are required to observe and uphold the standards of the code and all policies and procedures of the Council. This guidance will not cover every specific eventuality but the broad principles included in this document set standards for acceptable behaviour that should fit every eventuality.

1.2. Who Does the Code Apply to?

This code covers all employees of Godalming Town Council.

The standards set out here must also be followed by agency staff, temporary workers and internal contractors who carry out work on behalf of the Council.

1.3 Responsibility

All employees of the Council are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to councillors and fellow employees with impartiality.

All employees are encouraged, without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management or Members any impropriety or breach of procedure that comes to their attention.

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns in good faith and are protected from detriment or dismissal for making protected disclosures. See the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for further details.

1.4 Abuses of the Code

Employees who attempt to abuse this policy may face disciplinary action. The Council takes false or misleading accusations very seriously which may result in further action taken through the disciplinary procedure. This does not include ill-founded allegations that were made in good faith.

Employees have the right to fair disciplinary and grievance procedures, including the right to be accompanied and to appeal. Dismissal for asserting statutory rights is automatically unfair.

1.5 Publicising/Distribution of the Code

A copy of this code is issued to every employee, agency work or temporary staff who carry out work on behalf of the Council. A copy can also be viewed on the Council's website.

New employees will be informed of the existence of this code in their recruitment and induction information.

1.6 Reviewing the Code

The Council will keep the operation of this policy under review and will make such changes to the policy as deemed appropriate in the light of the experience of its application. Any such changes shall be made in consultation with staff.

1.7 Alternative Formats

Should you require a copy of this policy in any alternative format then a request should be submitted to the Town Clerk.

1.8 Further Information

If you require any further advice relating to this document, you should contact your line manager in the first instance. Policies and procedures referred to in this document can be found on the Town Council's website - www.godalming-tc.gov.uk

2. PROCEDURE

2.1 Equality and Diversity

All members of the local community, customers and other Council employees have a right to be treated with fairness and equity and the Council is committed to treating the people it serves or employs fairly, consistently and with respect, **and is committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and to advancing equality of opportunity for all employees, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and ERA 2025.**

All employees must ensure that they are familiar with and comply with policies relating to equality issues as agreed by the Council, e.g. the Council's Equality & Diversity Policy & Statement, in addition to the requirements of the law. This applies both in the delivery of Council services and in relation to its employment practices.

The Dignity at Work Policy defines standards of unacceptable behaviour for staff in relation to their work, identifying the responsibilities of both managers and individual employees.

Trade union equality representatives are entitled to reasonable time off and facilities for training and duties, as set out in ERA 2025.

2.2 Standards and Attitude

Employees must give the highest possible standard of service to the public and, where it is part of their duties, provide appropriate advice to elected Members and fellow employees with impartiality.

Employees must always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial delivery of services to all groups and people within that community according to the Council's policies.

In all cases, it is not enough to avoid actual impropriety, as public perceptions are very important. Employees should at all times avoid any appearance of improper conduct, which may give rise to suspicion.

2.3 Dress Code

All employees are required to be neat, clean and tidy whilst at work, whether working on the Council's premises or elsewhere. Dress should be appropriate to the work undertaken. For example, smart casual clothing is generally acceptable to wear on a day-to-day basis although formal office wear is sometime required for more formal work situations including at council meetings.

2.4 Confidentiality and Data Protection

All personal and sensitive information will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR and all information and data must be handled sensitively and processed in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy. All employees owe a general duty of confidentiality to the Council, have a contractual obligation in relation to confidential information and are required to protect official information held in confidence.

Employees shall not divulge to any person (other than another member of staff or member of the Town Council that requires information for the performance of their duties), any information which the member of staff has obtained by reason of their employment to the Council, except where that information is anyway in the public domain by virtue of legislation or under the Council's Publication Scheme. In particular, no member of staff shall divulge personal information regarding any employee, person or contractor, having dealings with the Council and information relating to tenders or other such issues.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations, individuals have the right to see their own personal data held subject to the rights of confidentiality of any third parties involved in that information. Please see the Information & Data Protection Policy for further information.

2.5 Political Neutrality

Employees serve the Council as a whole. Employees must serve all elected Members. In addition, they must ensure that the individual rights of all elected Members are respected.

Subject to the Council's conventions, employees may also be required to advise political groups. They must do so in ways which do not compromise their political neutrality.

Employees must follow the lawfully expressed policies of the Council and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere improperly with their work.

2.6 Relationships

2.6.1 Colleagues

Good working relationships between colleagues are essential. Officers should always treat their colleagues with dignity and respect. Attention is particularly drawn to the Council's Dignity at Work Policy, a copy of which should be issued alongside this Code of Conduct.

2.6.2 Councillors

Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential for good local government. Whilst there will be a need to work closely with councillors, a professional and courteous relationship should be maintained at all times.

2.6.3 The Local Community and Service Users

Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the whole of the community they serve and ensure courteous, effective and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community in accordance with the policies of the Council.

2.6.4 Contractors

All relationships of a business or personal nature with external contractors or suppliers, or potential contractors or suppliers, must be declared to the Town Clerk at the earliest opportunity. Orders and contracts must be awarded in accordance with Council standing orders on merit and without discrimination. No special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives.

2.6.5 The Press and the Media

All enquiries for information or comment on issues affecting the work of the Council must be referred to the Town Clerk.

Employees must not deal directly with the press or the media unless required to do so in the course of their work or they have been expressly authorised by the Town Clerk.

2.7 Tendering Procedures

Employees involved in a tendering process or who have any other official relationship with external contractors, must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

If you are responsible for engaging or supervising contractors and have previously had, or currently have, a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, you must declare that relationship to the Town Clerk.

If you become privy to confidential information on tenders or costs relating either to internal or external contractors, you must not disclose that information to any unauthorised person.

All employees must ensure that no special favour is shown to current, or recent former, employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in any capacity.

At all times, employees dealing with Tenders and Contracts must ensure that they comply with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations with respect to Contracts.

2.8 Use of Financial Resources

Employees must ensure that public funds entrusted to them are used in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the Council.

All employees involved in financial activities and transactions on behalf of the Council, including budgetary control, payments of accounts, payments of salaries and wages, petty cash and orders for works, goods or services must do so in accordance with financial regulations.

Where employees have concerns over the lawfulness of certain action they should express such concerns to the Town Clerk.

2.9 Protection of the Council's Property

Employees must take all reasonable precautions to ensure that the Council's regalia, equipment and other property that is placed in their charge is kept safe and is protected from damage.

In the general interests of security in the Council's premises, employees should take care not to do anything that reduces the level of security. In particular, employees must ensure that doors and windows are shut and locked when leaving any premises and that any security alarms (if present) are set or that arrangements are in place for them to be set later. If an employee notices a potential lapse in security, they should bring it to the attention of the Facilities Supervisor or the Town Clerk.

All resources of the Council including equipment, stationery etc. are to be used for the Council's business and are not for personal use.

2.10 Information Technology

Use of IT equipment and facilities must be in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct - IT Facilities.

2.11 Anti-Bribery – Hospitality, Gifts and Sponsorship

It is illegal to offer, promise, give, request, agree, receive or accept bribes (Bribery Act 2010). This includes accepting any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing, anything in an official capacity or showing favour or disfavour to any person in an official capacity.

2.11.1 Gifts

In general, the Council does not believe that it is appropriate for employees to accept gifts from service users, suppliers or any other person or organisation with which the Council has (or might have) business connections. This is because it is important to ensure that no employee acts in any way that is inconsistent with the Council's objectives or with the integrity of the Council by accepting a gift in circumstances where it could influence, or be seen to influence, that employee's actions or decisions. Acceptance of gifts by employees may be viewed by the public with suspicion and may make the Council extremely vulnerable to criticism.

For your own protection, if anyone makes an approach to you which seems to you, or might seem to a third party, to be aimed at obtaining some form of preferential treatment, or in any suspicious circumstances in connection with a contract, you must report the matter to the Town Clerk, disclosing the fact of the gift, its nature and the identity of the sender.

Employees should not accept personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers. The only exceptions to this rule are;

- a) small gifts of only token value often given by way of trade advertisements to a wide range of people, e.g. calendars, diaries, tape measures and similar articles of use in the workplace; or
- b) small gifts of only token value given on the conclusion of a courtesy visit, e.g. to a factory, trade fair or other premises.

Gifts which fall outside the definition above should be politely refused and the Council's policy on the acceptance of gifts should be explained.

If a gift is delivered to the office without prior warning, unless it falls within the scope of acceptable gifts the gift should be returned, or if the return of the gift would cause offence the item should be donated to the Mayor's Charity.

2.11.2 Hospitality

Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the Council in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the Council should be seen to be represented. They should be authorised by the Town Clerk, in advance whenever possible.

When receiving authorised hospitality employees should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the Council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality.

When hospitality must be declined, those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within Godalming Town Council.

2.11.3 Register of Hospitality and Gifts

All hospitality offered, whether it is accepted or not, and all gifts offered or received, whether they are accepted or returned, must be entered in the Register of Hospitality and Gifts and a note made of the action taken.

If you have any doubt about a gift or offer of hospitality, please seek advice from the Town Clerk.

2.11.4 Sponsorship – Giving and Receiving

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a Council activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

Where the Council wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither an employee nor any partner/civil partner, spouse nor relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to the Town Clerk of any such interest. Similarly, where the Council through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

3.0 APPOINTMENTS AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

3.1 Appointments

If an employee wishes to recommend an individual for employment, they must notify the Town Clerk. Any potential candidate for employment by the Council recommended by an existing employee will be assessed equally alongside all other candidates. Employees shall not canvass any Member or other employee of the Council in respect of candidates seeking employment with the Council.

Employees shall disclose to the Town Clerk any close relationship (partner or family member) between themselves and any person who they know is a candidate for employment with the Council. (The Town Clerk shall make any such disclosure to the Chair of the Staffing Committee.)

To avoid accusations of bias, employees must not be involved with appointments where they are related to any applicant or otherwise have a close personal relationship with them.

Employees who are involved in appointments must ensure that these are made on merit and on a non-discriminatory basis.

3.2 Outside Commitments

Any employee who wishes to take another job must, before commencing the second job, request and be granted written permission from the Town Clerk. The Council does not prohibit employees

from taking secondary employment and will not unreasonably withhold permission for an employee to work in a second job, provided that the second job does not interfere, and is not likely to interfere, with the performance of the employee's job with the Council.

You should not partake in any outside interests, voluntary activity or work that are in conflict with the work of the Council. If you are in any doubt whatsoever that any outside activities or employment might be detrimental to the Council's interests, you must discuss the matter with the Town Clerk.

3.3 Personal Interests

You must declare, in writing, to the Town Clerk any financial or non-financial interests which could bring about conflict with the Council's interests. If you are in any doubt about a potential conflict of interest, you should bring the matter to the attention of your line manager so that a decision can be made as to how best to proceed. You must not make or become involved with any official or professional decisions about matters in which you have a personal interest.

You must declare to the Town Clerk membership of any organisation not open to the public, requiring any commitment of allegiance, or which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct, for example, the Freemasons. The Town Clerk must make any declarations required by this paragraph, in writing, to the Chair of the Staffing Committee.

3.4 Use of Non-financial Council Resources for Personal Purposes

You should not use or abuse the Council's equipment and other resources for your own personal purposes, either at home or at the office, regardless of whether such use is for your personal gain.

However, in certain circumstances and with the prior agreement of the Town Clerk, it may be possible for you to make reasonable use of the Council's resources. In such a case, the Council will make an appropriate charge for the use of its resources, for example, photocopying.

3.5 Linked Policies:

- **Dignity At Work**
- **Equality & Diversity Policy**
- **Disciplinary Procedures**
- **Grievance Policy**
- **Code of Conduct – IT Facilities**
- **Members Code of Conduct**

DBS DATA HANDLING POLICY

THE SECURE STORAGE, HANDLING, USE, RETENTION, DISPOSAL OF DISCLOSURES AND DISCLOSURE INFORMATION FROM THE DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE AND UMBRELLA SERVICE PROVIDER (SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL)

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Godalming Town Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificates and certificate information.

It also complies fully with its obligations under the General Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request and published on the Council's website.

AGENCY WORKERS

DBS data relating to agency workers will be handled with the same care and rights as for permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists for different treatment.

LAWFUL PROCESSING

DBS data is processed under legal obligations for safeguarding and employment purposes, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and ERA 2025. Consent is not required where processing is necessary for these purposes.

STORAGE AND ACCESS

Certificate information is to be kept securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

HANDLING

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. Godalming Town Council will maintain a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

USAGE

Certificate information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

RETENTION

DBS data will be retained only as long as necessary, in line with the Council's Document Retention Policy. Individuals will be informed of retention periods and may request erasure of their data when it is no longer required. ~~Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, Godalming Town Council does not keep certificate information for any longer than is necessary. Retention of certificates is in accordance with~~ Godalming Town Council's Document Retention Policy, ~~which~~ states that information relation to employment applications will be retained as follows:

- duration of employment for successful applicant; and
- 1 month after vacancy filled.

If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep certificate information for longer than the stated periods, Godalming Town Council will consult Surrey County Council as the umbrella service provider for the Town Council and will give full consideration to the data protection and human rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

DISPOSAL

Once the retention period has elapsed, Godalming Town Council will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, for example by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). Godalming Town Council will not keep any photocopy or other image of the certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a certificate.

DATA SUBJECT RIGHTS

Individuals have the right to access, correct, or request erasure of their DBS data. Requests should be made in writing to the Town Clerk. For more information, see the Council's Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy.

DATA SECURITY AND BREACH NOTIFICATION

The Council is committed to maintaining the security of DBS data. In the event of a data breach, affected individuals will be notified promptly in accordance with legal requirements.

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Godalming Town Council fully supports the right of all people to be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace. The Council recognises that bullying is not only unacceptable on moral grounds and harassment on legal grounds, but that either can have a negative effect on both individuals and the organisation. Prolonged harassment or bullying can cause both serious psychological and physical health problems, such as stress and depression. Godalming Town Council is, therefore, committed to having a workplace which is free from harassment and bullying and to ensure that all employees, contractors and others who come into contact with the Council are treated with dignity and respect.

This policy and procedure is intended to assist Godalming Town Council to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

THE POSITION ON BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

All employees are required to help create a working environment in which bullying and harassment are unacceptable. Employees should, in particular, ensure that they do not collude with bullying or harassing behaviour and that they fully cooperate with any complaints' procedure. Managers are responsible for raising awareness of the issue, responding constructively to any complaints, and challenging and stopping bullying and harassment at work.

Godalming Town Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment in the workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or a repeated course of conduct, and whether done purposefully or not. The Council will not tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. Employees should also be aware that if a court or tribunal finds that an act of bullying or harassment has occurred, in some circumstances that treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

The Council will take appropriate action if any employees or contractors are bullied or harassed by our stakeholders or suppliers.

If, after an investigation, it is decided that an employee has harassed or bullied another employee or contractor, then the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Retaliation or victimisation will also constitute a disciplinary offence, which may, in appropriate circumstances, lead to dismissal.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and as far as possible, confidentially. Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

WHAT TYPE OF TREATMENT AMOUNTS TO BULLYING OR HARASSMENT?

Bullying and harassment may occur 'face-to-face', in meetings, through written communications including email, by telephone and through automatic supervision methods.

Bullying is generally behaviour that is identified as a misuse of power. Bullying is primarily intimidating in nature, but may also be insulting, offensive or malicious. It is frequently recognised through the abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or create a detriment for the employee. Bullying may occur as an isolated incident, but is commonly persistent.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to relevant protected characteristics, which include, but are not limited to, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex, gender identity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, physical characteristics and age, that:

- has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Examples of **bullying and harassment** include (but are not limited to):

- spreading malicious rumours, or verbal abuse or offensive comments, jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation;
- deliberate exclusion from conversations or work activities;
- unfair treatment;
- rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property;
- unwelcome sexual advances — lewd or suggestive comments, touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials;
- subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, often in front of others;
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities;
- physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling;
- abusing a position of power

(this list is not exhaustive)

It is important to note that bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or proper performance management.

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable. All employees must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

PREVENTION OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Prevention of Sexual Harassment

The Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including regular risk assessments, staff training, and clear reporting procedures, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025.

What should an employee do if they feel that they are being Bullied or Harassed by a Stakeholder or Supplier (as opposed to a colleague)?

If an employee is being bullied or harassed by someone with whom they have come into contact with at work, they must raise this with the Town Clerk (or the Chair or Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee in the case of the Town Clerk) in the first instance. A decision will then be made as to how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with the employee who has raised the concern.

What should an employee do if they are being Bullied or Harassed by a Colleague?

If an employee is being bullied or harassed by another employee or contractor, there are two possible avenues for the individual to consider, informal or formal.

Informal Approach

If an employee is being bullied or harassed by another employee or contractor, the employee may be able to resolve the situation independently by informing the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to the Council's policy and must stop immediately. Alternatively, it may be that the individual may obtain support from a colleague.

In either case, the employee can approach the Town Clerk for advice and support. If the employee being bullied or harassed is the Town Clerk, he/she can approach the Chair or Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee for advice and support. If the above approach is unsuccessful or if the employee does not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if the employee is being bullied by the Town Clerk, the employee should raise the issue with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee. The request for help will be treated confidentially.

The Chair of the Staffing Committee or the Town Clerk will discuss with the employee the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by:

- informing the alleged perpetrator(s), without prejudging the matter, that there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a fellow employee;
- that such behaviour is contrary to the Council's policy;
- that the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence.

It may be possible for the Town Clerk, Chair or Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee to have this conversation with the alleged perpetrator. The Town Clerk, Chair or Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee will only share information that has been agreed with the employee. Complete anonymity cannot always be guaranteed in all circumstances as the employee may be identifiable from the matter being discussed. The Town Clerk, Chair or Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee will also ensure that the perpetrator is aware that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances the Council may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The Town Clerk, Chair or Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee will discuss this with the employee if it is appropriate.

If the complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as a serious allegation of sexual or racial harassment, or in cases where a problem has happened before) the Council may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that the matter had been raised informally. The Council will consult with the employee before taking this step.

Raising a Formal Complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, the employee can make a formal complaint through the Grievance Procedure.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would normally need to be informed of the name of the employee making the complaint and the details of the grievance in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, the Council will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. When carrying out any reviews or monitoring, an individual's personal data must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

If, at any stage, from the point at which a complaint is raised and it is believed that there is '*a case to answer*' and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, the Council will instigate the formal disciplinary procedure. The employee will be kept informed of the outcome.

Whistleblowing and Confidentiality

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about harassment or discrimination in good faith and are protected from detriment or dismissal for doing so. No confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination. See the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for further details.

False Allegations of Bullying or Harassment

False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. If it is found that an employee has made a false allegation of bullying or harassment for malicious reasons, this will be investigated and dealt with fairly and objectively under Godalming Town Council's Disciplinary Procedure. This will not include ill-founded allegations that were made in good faith.

Equality Representatives

The Council supports the statutory rights of trade union equality representatives, including reasonable time off and access to facilities for their duties, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025.

Agency Workers

Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.

Data Protection

All personal data collected during investigations will be handled securely and confidentially, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

This is a non-contractual policy.

Linked policies and procedures:

- Dignity at Work
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Equality Act 2010

DISCIPLINARY POLICY & PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

This policy is based on The ACAS statutory Code of Practice on discipline and grievance procedures – ACAS Code of Practice 1 published 11 March 2015 <https://www.acas.org.uk/codes-of-practice>

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

Inevitably, because the Town Council is a small organisation, Members may be involved in initiating, investigating or hearing disciplinary action. Members must always follow this procedure and should always seek external support and advice when taking disciplinary action. Suitable sources of advice include the Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) or the Town Council's external HR provider, the Chair of the Staffing Committee is authorised to seek advice and engage the services of the HR provider for disciplinary issues.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, satisfactory work performance and attendance which are acceptable at all times, including the need to: -

- Fulfil the duties specified in their contract of employment,
- Be honest and act beyond suspicion of dishonesty, and,
- Maintain high standards of integrity and conduct to protect the Council's reputation with the public.

The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all staff. It does not apply to employees in their probationary period.

No disciplinary action will be taken against any employee for making a protected disclosure under the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

PRINCIPLES WHICH UNDERPIN THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

This policy confirms:

- Where required the Council will access external HR support in order to provide advice and support to the Council as an employer.
- No formal disciplinary action will be taken (i.e. a formal warning) until the necessary investigations have been completed.
- The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants this.
- The Council recognises that misconduct and unsatisfactory work performance are different issues. The disciplinary policy also applies to work performance issues to ensure that alleged instances of employees' underperformance are dealt with fairly and in a way that is consistent with required standards. However, the disciplinary policy will only be used when performance management proves ineffective. For more information see the ACAS publication "How to

manage performance” at <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/m/0/How-to-manage-performance-advisory-booklet.pdf>

- 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 by a fellow worker, a trade union representative (certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker) or a trade union official at any disciplinary, or appeal meeting which could result in a formal warning or other disciplinary action being taken. 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. Employees must make all reasonable efforts to attend. Failure to attend any meeting may result in it going ahead and a decision being taken. An employee who does not attend a meeting will be given the opportunity to be represented and to make 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.
- 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
- 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.

EXAMPLES OF MISCONDUCT

Misconduct is employee behaviour that can lead to the employer taking disciplinary action. The following list contains some examples of misconduct. This list is not to be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive:

- unauthorised absence;
- poor timekeeping;
- unsatisfactory work performance (either repeated instances of poor work or one piece of very poor work);
- not working co-operatively and positively as a member of a team;
- failure to preserve the dignity, respect and privacy of others or behaviour that would breach the harmony in the workplace;
- breach of confidentiality – to an extent short of that specified under the relevant example given for Gross Misconduct;
- misuse of the Council's resources and facilities including telephone, email and internet;
- inappropriate behaviour;
- failure to follow reasonable instructions;
- breach of health and safety rules;
- impropriety or disorderly conduct whether within or outside working hours which the Council reasonably considers to be detrimental to the Council;
- failure to disclose a personal interest;
- unsatisfactory manner or/and appearance;
- any act or omission which, after investigation and due consideration to the individual circumstances is believed to amount to misconduct.

EXAMPLES OF GROSS MISCONDUCT

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. This list is not to be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive.

- intentionally making false statements when incidents or accidents are being investigated, or when applying for employment or in connection with medical examination;
- bullying, discrimination and/or 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;
- impropriety or disorderly conduct whether within or outside working hours which the Council reasonably considers to bring or potentially bring the Council into disrepute;
- failure to disclose a personal interest;
- unsatisfactory manner or/and appearance;
- any act or omission which, after investigation and due consideration to the individual circumstances is believed to amount to gross misconduct.

EXAMPLES OF UNSATISFACTORY WORK PERFORMANCE

The following list contains some examples of unsatisfactory work performance:

- inadequate application of office procedures;
- inadequate IT skills;
- unsatisfactory management of staff;
- unsatisfactory communication skills.

DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION

Necessary investigations of potential disciplinary matters will be carried out without unreasonable delays. **Investigations will normally be completed within 10 working days, unless otherwise agreed with the employee.** The nature and extent of the investigations will depend upon the seriousness of the matter and the more serious it is then the more thorough the investigation will be.

It will not always be necessary to hold an investigatory meeting. If a meeting is held, the employee will be given advance warning and time to prepare. **Employees have the right to be accompanied at an investigatory meeting by a work colleague, trade union representative, or certified workplace advocate.**

Investigations are intended to establish the facts.

Where practicable, different people should carry out the investigations and the disciplinary hearing.

Where investigations are carried out against the Town Clerk, the Chair of the Staffing Committee will appoint an investigator who will be responsible for undertaking the investigation – a fact-finding exercise to collect all relevant information. The investigator will be independent and will normally be a councillor. If the Chair of the Staffing 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. The investigator will be appointed as soon as possible after the allegations have been made. The Chair of the Staffing Committee will inform the investigator 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 (normally the Chair of the Staffing Committee) and who to contact for further direction if unexpected issues arise or advice is needed.

The investigator's report will contain recommendations and the findings on which they were based. The investigator 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 or;
- the employee has a case to answer and the matter should proceed to the Council's disciplinary procedure.

The investigator will submit the report to the Chair of the Staffing Committee, who will present the report to the Staffing Committee without delay. The Staffing Committee will decide whether further action is to be taken.

Where investigation of potential disciplinary matters are carried out against other staff members, The Town Clerk will request that the Chair of the Staffing Committee appoints an independent person to conduct an investigation, informing the investigator of the terms of reference of the investigation. The terms of reference are to follow the guidelines set out above. The investigator is to report recommendations and findings to the Town Clerk. The investigator's report is to contain recommendations as set out above.

THE DISCIPLINARY HEARING

Disciplinary hearings will consider the outcome of the investigation, together with the employee's representations and any other matters or further investigations it wishes to conduct before deciding whether to issue a warning or dismissal. **Hearings will normally be completed within 10 working days of completion of investigations, unless otherwise agreed with the employee. Employees have the right to be accompanied at a disciplinary hearing by a work colleague, trade union representative, or certified workplace advocate.**

The Town Clerk will usually conduct disciplinary hearings with staff members. However, before holding the hearing, the Town Clerk is to seek advice from the Council's HR advisers and discuss the matter with the Chair of the Staffing Committee.

In the case of the Town Clerk, if the Staffing Committee decides that, following an investigation, there is a case to answer, it will appoint a Disciplinary Hearing Panel (The Panel) of three councillors (The Panel members could, if appropriate be Councillors who are not members of the Staffing Committee). The Panel members will appoint a Chair from one of its members. The original investigator shall not sit on the panel. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to The Panel. The employee will be invited, in writing, to attend a disciplinary hearing. The Disciplinary Hearing Panel's letter will confirm the following:

- the names of its Chair and the other two members;
- details of the alleged misconduct, its possible consequences and the employee's statutory right to be accompanied at the hearing;
- a copy of the investigation report and all the supporting evidence;
- the time and place for the hearing; the employee will be given reasonable notice of the hearing so that they have sufficient time to prepare for it.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If the Disciplinary Hearing Panel decides that there should be disciplinary action, it may be any of the following:

1. First written warning

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

- of 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 to 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 a period of time, usually for six months.

2. 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 the letter confirming the final written warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file, and that the warning will remain in force for 18 months.

3. 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.

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

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

Outcome letters will include the findings, any sanction, the rationale for the decision, the right of appeal, and signposting to support.

THE APPEAL

An employee who is the subject of disciplinary action will be notified of the right of appeal. Their 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.

The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of the Staffing Committee who have not previously been involved in the case, this includes the investigator. There may be insufficient members of the Staffing Committee who have not previously been involved. If so, the appeal panel will be a committee of three members of the Council who may include members of the Staffing Committee. The appeal panel will appoint a Chair from one of its members.

Where the Town Clerk has received a warning or been dismissed, the appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of the Council not previously involved in the case. Where three members of the Council are not available, the Staffing Committee can appoint others to make up a panel. This might be councillors from other councils or other appropriate people.

The employee will be notified, in writing, usually within 10 working days of receipt of the notice of appeal of the date, time and place of the appeal meeting. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a companion - a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a **certified workplace advocate** ~~trade union official~~.

The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the Staffing 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.

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.

DATA PROTECTION

The Council processes personal data collected during the investigation stage and any subsequent stages of disciplinary action in accordance with its Data Protection Policy. In particular, data collected as part of the investigation stage and any subsequent stages of disciplinary action is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the disciplinary procedure. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Council's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under this disciplinary procedure.

All disciplinary records will be kept securely and in accordance with statutory retention and access rights under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.



POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR THE RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Every staff member has a contract of employment that sets out their working hours. A request to work flexibly is a request from the employee to change either the number of working hours, when or where they are worked. Flexible working does not mean a member of staff can work the hours they wish from day-to-day, week-to-week.

Flexible working arrangements take account of employees' preferences, interests and non-work responsibilities whilst also meeting the needs of the Council. Common examples of flexible working include part-time working; non-standard working hours including compressed hours; and remote/home working.

Flexible working can result in benefits to Councils, in that such arrangements can help make the most of today's diverse workforce and improve the Council's ability to recruit and retain staff. It is good practice to make flexible working open to all staff.

This policy has been written to explain the process which we will use to respond to requests by staff to vary hours, pattern or place of work.

~~You have a statutory right to request a change to your contractual terms and conditions of employment to work flexibly regardless of whether you work full or part time or have a temporary contract of employment. It does not apply to agency staff.~~

All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working from day one of employment. Agency workers are not covered by this statutory right, but may make non-statutory requests.

POLICY

Our policy is to comply with both the spirit and the letter of the law on the right to request flexible working. To this end we aim to inform all staff of their right to request flexible working and to ensure those rights are understood and that staff feel confident their requests will be handled objectively, fairly, free from discrimination, and that staff will not be treated detrimentally because they have asked for flexible working arrangements.

MAKING THE REQUEST

To apply for flexible working, please provide the following information in writing, and submit this to the Clerk. In the case of the Clerk, the request should be submitted to the Chair of the Staffing Committee:

- the date of the application;
- a statement that this is a statutory request;
- details of how you would like to work flexibly and when you want to start;
- a statement saying if and when you've made a previous application.

You are asked to let us know if you are making the request because you consider the change could be a reasonable adjustment to support a disability. In such a case some of the requirements of this policy would not apply (i.e. two requests in a 12 month period).

You may make up to two flexible working requests in any 12-month period. You can also make a non-statutory request for flexible working if you don't have the statutory right. The Council is not required to follow this policy when considering any non-statutory requests.

Requests for flexible working as a reasonable adjustment for disability are not subject to the two requests per year limit.

RESPONDING TO YOUR REQUEST

Once we receive your written request, unless we agree immediately to your request, we will arrange a discussion to consult with you with you as soon as possible. It may be that we need to ask you to supply further details before the meeting. If there is likely to be a delay in discussing your request or reaching a decision with 2-months of its receipt, we will inform you to seek an agreed extension of time to deal with the request. You may be accompanied at the meeting by a work colleague.

Having the right to request a change to your working arrangements does not necessarily mean that your request will be accepted. Your request will be fully discussed at the meeting. We will carefully consider your request looking at the benefits of the requested changes on working conditions for you as an employee and the Council and weighing these against any adverse impact of implementing the changes.

Having considered the changes you are requesting and weighing up the advantages, possible costs and potential logistical implications of granting the request, we will write to you with the decision. The decision will be either:

- to accept the request and confirm a start date, with or without a trial period and review date. Where the request is granted, we will set out what changes will be made to your terms and conditions of employment and whether they are temporary or permanent or,
- to reject the request setting out the reasons and how they apply to the application and the appeal process, and to offer an alternative or,
- to reject the request, setting out the reasons, how these apply to the application and the appeal process.

If we turn down your request, it will be because of one, or a combination of the following **statutory** reasons, and we will outline the reason/s and explain why:

- the burden of additional costs ~~is unacceptable to the Council~~
- detrimental effect on the Council's ability to deliver for the community
- inability to re-organise work among existing staff
- inability to recruit additional staff
- detrimental impact on quality
- detrimental impact on performance
- insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- planned structural changes to the Council
- **Any other grounds specified by the Secretary of State in regulations.**

If you are only looking for an informal change for a short period to your working hours or conditions, for instance to pursue a short course of study, we may consider allowing you to revert back to your previous conditions after a specified period, e.g. three months, or after the occurrence of a specific event, such as the end of a course of study.

TIMEFRAME FOR DEALING WITH REQUESTS

~~We will do what we can to respond to your request as soon as possible although the law requires the consideration process to be complete within two months of first receiving a request. including~~

~~any appeal. If the request cannot be dealt with within two months, we may ask to extend the consideration process, provided you agree to the extension.~~
The Council will complete the process (including any appeal) within two months of receiving a request, unless an extension is agreed with the employee.

HANDLING REQUESTS IN A FAIR WAY

We may receive more than one request to work flexibly closely together from different employees and it may or may not be possible to accept all requests. If we agree to a request for flexible working arrangements this does not mean that we can also agree to a similar change for another employee. Each case will be considered on its merits looking at the business case in the order they have been received. We may need to take others' contractual terms into account, and we may ask you if there is any room for adjustment or compromise before coming to a decision.

APPEALING THE DECISION

~~Although there is no legal right of appeal to a Flexible Working request decision, The Council accepts best practice employment procedures as set out in the ACAS Code of Practice on Flexible Working.~~

Although there is no statutory right of appeal, the Council offers an appeal process in line with best practice.

If we decline your request and you wish to appeal, you must do so, in writing, within 5 days of receiving the letter informing you of the outcome. We will then write to you to arrange a meeting to discuss your appeal. This meeting will be held as soon as reasonably possible and will normally be with an appeals panel of Councillors. You may wish to be accompanied at that meeting by a work colleague.

There may be circumstances when the Council is unable to meet within the required timeframes, in which case a meeting will be held as soon as is practically possible.

THE EFFECT ON YOUR CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Any change in your hours or pattern of work will normally be a permanent change to your contractual terms and conditions. This means that you will not automatically be able to revert back to the previous working pattern unless a trial period was agreed and you are still within your trial period, the change was agreed on a temporary basis, or unless otherwise agreed. So, for example, if your new permanent flexible working pattern involves working reduced hours, you will not automatically be able to revert to working full time hours.

Changes to your working pattern may affect other terms and conditions of employment. For example, reducing your hours of work will mean that your pay and leave will be pro-rated accordingly. Your pension may also be affected.

Any changes to your terms and conditions as a result of a change to your working pattern will be confirmed in your decision letter, however, if you have further queries about how a proposed change to your pattern of work might affect your terms and conditions please speak to the Clerk, or Chair of the Staffing Committee in the case of the Clerk, in the first instance.

DATA PROTECTION

When managing a flexible working request, we will process personal data collected in accordance with the data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which we receive a flexible working request is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing their request for flexible working. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the data protection policy

immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employers. This document sets out the procedures that Godalming Town Council will use to deal with their employees' grievances.

This policy is based on The ACAS statutory code of Practice on discipline and grievance procedures – ACAS Code of Practice 1 published 11 March 2015 <https://www.acas.org.uk/codes-of-practice>. 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. It sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their concerns, problems or complaints about their employment with the Council. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

In most cases of grievance an informal approach between employee and line manager is the best way to proceed. This procedure is for use when an informal approach has not resolved matters to the satisfaction of an employee or when the informal approach seems inappropriate.

Inevitably, because the Town Council is a small organisation, Members will be required to hear either a grievance or an appeal. Members must always follow this procedure and should always seek external support and advice when dealing with a grievance raised by an employee (particularly when the grievance is raised by, or is about, the Town Clerk). Suitable sources of advice include the Surrey Association Local Councils (SALC) or the Town Council's external HR provider, the Chair of the Staffing Committee is authorised to seek advice and engage the services of the HR provider for HR advice.

This policy confirms:

- Employees have the right to be accompanied at a grievance meeting or appeal by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative (certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker) or a trade union official. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employee's case for their 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 their 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.
- An employee has the right to appeal against the decision about their grievance. The appeal decision is final.
- Recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition.
- 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 they 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 Council's and the employee's consent.

PROTECTED DISCLOSURES AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about harassment, discrimination, or other protected matters in good faith and are protected from detriment or dismissal for doing so. No confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination. See the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for further details.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including regular risk assessments, staff training, and clear reporting procedures, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025.

INFORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally and as quickly as possible. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with their manager to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage.

FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally, the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the employee's manager or, if it is about the employee's manager, to their manager. If the Grievance is about the Town Clerk it should be raised with the Chair of the Staffing Committee.

The Manager receiving the grievance will arrange a meeting to discuss the grievance. Depending upon the complexity of the matter(s) raised the Manager will either look into the matter themselves or appoint someone to investigate.

If the grievance is against the Town Clerk, the Chair of the Staffing Committee will appoint a sub-committee of three members to hear the grievance. Depending on the complexity of the matter they will either look into the matter themselves or appoint someone to investigate.

NOTIFICATION

The employee will be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The letter will include the following:

- the names of the person or people hearing the grievance;
- a summary of the employee's grievance based on their written submission;
- the date, time and place for the meeting; the employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting;
- the employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official;
- 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 their 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.

THE APPEAL

If an employee decides that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved they may submit a written appeal to the Chair of the Staffing Committee. An appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving the decision and must specify the grounds of appeal.

The appeal will be heard by a panel of three Members of the Staffing Committee, appointed by the Chair of the Staffing Committee, who have not previously been involved in the case. There may be insufficient members of the Staffing Committee who have not previously been involved. If so, the appeal panel will be a committee of three Council Members who may include Members of the Staffing Committee. The appeal panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members.

The employee will be notified, in writing, of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The employee will be advised that they may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

The decision of the appeal panel is final.

GRIEVANCES AGAINST COUNCILLORS

Complaints about the conduct of parish and town councillors are handled by the Waverley Borough Council's Monitoring Officer, Case law, *R (Harvey) v Ledbury Town Council*, has found that complaints must be investigated under the standards procedures and not through other processes such as staff grievance procedures.

AGENCY WORKERS

Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.

EQUALITY REPRESENTATIVES

The Council supports the statutory rights of trade union equality representatives, including reasonable time off and access to facilities for their duties, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025.

DATA PROTECTION

All personal data collected during grievance investigations will be handled securely and confidentially, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. The Council processes personal data collected during the Grievance Procedure in accordance with its data protection policy. In particular, data collected as part of the investigation stage and any subsequent stages of the Grievance Procedure is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the Grievance Procedure. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Council's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

LEAVE POLICY

(To be read in conjunction with the Absence & Sick Pay Policy and Procedure)

Policy Statement: The aim of this policy is to outline the leave entitlement of an employee. The Policy aims to ensure fair, equitable and consistent treatment of staff and is based on The National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service of the National Joint Council (“the NJC”) for Local Government Services (“the Green Book”)

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Council recognises that every individual, may, at some point, be challenged by unplanned and unexpected events or sudden ‘life events’ which can affect not only the individual’s work but may also impact on other colleagues. The Council’s Leave Policy provides a range of options to assist staff to meet these challenges, whilst ensuring the proper functioning of the Council’s services. **Agency workers are entitled to the same rights to leave as employees, unless a legitimate reason exists for different treatment.**

PART ONE – ANNUAL LEAVE ALLOWANCE

2. LEAVE YEAR GUIDELINES:

- The Council’s annual leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March.
- Annual leave should be planned over the year and not “saved” until the end of the financial year. Staff should consider the operational needs of the Council prior to making an annual leave request. Every effort will be made to accommodate requests for annual leave.
- Requests for annual leave should be made in a timely manner with, under normal circumstances, a minimum of 3 days’ notice for leave periods up to 5 days and 3 weeks’ notice for periods over 5 days.
- In the normal course of events, requests for annual leave should be made no more than 12 months in advance of the planned leave. However, where a special event is being planned an exemption may be granted by the ~~Town Clerk~~ **CEO**.
- Annual leave must be taken at times agreed with the employee’s Line Manager. However, during peak operating periods or when planned major civic events are taking place, leave must also be authorised by the ~~Town Clerk~~ **CEO**.
- The maximum single period of leave, under normal circumstances, will be two weeks. Requests for longer periods of leave will require the approval of the Staffing Committee. Such requests should be made in writing to the ~~Town Clerk~~ **CEO** a minimum of 3 months prior to the requested leave to allow such requests to be put to the Staffing Committee (if exact dates are not known, the request should state an approximate range of dates).
- **Employees are reminded not to pre-book any holiday prior to approved leave being granted.**
- Any employee not having taken at least 18 days of their Annual Leave Allowance (ALA) by 31 January will be required to submit a leave plan which provides for a minimum of 28 paid leave days to have been taken by 31 March. (18 days ALA, 2 Statutory Days plus 8 Public Holidays = 28 Days) pro rata for part time employees.

- All annual leave should be taken within the current leave year. In **exceptional circumstances**, employees may be allowed to carry over a maximum of five days untaken annual leave into the following year. Staff must request prior approval of the ~~Town Clerk~~ **CEO** no later than 31 January in order to carry over unused annual leave. The ~~Town Clerk~~ **CEO** will require approval of the Chair of the Staffing Committee in order to carry over unused annual leave.
- Legitimate 'exceptional circumstances' could include:
 - Workload – covering for other staff absences (other than normal annual leave) for more than 4 weeks;
 - Preparing for a successor or succession;
 - Undertaking additional duties (either temporarily or permanently) which the Staffing Committee, upon review, deem not to have been sufficiently resourced.
- Subject to the above, and the provisions of the Council's Absence & Sick Pay Policy and Procedure and Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Shared Parental Leave Policies, any untaken leave will be lost and employees will not be entitled to pay in lieu of untaken annual leave.
- Except where allowed by Employment Rights Act 1996 (Time Off for Dependents) leave taken without the prior approval of the employee's Line Manager will be classified as unauthorised absence and may result in pay being withheld, and/or disciplinary action being taken.

3. **LEGAL REQUIREMENT UNDER THE WORKING TIME AMENDMENT REGULATIONS:**

~~The Council's minimum leave allowances (23 days annual paid leave, 2 days extra statutory days plus 8 public holidays) exceeds the 28 days minimum annual leave required under the working time amendment regulations 2007.~~ It is a statutory requirement that staff take a minimum of 28 days (pro rata for part-time employees) paid ~~annual~~ leave each year, ~~which includes annual leave, statutory leave days and public holidays.~~ Employees are unable to carry forward holiday if this leaves them with less than 28 days leave in any year.

4. **PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:**

Employees shall, irrespective of length of service, be entitled to a holiday with a normal day's pay for each of the statutory and public holidays as they occur.

5. **ANNUAL LEAVE:**

~~Annual leave entitlement for Council employees is 23 days per annum (rising to 25 days a rate of 1 day for each completed 12 months counting from the 1 April following the start of employment of continuous Local Government service up to a maximum of 25 days annual leave entitlement per annum) plus two extra statutory days and public holidays (pro rata for part-time employees). For the purposes of entitlements regarding Annual Leave, Occupational Sick Pay and the Occupational Maternity Scheme, continuous service will include continuous previous service with any public authority to which the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc.) (Modification) Order 1999 applies. Further guidance relating to the definition and calculation of eligible continuous service is detailed in 'The Green Book'.~~

Annual leave entitlement for Council employees is determined by the terms and conditions of their employment and will be aligned with either the National Joint Council (NJC) or the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) agreements.

An employee's initial annual leave allowance will be set out in their Particulars of Employment. Where the relevant terms and conditions provide for an increase in entitlement based on length of service, any such increase will apply from 1 April following the start of continuous local government service, up to the maximum entitlement permitted under the appropriate agreement.

All employees will also be entitled to two additional statutory leave days and public holidays (pro rata for part-time employees).

For the purposes of annual leave entitlement, occupational sick pay, and the occupational maternity scheme, continuous service includes previous continuous service with any public authority covered by the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc.) (Modification) Order 1999.

Further guidance on the definition and calculation of eligible continuous service is set out in the 'Green Book' for employees engaged on NJC terms and conditions and the 'Pink Book' for employees engaged on JNC terms and conditions.

6. EXTRA STATUTORY HOLIDAYS:

Employees shall have an entitlement to two extra statutory days holiday, these 'statutory days' are to be used during the Christmas to New Year closure period.

7. CALCULATION OF ANNUAL LEAVE ENTITLEMENT FOR NEW STARTERS AND LEAVERS:

The annual leave entitlement of employees leaving or joining the Council is pro-rata to their completed service during the leave year. Deductions from an employee's final salary payment will be made for any leave taken in excess of entitlement.

For the purpose of calculating leave (annual, public and extra statutory holidays) entitlements may, where necessary, be expressed in hours over the leave year.

8. DIRECTED LEAVE: ~~CHRISTMAS TO NEW YEAR HOLIDAY CLOSURE:~~

~~Godalming Town Council will follow the 'Council Office Closure' schedule set by Waverley Borough Council.~~

All Staff

Christmas Closure: If the Christmas Closure covers a period in excess of public holidays plus the two statutory days' holiday detailed above, staff will be required to allocate any additional days against either their annual leave entitlement or 'accrued' TOIL. Notice of the number of days required to be set against this requirement will be announced no later than 31 October. It should be noted that due to the operational requirements of Godalming Town Council it may not be possible to grant all staff leave during the entire shut down period, in which case appropriate adjustments to leave records will be made.

JNC STAFF

JNC staff are required to book 5 days annual leave (pro rata for part-time employees) at over the Easter school holiday period and over the October half-term school holiday. The dates used by Broadwater School are to be used for determining the Easter and October half-term holidays periods.

9. TIME OFF FOR RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS OR OBSERVATIONS:

Wherever possible, the Council shall endeavour to accommodate requests for time off for religious festivals or observations which are not covered by statutory public holidays. Employees must use their annual leave entitlement or accrued TOIL for this purpose.

10. PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING APPROVAL AND RECORDING OF LEAVE:

An employee's Line Manager must approve all paid leave in advance. Staff wishing to take paid leave should follow the procedure set out below:

- Staff are required to enter requested leave dates onto their leave card held by the Support Services Executive/~~Youth Centre Manager/Museum Curator as appropriate.~~
- The ~~Support Services Executive will present the relevant~~ leave card ~~is to be presented~~ to the appropriate Line Manager for authorisation of the request as soon as practicable. On authorising leave, Line Managers are to inform the staff member that their leave request has been granted.
- If approved, ~~the Services Support Executive will update the~~ details of the leave are to be uploaded onto the staff leave calendar. ~~(shown on Microsoft Outlook for ease of reference by Line Managers and other staff).~~
- Upon notification from a Line Manager, ~~the Support Services Executive is to record on~~ an individual's leave record card ~~is to be annotated to record~~ any occasion where a staff member was required to work on a Public Holiday.
- The ~~Town Clerk~~ CEO shall consult with the Chair of the Staffing Committee when making ~~his/her~~ their leave arrangements and where the ~~Town Clerk~~ CEO has delegation for authorisation of discretionary leave in relation to other staff, ~~he or she~~ they will seek such authorisation from the Chair of the Staffing Committee or Vice Chair if the Chair is unavailable.

PART TWO – SPECIAL FORMS OF LEAVE

11. PUBLIC DUTIES:

Paid leave of absence will be granted for employees undertaking jury service or serving on public bodies or undertaking public duties. Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings the employee should claim and pay the allowance to the Council.

12. ELECTION DUTIES:

Employees who wish to act as presiding officers, poll clerks or counting officers may request to take an unpaid leave day to carry out these duties. Employees should consult the ~~Town Clerk~~ CEO and obtain permission, which should not be unreasonably withheld, before accepting the appointment.

13. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND:

The Council recognises and abides by the legislation relating to employees rights to leave and protection of leave including Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Shared Parental Leave, Ordinary Parental and ~~Parental~~ Bereavement leave. In the event that an eligible employee is seeking to take any of the aforementioned leave they should, at the earliest opportunity, discuss their plans with their Line Manager who will be able to seek further advice on leave entitlements, pay rates and the legislation which is current at the time.

14. OCCUPATIONAL MATERNITY SCHEME:

The Occupational Maternity Scheme, as detailed in '~~The Green Book~~', ~~either the 'Green or Pink Book', as appropriate to an employees terms of employment,~~ shall apply to all pregnant employees, regardless of the number of hours worked per week, who have completed at ~~least~~ 1 year's continuous local government service at the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.

15. HEALTH & SAFETY IN PREGNANCY:

On receipt of written notification from an employee that she is pregnant, the ~~Town Clerk~~ **CEO** should carry out a risk assessment. The employee and relevant Line Manager should be fully informed of any risks identified. The Line Manager and employee have an on-going responsibility to monitor any potential risks that may be present.

16. SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE AND STATUTORY SHARED PARENTAL PAY:

Employees and their partner may be able to get Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) if there are:

- having a baby
- using a surrogate to have a baby
- adopting a child

They can share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay between them. They need to share the pay and leave in the first year after their child is born or placed with their family.

They can use SPL to take leave in blocks separated by periods of work, or take it all in one go. They can also choose to be off work together or to stagger the leave and pay.

To get SPL and ShPP, an employee and their partner need to:

- meet the eligibility criteria - there's different criteria for birth parents and for adoptive parents or parents using a surrogate.
- Give notice to employers.

There is no qualifying period for parental leave; these rights apply from day one of employment.

Full details and information on SPL and ShPP can be found on the [Government's website](#) and on the [ACAS website](#)

17. PATERNITY LEAVE:

Up to two weeks' paid leave (to be taken in a block of one or two weeks leave over a single period) shall be granted to the child's father or the partner or nominated carer within the first year of birth/adoption.

There is no qualifying period for paternity leave; these rights apply from day one of employment.

Further details and information on Paternity Leave can be found on the [Government's website](#) and on the [ACAS website](#)

17A. ORDINARY PATERNITY LEAVE:

Parents have the right to unpaid time off work when they need to look after their children. This is called 'ordinary parental leave' or unpaid parental leave. Ordinary Parental leave is additional to other types of time off employees are usually entitled to, such as:

- maternity, paternity and adoption leave and shared parental leave – for when someone's having a baby or adopting a child
- holiday

Full details and information on Paternity Leave can be found on the [ACAS website](#)

18. ANTENATAL APPOINTMENT:

Any pregnant employee has the right to paid time off to attend antenatal appointments and must produce evidence of appointments if requested to do so. Wherever possible these should be arranged outside of core time as set out in an employee's contract of employment.

A baby's father, the expectant mother's spouse or civil partner, or an employee in a long-term relationship with the expectant mother can take unpaid leave to accompany a pregnant woman to 2 antenatal appointments (taking up to 6 and a half hours per appointment).

19. CARER LEAVE:

Although ~~employees have a right under the Carer's Leave Act 2023 to up to one weeks' unpaid leave during a 12 month period to provide or arrange care for a dependants~~ all employees have a statutory right to one week's unpaid carer's leave per year to provide or arrange care for a dependant, as set out in the Carer's Leave Act 2023 and Employment Rights Act 2025, Godalming Town Council recognises that a flexible and supportive approach is required for those who have care responsibilities for others. Discretionary leave may be granted in the following circumstances:

Serious illness of a Husband, Wife, Partner, Son / Daughter including Step-children or a close family member who requires constant care and attention in their own home as defined in the [Carer's Leave Act 2023](#) 80J (2b), where no other care arrangements can be made or normal care arrangements have broken down, for example a person living alone recovering from an operation.

Up to five days with pay may be granted at the discretion of the ~~Town Clerk~~ CEO in accordance with the individual circumstances of the case. These additional days paid leave will not normally be granted until employees have exhausted any outstanding annual leave entitlement (based on the pro-rata calculation of the full annual entitlement on the date of request).

In cases of family sickness other than serious illness, consideration will be given to allowing the employee flexibility for start, finish and lunch times to allow them to care for their Husband, Wife, Partner, Son, Daughter or a member of their close family.

The Council's Carer Leave Scheme should be used in circumstances where the illness relates to someone who is normally directly dependant upon the employee for domestic support as defined in the [Carer's Leave Act 2023](#). 80J (2a)

Further information on the Carer's Leave Act 2023 can be found on the [ACAS website](#)

20. TIME OFF FOR MEDICAL SCREENING AND OTHER MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS:

Wherever possible, visits to a GP and other routine medical appointments should be made outside working hours.

Where this is not possible, appointments should be made to minimise the extent of absence from work, for example, either at the beginning or end of the working day. Paid leave of up to two hours may be granted at the discretion of the ~~Town Clerk~~ CEO, time off in excess of this period will be permitted, subject to the employee making up the hours lost. Time in excess of two hours is to be recorded by ~~Support Services~~ in the TOIL log with the accrued TOIL balance amended accordingly.

Employees having to attend hospital, clinic appointments or work-related medical appointments (e.g. sight tests or occupational health) where the timing of the appointment(s) is beyond their control will be able to attend these appointments during the working hours with no expectation to make up the hours lost.

Necessary paid time off will be granted for the purpose of cancer screening.

21. SPECIAL LEAVE:

Additional leave with or without pay may be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of the Staffing Committee, such requests are to be made in writing to the ~~Town Clerk~~ CEO.

22. BEREAVMENT LEAVE:

Employees are entitled to Bereavement Leave in the event of the death of a child, pregnancy loss (including miscarriage before 24 weeks and failed embryo implantation), or the death of another close relative, as defined in the Employment Rights Act 2025. At least one week's leave is available per bereavement, and for each person lost.

23. COMPASSIONATE LEAVE:

The ~~Town Clerk~~ CEO may grant up to three days' paid compassionate leave to help an employee cope with the serious illness or death of an immediate family member.

24. FUNERALS:

An additional paid Compassionate Leave day may be granted for attendance at the funeral of an immediate family member; Spouse or Partner, Parent (birth, adoptive or step-parent), Child (birth, step-children or adopted) or Sibling (including step-sibling or adopted).

25. TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS:

All employees (regardless of their length of service) have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work in order to deal with particular unexpected emergencies affecting their dependants.

A dependant is:

- A spouse;
- A civil partner;
- A child;
- A parent;
- A person who lives with the employee other than as his or her employee, tenant, lodger or boarder;
- Any other person who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance if he or she fell ill or was injured or assaulted, or who would rely on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury; or
- In relation to the disruption or termination of care for a dependant or any other person who reasonably relies on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care.

An example of time off for dependants is if your child falls ill you could take time off to go to the doctor and make care arrangements. Your employer may then ask you to take annual leave or parental leave if you want to look after your child for longer.

Although there is no requirement to give notice the employee must, as soon as possible, tell their Line Manager the reason for their absence and how long they expect to be away from work.

Exceptionally, consideration will be given to events which may be foreseen, but which are of a serious nature such as to make the presence of the employee necessary, for example, time off to settle an elderly relative into a care home or to attend a hospital appointment or planned operation with a child/partner. Such requests should be made to the ~~Town Clerk~~ CEO for determination in consultation with the Chair of the Staffing Committee.

26. TIME OFF IN LIEU:

For staff members above pay point 23 unless otherwise agreed as part of employment particulars, authorised additional hours worked outside of an individual's normal working hours will be compensated for by Time off in Lieu (TOIL). The points set out below govern the accrual and taking of TOIL.

Accruing TOIL

- Additional hours which may accrue TOIL must be authorised in advance by the ~~Town Clerk~~ **CEO**.
- Unless otherwise approved and authorised by the Staffing Committee, TOIL will be granted at single rate (one hour worked equals one hour TOIL) when a member of staff is required to work outside their normal hours to service weekday meetings or to attend weekday Civic, Mayoral or approved external events.
- Staff attending weekday evening meetings or weekday Civic, Mayoral or approved external events will receive single rate TOIL with an additional hour to cover travel time, meeting preparation and clear-up.
- For meetings started during the employee's normal working day and proceeding beyond the end of the working day, single TOIL will be granted as earned after the end of the working day.
- Staff attending weekend meetings or weekend Civic, Mayoral or approved external events will receive TOIL at time and a half for the duration of their involvement /requirement at the event. Additionally, staff will be granted travel time to and from an event. Travel time will be determined by the most direct route and standard parameters of the RAC route planner (www.rac.co.uk/route-planner). The approved travel time allowance is to be recorded in the TOIL log.
- Employees are to report TOIL hours to the Support Services Executive/**Youth Centre Manager, as appropriate**, in writing, and the Support Services Executive/ **Youth Centre Manager** will maintain the TOIL log, recording the date of accrued toil, the amount of toil time claimed, employees accumulated TOIL, date TOIL taken, balance of TOIL remaining. ~~Once recorded in the TOIL log, the entry is to be signed authorised by the Town Clerk.~~

Taking TOIL

- Whilst all staff should aim to take TOIL as soon as practicable after the date of accrual, in recognition of the relatively small number of employees **within each departmental area at the Town Council** and the resulting difficulty of taking time off, no more than 22.5 hours (three working days) TOIL can be accumulated at any one time **without the authorisation of the CEO**. This is pro-rated for part-time staff.
- Toil is to be requested and recorded using the same procedure as when requesting Annual Leave. Line-managers are to check with the Support Services executive/**Youth Centre Manager** that ~~with the added requirement that once approved by the Line Manager, the leave card is counter-signed by the Support Services Executive to indicate~~ that sufficient TOIL is available to support the request and that the accrued TOIL balance has been adjusted accordingly.
- The ~~Town Clerk~~ **CEO** will inform the Chair of the Staffing Committee before taking TOIL in excess of 7.5 hours.
- TOIL cannot be taken in advance of the hours being accrued.
- Except when leaving and by specific agreement of the Staffing Committee, TOIL cannot be 'bought back'.

PART THREE – IMPLICATIONS ON PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS

27. UNPAID LEAVE:

If employees are granted unpaid leave of absence or leave on reduced pay

For the first 30 days: Full Local Government Pension Scheme membership continues to build up during this period but the employee must pay the pension contributions that would have been paid had ~~she/he~~ **they** been at work.

After 30 days: This period will not count as pension scheme membership unless the employee opts to pay for it to do so. For the period to count as pensionable service he/she

can elect to pay pension contributions for the whole period (up to a maximum absence period of 36 months) by taking out a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (SCAPC) contract in order to maintain their full pension benefits. If the employee wishes to do this, they must notify the RFO in writing within 30 days of their return to work (or within 30 days of leaving work if they do not return). Details of the cost of buying back the 'lost' pension can be obtained from the Pension Scheme; please ask the RFO for details.

28. MATERNITY, ADOPTION, PATERNITY AND SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE:

The implications of these types of leave is set out in the ~~National Agreement of the National Joint Council for Local Government~~, the 'Green or Pink Book' ~~a copy~~ copies of which ~~is~~ are available at the Town Council Offices.

29. INDUSTRIAL ACTION:

If employees who are LGPS members are absent from work due to industrial action they will also have the option to buy back the 'lost' pension by making an Additional Pension Contribution. In order to do so they must write to the RFO, however, there is no time limit and the entire cost will be met by the employee.

30. DATA PROTECTION:

All personal data relating to leave requests will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions of trust, which may fall within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order, Godalming Town Council uses criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). The Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and the Home Office Revised Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service Registered Persons (November 2015) pursuant to section 122(2) of the Police Act 1997.

Godalming Town Council undertakes to treat all applicants fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS application or criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

2. COMMITMENT TO FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY

The Council is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, and service users, regardless of:

- race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins)
- Sex
- gender reassignment
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- responsibilities for dependents
- age
- physical/mental disability
- physical characteristics
- offending background.

The Council actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential. It welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. All candidates are selected for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.

Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff in relation to the consideration of criminal records, unless a legitimate reason exists.

3. DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

- A DBS application is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned.
- Where a criminal record check is required, all application forms, job adverts, recruitment briefs, and discussions will clearly indicate that a DBS check will be requested in the event of an offer of employment.
- The Council can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that it is legally entitled to know about and that are not protected.
- Unless the nature of the position allows otherwise, only "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 will be asked about.

4. HANDLING OF INFORMATION

- Applicants are encouraged to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage of the recruitment process.
- Information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- An open and measured discussion will always take place regarding any offences or other matters relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information directly relevant to the position could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- The Council undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing any conditional offer of employment.
- All personal data, including criminal records, will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Information will only be shared with those who need to know as part of the recruitment process.

5. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The Council will ensure that:

- appropriate professional support is provided for the recruitment process to assess the relevance and circumstances of offences; and
- those involved in recruitment receive guidance and training on the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, including the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

6. DBS CODE OF PRACTICE

Every subject of a DBS check will be made aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice, and a copy will be made available on request.

7. GENERAL PRINCIPLE

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an individual from working with the Council. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

8. DISMISSAL

Protection against dismissal for a spent conviction applies after six months' service, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025.

9. WRITTEN STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DISMISSAL

Where an offer of employment is withdrawn or employment is terminated due to a spent conviction, the individual will be provided with a written statement of reasons if requested and they have at least six months' service, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025.

POLICY ON THE ACCEPTABLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This should be read in conjunction with the linked policies listed below:

Linked policies and procedures:

- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Procedure & Rules
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Use of IT Facilities

Social media is an online method to instantly communicate with others or to share data in a public forum. Examples include Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also includes blogs, video and image sharing websites such as You Tube and Flickr. There are many more examples of social media than these; employees need to be aware that this is a constantly changing area.

The purpose of this policy is to set clear standards of behaviour and conduct in the use of social media and you should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that you use. This policy also covers the use of social media in your personal life which may have an impact upon the reputation of Godalming Town Council (the Council).

This policy applies to all staff (whether full time, part time, casually employed or temporary workers), and agency workers working for or on behalf of the Council and anyone using the Council's information and communication technology equipment. **Agency workers will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff, unless a legitimate reason exists.**

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat, Pinterest, all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs.

It applies to the use of social media accessed for work or on behalf of the Town Council, whether during office hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the Council's IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff. This policy equally applies to the use of personal social media if reference is made to Godalming Town Council or your employment thereof.

The Council recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media. However, use of social media can pose risks to confidential information, and reputation, and can jeopardise the Council's compliance with legal obligations.

The Council may require staff to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Town Clerk.

References or endorsements for individuals or organisations on social or networking sites on behalf of Godalming Town Council are to be approved in advance by the Town Clerk.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is part of the modern communication environment, staff are to keep use of social media during work hours to a reasonable level.

The use of Council computers, networks and IT resources for use of social media activities will be subject to monitoring as appropriate. **All personal data relating to social media monitoring and investigations will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.**

Staff are to seek the approval of the Town Clerk before responding to or posting comments on potentially controversial subjects/matters. Where duties require staff to represent the Council in a social media environment, they are to do so in a neutral and non-controversial manner. If doubt exists then they are to liaise with the Town Clerk prior to posting.

Circulating chain letters, spam or political solicitations is never permitted. The approval of the Town Clerk is required for the promotion on social media of commercial organisations, individuals or religious activities/events not associated with the Council. Such approval will be limited to individuals and organisations of merit and/or benefit to the Godalming community.

Likewise, staff who are contacted for comments about the Council for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, must direct the inquiry to the Town Clerk. Staff are not to respond without clear approval.

3. THE DOS AND DON'TS WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA

The following section provides staff with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely whether inside or outside of work.

Protecting the Council's reputation

- Do not post disparaging or defamatory statements about the Council or its stakeholders.
- Avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage the Council's reputation, even indirectly.
- Do not breach copyright for example by using someone else's images or written content without permission or failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.
- Individuals are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media. Remember that what is published might be available to be read by a wide and diverse audience, including the Council itself, future employers and social acquaintances and may be visible for a long time. This should be borne in mind before posting content.
- If any uncertainty or concern about the appropriateness of any statement or posting exists then it is advised to refrain from making the communication until discussed with the Town Clerk.
- Social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the Council should be reported to the Town Clerk. All staff are responsible for protecting the Council's reputation.

Respecting colleagues, stakeholders, partners and suppliers:

- Consider carefully whether your posts could be considered offensive by your colleagues, the Town Council or other stakeholders, partners or suppliers of the Town Council.
- You are reminded that the same laws, rules and regulations regarding discrimination, bullying and harassment apply equally to a social media environment as any other.

- The Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and harassment by third parties, including via social media. This includes regular risk assessments, staff training, and clear reporting procedures, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025.
- Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about harassment or discrimination in good faith, including via social media, and are protected from detriment or dismissal for doing so. No confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination. See the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for further details.

4. RECRUITMENT

Depending upon the position, the Council may use internet searches to perform due diligence on candidates in the course of recruitment. Where this is done, the Council will act in accordance with its data protection and equal opportunities obligations. Candidates will be given the opportunity to comment upon any concerns.

5. DISCIPLINARY ACTION OVER SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the Council, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, which include the right to be accompanied and to appeal.

This is a non-contractual policy, which will be reviewed from time to time



APPRAISAL & PERFORMANCE REVIEW SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

The appraisal and performance review scheme provides the Council with a framework to review employees' performance and potential which can benefit both employers and employees by improving job performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses and by determining suitability for development.

APPRAISALS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Appraisals and performance reviews give managers and employees opportunities to discuss how employees are progressing and to see what sort of improvements can be made, or help given, to build on their strengths and enable them to perform more effectively.

Review of potential and development needs predicts the level and type of work that employees will be capable of doing in the future and how they can be best developed for the sake of their own career and to maximise their contribution to the organisation.

WHO SHOULD UNDERTAKE APPRAISALS?

The Town Clerk will usually appraise those who report directly to the Town Clerk. Managers will usually appraise the staff reporting to them and share the reports from these appraisals with the Town Clerk to enable the senior management to comment on the report.

The Chair of the Staffing Committee and the Leader of the Council will conduct the appraisal of the Town Clerk.

BENEFITS OF APPRAISALS & PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Appraisals can help to improve employees' job performance by identifying strengths and weaknesses and determining how their strengths can be best utilised within the organisation and any weaknesses overcome. They can help to reveal problems which may be restricting employees' progress and causing inefficient work practices.

Appraisals can also provide information to assist succession planning and to determine the suitability of employees for promotion, for particular types of employment and training. In addition, they can improve communications by giving employees an opportunity to talk about their ideas and expectations and to be told how they are progressing. This process can also improve the quality of working life by increasing mutual understanding and respect between managers and employees.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The Council will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled employees during appraisals and performance reviews, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and ERA 2025.

FREQUENCY OF APPRAISALS & PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Employee appraisal should be a continuous process and should not be limited to a formal review once a year.

The majority of formal employees' appraisals will be conducted annually. However, more frequent performance reviews may be conducted for new employees, for longer serving staff who have moved to new posts or for those who are below acceptable performance standards.

Annual appraisals should be conducted within the anniversary month of their employment start date as stated on the employees Particulars of Employment i.e. an employee who joined in April, should have an appraisal each April.

Performance reviews are to be conducted as required to support an employee in identifying any weaknesses or issues that are affecting their employment.

SIGNING OF APPRAISALS & PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Before an appraisal or performance review is passed to the senior management for comment, employees are to be given the opportunity to see their appraisal reports and are required to sign the completed form and may, if they wish, express their views on the appraisal they have received; in particular whether they feel it is a fair assessment of their work over the reporting period.

TRAINING

All managers who carry out appraisals must receive training to help them assess performance effectively and to put that skill into use in the appraisal process. Godalming Town Council will provide all those who have responsibility with conducting appraisals and performance reviews appropriate training through ACAS Performance and Appraisal modules. At least one of the councillors conducting the Town Clerk's appraisal, or any performance review, must also have conducted the ACAS Performance and Appraisal Module.

RECORD KEEPING

A written record of an annual appraisal, a performance review, any intermediate appraisals or catch-up meetings will be given to the employee for their own records and copies will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

The written record of an annual appraisal, a performance review or any intermediate appraisals or catch-up meetings for the Town Clerk will be held by the Chair of the Staffing Committee on behalf of the Committee, as well as in the Town Clerk's own personnel file and a copy given to them.

When the Chair of Staffing Committee changes, then these records will be made available to the new Chair.

All personal data relating to appraisals and performance reviews will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

OBJECTIVES

If objectives are set as part of an appraisal or performance review, wherever possible agreement should be sought for those set. It is important for the appraiser to listen carefully to any concerns raised by the 'appraisee'. However, if agreement cannot be reached then the disputed objectives can be referred to the Town Clerk for employees whose appraisal is conducted by other managers or to the Staffing Committee where the appraisal is conducted by the Town Clerk, who will consider whether to amend, withdraw, or retain the disputed objectives after having considered the matter.

Objectives should always be written meeting the SMART criteria (see Appendix A)

Wherever possible, agreement should be sought for the other aspects of the appraisal (i.e. looking back at past achievements, training required, etc.). However, where agreement cannot be reached a note of the employee's comments/objections will be recorded within the appraiser comments.

TOWN CLERK'S APPRAISAL VS THE APPRAISALS OF OTHER MEMBERS OF STAFF

For clarity, the Town Clerk's appraisal process is entirely independent from that of other members of staff. In other words, if for any reason any stage of the Town Clerk's appraisal is delayed in full or

in part - then this should not delay any element of the appraisal process progressing for any other member of staff.

EQUALITY REPRESENTATIVES

Trade union equality representatives are entitled to support staff in appraisal and performance management processes. The Council supports the statutory rights of trade union equality representatives, including reasonable time off and access to facilities for their duties, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025.

AGENCY WORKERS

Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff in relation to appraisal and performance management, unless a legitimate reason exists.

APPENDIX A

Objectives should always be written meeting the SMART criteria.

Specific	The objective should provide clarity about the outcome required.
Measurable	The objective must include some means by which it will be possible to identify whether it has been achieved.
Achievable	The objective must be challenging and testing but realistic.
Relevant	The objective must be appropriate to the member of staff's role and also fit within the team objectives. Alternatively, there can be one or two personal objectives which are loosely connected with the team objectives but support staff development. (Note that the Staffing Committee would need to approve expenditure for staff development.)
Time bound	A timeframe must be given. It might be useful to define interim milestones which can be discussed at the 6-monthly review or more frequently.

TEMPLATES WHICH CAN BE USED AS THE BASIS FOR WRITING SMART OBJECTIVES

Example 1 – For delivering a one-off piece of work

By...*DATE* ...to have written the plan to deliver the.....

This objective might lend itself to setting milestones such as:

By...*DATE*...to have presented an outline project plan to the *line manager*.

You might also want to include additional information such as:

“You should use Microsoft Excel to detail the activities which fall under the plan, together with dates and responsibilities.”

Example 2 – To raise the standard of current performance

To meet the deadlines for.....on 95% of occasions during the second half of the year.

This objective lends itself to noting what both the appraiser and appraisee need to do to enable this objective to be met. For example:

- Appraiser will explore the possibility of team member attending a Time Management course.
- Appraiser will support the team member in taking one half day to tidy up and sort out personal workspace.
- Team member to use Outlook to create a running ‘to do’ list.
- Team member will readbook on time management.
- Team member’s time management will be a regular item for discussion at catch-up meetings.

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL – TRAINING – STATEMENT OF INTENT

1. COMMITMENT TO TRAINING	<p>Godalming Town Council is committed to reaching and maintaining the standards expected from staff and Members through identifying appropriate training needs and providing sufficient resources for its provision.</p> <p>Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff in relation to access to training and development, unless a legitimate reason exists.</p> <p>The Council supports the statutory rights of trade union equality representatives, including reasonable time off and access to facilities for their duties and for attending training, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025.</p> <p>The Council will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and members to enable access to training, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and ERA 2025.</p>
2. TRAINING NEEDS	<p>The Town Council acknowledges that it is equally important to train both its Members and staff in order to adequately carry out its service provision in an efficient and professional manner. Training will primarily focus on specific topics and areas of work pertinent to local government and may also encompass other relevant training that will enhance the professional skills of staff, benefit Members and thereby improve service delivery.</p> <p>Training may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Formal training courses ➤ Briefings and seminars ➤ Conferences such as Surrey Association of Local Councils, NALC regional and national
3. IDENTIFYING TRAINING NEEDS	<p>The training needs of staff will be identified mainly through the annual appraisal system. However, should there be a need for staff training due to the introduction of new equipment or the need for specialist knowledge then appropriate training will be provided.</p> <p>All new Councillors will be expected to undergo induction training to include training on the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>A new Chair will be encouraged to undergo appropriate training.</p> <p>Members will be informed of the availability of appropriate training/briefing sessions. Changes in legislation may also give rise to the need for appropriate training. Members will be asked annually to identify their own specific training needs.</p> <p>It is noted that some Members will have undertaken relevant training elsewhere and this will be taken into account.</p>
4. RESOURCING TRAINING	<p>Training will be resourced by making the funds available in the budget to ensure that staff and Members are suitably qualified to carry out their functions and duties. Funds will be made available for appropriate technical and other information, as required. The Training budget will be assessed as part of the annual budget setting process.</p>

5. MEASURING THE IMPACT OF TRAINED STAFF AND MEMBERS	<p>The impact of training will be measured through the council's service delivery. Well trained staff and Members will see the benefits through its successes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Well chaired council meetings ➤ Professional and pertinent observations ➤ Well written policies and reports ➤ Well managed projects ➤ Well managed finances ➤ Well informed staff and Members ➤ The professional conduct of staff and Members ➤ The maintenance of the General Power of Competence
6. DATA PROTECTION	<p>All personal data relating to training will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.</p>

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Godalming Town Council is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty, openness and accountability. It seeks to conduct its affairs in a responsible manner, to ensure that all Godalming Town Council activities are open and effectively managed, and that the Council's integrity and principles of public interest disclosure are sustained.

In line with that commitment, we encourage employees, Councillors, those working on behalf of the Godalming Town Council and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Town Councils' work to come forward and voice those concerns with their immediate manager and/or more senior managers. Where any member of staff decides to report a serious incident, whether anonymous or not, this will be treated as a 'protected, internal disclosure' i.e. there will be no adverse repercussions for the member of staff.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Town Council. However, staff may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to Godalming Town Council. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. Each person working for Godalming Town Council needs to realise that they not only have the right, but also a duty to report any improper actions or omissions.

Godalming Town Council also recognises and appreciates that staff who raise concerns regarding malpractice or wrongdoing are an asset to the Council, and not a threat. This policy makes it clear that they can raise concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The whistleblowing policy is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns within the Council.

This policy aims to:

- encourage staff to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
- provide avenues to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- ensure that staff receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied; and
- reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosure in good faith.

WHO IS TO BE COVERED BY THE POLICY?

The policy applies to all Godalming Town Council employees whether full-time or part time, permanent or temporary. To facilitate the reading of this policy, the terms 'staff' or 'members of staff' have been used, with the intention to cover all individuals mentioned above.

Agency workers are covered by this policy and will not be treated less favourably than permanent staff in relation to whistleblowing protections, unless a legitimate reason exists.

Whilst the policy is aimed at Godalming Town Council employees, the principles apply equally to any person who deals with the Council in any capacity and has an issue they would like to raise.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover serious concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures, in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. These include:

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law;
- failure to comply with a legal obligation;
- disclosures related to miscarriages of justice;
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees/staff;
- damage to the environment; and
- information relating to the above issues that has been or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

Examples of the above categories are likely to include:

- the unauthorised use or misuse of public funds;
- possible fraud and corruption; and
- sexual, physical or psychological abuse of service users.

Therefore, any serious concerns that a member of staff has about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of Godalming Town Council, others acting on behalf of the service or service users, can be reported under the Whistleblowing Policy where the member of staff has a reasonable belief in those concerns and they relate to one of the specified areas set out above.

A wrongdoing disclosed under the policy should be in the public interest, this means it affects others. There are existing procedures in place to enable employees to lodge concerns relating to their own employment.

SAFEGUARDING AGAINST HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION

Godalming Town Council is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees. It is recognised that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If a member of staff has a reasonable belief that what they are saying is true, they have nothing to fear because they will be doing their duty to their employer and/or those for whom they are providing a service.

Godalming Town Council will take appropriate action to protect staff when they raise a concern, by supporting the member of staff and consider action under the appropriate procedure against the person or persons responsible for the reported acts, provided the allegations relate to one of the categories covered by the scope of the policy and provided the member of staff:

- discloses the information in good faith;
- believes the concern to be true;
- does not act maliciously or make false allegations; and
- does not seek any personal gain.

There are national guidelines to help you as a whistleblower. See the [government guidance](#).

There is also a whistleblowing charity Protect that has a helpline on 020 3117 2520. This helpline offers independent and confidential advice to those who are unsure whether, or how, to raise a public interest concern.

PROTECTED DISCLOSURES: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Disclosures about sexual harassment are protected under this policy, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025.

CONTRACTUAL CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSES

No confidentiality clause will prevent disclosures about harassment or discrimination, or the Council's response to such disclosures.

UNSUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS

If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, an allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All concerns will be treated in confidence but at the appropriate time, the whistleblower may be asked to come forward as a witness, and this will be discussed with them.

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

This policy encourages staff to put their name to their allegation whenever possible.

The Council will take all concerns raised seriously. When carrying out an initial review of a concern, the Council will take into account the following factors:

- the seriousness of the issues raised;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

HOW TO RAISE CONCERNS

Staff may raise concerns with their immediate manager or another manager or, if it is believed that such managers are involved, the Chair of Staffing, the Mayor or the Leader of the Council.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are asked to provide the background and history of the concern (including relevant dates) and the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.

The earlier the concern is expressed, the easier it is to take action. In order to assist with the investigation, staff should provide as much detail and supporting evidence as possible. Staff are not expected to prove that an allegation is true, only to have sufficient grounds for concern.

~~The whistleblower may invite a recognised Trade Union representative or a work colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns raised. Employees and agency workers have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at meetings relating to whistleblowing investigations~~

HOW GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL WILL RESPOND

Godalming Town Council will investigate and respond to all concerns raised by staff or service users through any channels.

While it is not essential that the concerns be provided in writing, the person receiving the concern will, ensure that a written account of it is made. This will help with the subsequent investigation by facilitating clear record-keeping.

When a concern is raised directly with a council officer, they should undertake the following actions:

- take the concern seriously;
- consider the concerns fully and objectively;
- recognise that raising a concern can be a difficult experience for employees;
- ensure confidentiality; and
- refer to a manager of appropriate seniority, to agree the level at which the concern will be investigated and identify who will take responsibility for co-ordinating the enquiry.

INITIAL ENQUIRY

In order to protect the individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle, which the Council will have in mind, is that of the public interest. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

The purpose of the initial inquiry is to ascertain if the conduct or behaviour involves a Member of the Council, a senior manager or a member of staff, so that further enquiries and investigation can be progressed accordingly.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW

A preliminary review establishes the need to carry out an investigation. Further to the results of the initial enquiry and preliminary review, and at the discretion of senior management, the following steps will then need to be considered:

- concerns or allegations, which fall within the scope of specific procedures, e.g. child protection or discrimination issues, will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures;
- where there is any financial impropriety, the concern should be referred to internal audit, before taking any other action;
- inform the Council's Monitoring Officer if the concerns indicate unlawful activity;
- ensure that matters of a criminal nature are reported to the police, after consultation with internal audit;
- whether the disciplinary or other relevant management policies, procedures and processes of the Council need to be applied; and
- appointment of an officer to carry out the investigation under these procedures.

INVESTIGATION

Depending on the nature of concerns, investigation may be carried out under the Disciplinary Policy.

Investigation Timescales

Within 14 days of a report being received, the person who is dealing with the concern that has been raised will respond in writing:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- supplying information on staff support mechanisms, and
- advising whether further investigations or action is required and, if not, why not.

A further update will also be provided 28 days after the report was received, advising of additional progress made and the estimated date a final response will be available.

Investigation process

The impartial investigating manager appointed to undertake the investigation will establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. Other people may need to be interviewed to provide further information and/or clarification concerning the issue(s) raised.

It is essential that written records of all interviews be kept throughout the investigation, together with written details of any action taken. The investigation will result in a written report and recommendations for corrective action which will be passed to the manager responsible for deciding whether formal action shall be taken.

Where any meeting is arranged involving an individual member of staff, which can be off site, a recognised Trade Union representative or a work colleague may also attend. The Council will take steps to minimise any difficulties which may be experienced as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if a member of staff is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Council will arrange for them to receive appropriate procedural and/or legal advice.

A member of staff raising directly with a senior officer a concern will be, subject to legal constraints, advised in writing of the outcome of the investigation and, where appropriate, what action is being taken.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this procedure. The Town Clerk maintains a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (but in a form which does not compromise confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the appropriate committee of the Council. The whistleblowing procedures are to be defined, documented, widely circulated and reviewed at appropriate intervals.

The practical aspects of monitoring are to assess whether:

- the policy is being used appropriately;
- concerns are being handled and investigated properly;
- there are any discernible patterns of concern across the Council;
- the policy has been effective in identifying and deterring malpractice, and
- more needs to be done to raise awareness of the policy.

DATA PROTECTION

All personal data relating to whistleblowing will be handled securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

6. STAFF TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

1. **Purpose of Report**

To recommend an approach for identifying and addressing staff training needs, seek approval for the proposed Training Needs Assessment (TNA) form, and outline a timescale and methodology for implementation.

2. **Background**

The Council recognises that a skilled and well-trained workforce is essential for delivering high-quality services and meeting statutory obligations. A structured approach to training needs assessment ensures that staff development is aligned with organisational priorities, statutory requirements, and individual aspirations, which should deliver efficient, professional services and maintain compliance with sector standards. Training needs are primarily identified through the annual appraisal system, but also in response to new equipment, legislative changes and specialist requirements.

The existing staffing structure is as follows:

Executive Officers (2)	Chief Executive Officer Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Finance & Corporate Services (4)	Finance Manager Support Services Executive Community Services & Communications Officer Finance Assistant
Facilities (5)	Operations & Compliance Officer Maintenance Supervisor Maintenance Operative Maintenance Assistant x 2
Museum (4)	Museum Curator Museum Support Manager Museum Education & Outreach Officer (<i>new post not yet in place</i>) Museum Assistant
Youth Service (10)	Head of Youth Service Youth Service Manager Senior Youth Support Worker Youth Support Worker in Charge x 2 Youth Support Worker x 3 Administrator Apprentice

3. **Core Training Needs**

The following table identifies the likely training needs for the different services within Godalming Town Council.

Service	Statutory & Best Practice Training	Role-Specific/ Development Training
Executive Officers	CiLCA Data Protection FOI Code of Conduct & Standards Financial Management & Governance	Leadership Project Management Sector Conferences Policy Updates Local Government Updates/C

Service	Statutory & Best Practice Training	Role-Specific/ Development Training
	Health & Safety (inc. Risk Assessment) Employment Law & HR Basics Meeting Law & Procedures Equality & Diversity Safeguarding Awareness	
Finance & Corporate Services	Financial Regulations & Governance Local Government Finance Internal Controls & Audit Procurement & Contract Management VAT & Taxation for Local Councils Data Protection (GDPR) Freedom of Information (FOI) Equality & Diversity Health & Safety (Office-based) Payroll & Pensions Administration	Cyber Security Awareness Customer Service & Complaints Handling IT Skills Communications Event Management
Facilities Team	Health & Safety (inc. Risk Assessment) Manual handling COSHH Fire Safety First Aid Working at Height Use of Machinery/Equipment Asbestos Awareness Legionella Awareness Equality & Diversity	Compliance Contractor Management Emergency Planning Grounds Maintenance Safeguarding Awareness Lone Working
Museum Staff	Health & Safety (inc. Risk Assessment) Fire Safety & Evacuation Procedures Manual Handling Safeguarding (Children & Vulnerable Adults) GDPR & Data Protection Equality & Diversity Emergency Planning & Incident Response First Aid at Work	Museum Accreditation Standards Collections Care & Documentation Object Handling & Conservation Customer Service & Front of House Volunteer Management Lone Working
Youth Service Staff	Safeguarding Children & Young People DBS First Aid (Youth)	Mental Health Awareness (Youth) Youth Work Practice & Professional Boundaries Lone Working

Service	Statutory & Best Practice Training	Role-Specific/ Development Training
	Health & Safety (inc. Risk Assessment) Equality & Diversity GDPR & Data Protection Prevent (Counter-Extremism) Training Food Hygiene (if providing food)	Managing Challenging Behaviour

4. Recommended Approach to Training Needs Assessment

- A TNA form should be completed jointly by each staff member and their line manager, ensuring a balanced and accurate assessment.
- Initially all staff should complete an assessment to form a baseline. After which the assessment should be conducted annually, as part of the appraisal process, with a mid-year review to address emerging needs.
- The form includes a skills and knowledge matrix, allowing for self-assessment and manager input on current and required competency levels.
- The form prompts identification of any outstanding statutory or mandatory training.
- Staff are encouraged to identify areas for personal growth, supporting both organisational and individual objectives.

5. Methodology and Timescale

March – April	All staff to complete the TNA form with their line manager.
May	Line managers to submit completed forms to the Deputy Chief Officer for collation.
June	Deputy Chief Officer to analyse results, identify common themes, and draft a council-wide training plan
July	Staffing Committee to review and approve the training plan and associated budget allocations.
Ongoing	Training delivered throughout the year, with a mid-year review in October.

6. Allocation of the Staff Training Budget

- Focus on statutory, mandatory, and high-impact training first.
- Where possible, arrange group sessions to maximise value.
- Use sector-recommended providers (e.g., SLCC, NALC, SALC) for specialist training.
- Track expenditure and outcomes to ensure the annual budget is used effectively and equitably.

7. Benefits

- Staff are better equipped to meet current and future challenges.
- Ensures all statutory and mandatory training is up to date.
- Demonstrates investment in staff, supporting retention and morale.
- Structured planning ensures the training budget is targeted where it will have the greatest impact.

8. Officer Recommendations

1. Approve the attached Training Needs Assessment form for use by all staff.
2. Adopt the proposed annual cycle and methodology for identifying training needs.
3. Delegate to the Deputy Chief Officer the collation and analysis of training needs and the drafting of a council-wide training plan.
4. Approve the proposed timescale for implementation.

APPENDIX 1 TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM

Guidance

This form should be completed collaboratively by the member of staff and their line manager. The staff member may complete the self-assessment sections in advance, and the final assessment and action plan should be agreed together during a discussion. Both parties should sign the form to confirm agreement.

Employee Name:	
Job Title:	
Service Area:	
Line Manager:	
Date of Assessment:	

1. Current Role and Responsibilities

Briefly describe your main duties and responsibilities:

2. Skills and Knowledge Review

Area/Skill	Current Level (1-5)*	Required Level (1-5)**	Gap Identified ? (Y/N)	Comments / Examples
e.g. Health & Safety				
e.g. First Aid				
e.g. Data Protection				
Other (specify):				

*Current Level

- **Definition:** The staff member's self-assessed or manager-assessed ability or knowledge in a particular skill area at the present time.
- **Scale:** Usually rated on a scale (e.g., 1 = no experience, 5 = highly proficient).
- **Purpose:** Helps identify what the staff member can already do.

**Required Level

- **Definition:** The level of ability or knowledge needed to perform the job effectively, as agreed by the staff member and their manager.
- **Scale:** Uses the same scale as "Current Level".
- **Purpose:** Shows what is expected for the role or for future development.

3. Statutory and Mandatory Training

Are there any statutory or mandatory training requirements outstanding? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please specify:

4. Personal Development Goals

What areas would you like to develop further in your role?

5. Training Methods Preferred

Please indicate your preferred training methods (tick all that apply):

- ☐ In-person courses
- ☐ Online learning
- ☐ On-the-job training
- ☐ Mentoring/Coaching
- ☐ Other (please specify):

6. Additional Comments

Any other training or support needs identified:

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Line Manager Signature: _____ Date: _____

For Office Use:

Date received:

Action taken/Training arranged:

Review date:



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Education & Outreach Officer
Location:	Godalming Museum, 109a High Street, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1AQ
Contract Type:	Permanent, part-time
Hours of Work:	22.5 per week - 3 days per week on a rota basis, (flexibility required, including occasional evenings/weekends)
Reports To:	Museum Curator

1. Purpose of the Role

The Education & Outreach Officer is responsible for developing, delivering, and promoting high-quality learning and engagement activities that increase access to, and participation in, Godalming Museum's collections and stories. Working as part of a small museum team, the postholder will take a practical, flexible approach — leading on education and outreach while also contributing to the day-to-day operation of the Museum when required.

2. Key Responsibilities

2.1 Learning & Education Programmes (Core Responsibility)

- Plan, deliver, and evaluate a structured programme of formal and informal learning activities, including:
 - school visits and workshops;
 - loan boxes;
 - family activities and holiday events; and
 - talks, tours, and community group sessions.
- Develop learning resources that are accessible, engaging, and aligned with the Museum's collections.
- Promote the Museum's learning offer to schools, community groups, and partners.
- Maintain accurate records, bookings, risk assessments, and evaluations for learning activities.

2.2 Outreach & Community Engagement

- Proactively build relationships with local schools, community groups, voluntary organisations, and partner bodies.
- Identify opportunities to take the Museum beyond its walls through outreach sessions, collaborative projects, and community-led activity.
- Support inclusive programming that reflects the diversity of the local community.

- Assist in developing events that raise the Museum's profile and encourage repeat visits.

2.3 Learning Content for Exhibitions & Displays

- Develop learning material to support exhibitions and permanent displays.
- Create supporting self-led activities, trails, and family resources.
- Support exhibition-related events such as private views and public programmes, as required.

2.4 Volunteers & Casual Staff

- Support the recruitment, training, and supervision of:
 - learning volunteers; and
 - casual learning facilitators.
- Assist the Curator and Museum Support Manager in maintaining a positive and professional volunteer experience.

2.5 Operational Support (Small Team Requirement)

- Contribute to the day-to-day running of the Museum, which may include:
 - front-of-house cover when required;
 - supporting events and activities; and
 - assisting with basic administrative and operational tasks.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to ensure the Museum operates smoothly and professionally at all times.

2.6 Administration, Compliance & Promotion

- Work within agreed budgets and assist with identifying funding opportunities relevant to learning and outreach.
- Monitor, evaluate, and report on learning and engagement activity to inform future planning.
- Support the Museum's website and social media presence by producing learning-related content.
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding, health & safety, and data protection requirements, particularly when working with children and young people.

3. General Responsibilities

- Act as an ambassador for Godalming Museum at all times.
- Work flexibly to meet operational and programming needs.
- Undertake any other duties reasonably required by the Curator or the Council.

NB. This job description is non-contractual and is a statement of the job content agreed at the time of issue. It should not be seen as precluding future changes.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Education & Outreach Officer – Godalming Museum

Essential Criteria

Knowledge & Experience

- Experience of planning and delivering learning or engagement activities for a range of audiences (e.g. schools, families, community groups).
- Practical experience of working with children and young people, with a clear understanding of safeguarding responsibilities.
- Experience of community engagement or outreach, ideally within a cultural, heritage, education, or voluntary sector setting.
- Experience of delivering activities in a front-facing, public environment.
- Understanding of how learning and engagement can support access to collections and local history (without needing to be a subject specialist).
- Experience of working within limited budgets and managing resources effectively.

Skills & Abilities

- Ability to design and deliver engaging, accessible learning activities for different age groups and abilities.
- Strong communication skills, with confidence in:
 - public speaking;
 - working with schools and community partners; and
 - engaging visitors and volunteers.
- Good organisational skills, with the ability to manage bookings, paperwork, and evaluations efficiently.
- Ability to work independently while also contributing positively to a small team.
- Practical problem-solving skills and a willingness to take a hands-on approach.
- Basic IT skills, including use of email, word processing, and online systems.

Personal Attributes

- Enthusiastic about education, learning, and community engagement.
- Approachable, professional, and comfortable working with the public.
- Flexible and adaptable, with a realistic understanding of working in a small museum environment.
- Reliable, well-organised, and able to see tasks through to completion.
- Commitment to equality, inclusion, and safeguarding.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience of working in a museum, gallery, heritage site, or similar cultural organisation.
- Experience of developing learning resources linked to exhibitions or collections.
- Knowledge of the National Curriculum or informal learning frameworks.
- Experience of supervising volunteers or casual staff.
- Experience of contributing content to websites or social media, particularly learning-related material.
- Awareness of Museum Accreditation or good practice in museum learning.

Other Requirements

- Willingness to work flexibly, including occasional evenings and weekends.
- Ability to work on site at Godalming Museum.
- Satisfactory DBS check.

STAFF-IN-CONFIDENTIAL

To: Chair GT Staffing Committee

From: CEO

Subject: Request to vary flexible working arrangements.

Date: 6 February 2026

Dear Cllr Heagin

As you are aware, I submitted a flexible working request in February 2023, which was approved by the Staffing Committee (effective 1 April 2023), for which I am very appreciative. However, the circumstances that led to the original request have since changed, because of this change, I am writing to request a variation to the previously agreed working pattern.

I believe the revised arrangement set out below continues to support the operational needs of the Council while also supporting my role as Chief Executive and my work-life balance.

Current approved arrangement

- Monday to Thursday: 08:30 – 17:00
- Alternate Fridays: 08:30 – 16:30

Proposed variation

I wish to cancel the arrangement of taking every other Friday off and replace it with the following:

- Finish at **14:00 every Tuesday**,

To support this arrangement, I would continue to start work at 08:30 each weekday, rather than the standard 09:00 start time, and add 30 minutes to my finish time on a Friday, this provides for 37-hours per week and is therefore cost neutral to the council.

- Early Tuesday finishes equate to a reduction of **3 hours per week**.
- Starting 30 minutes earlier each weekday provides **2.5 hours per week**.
- Finishing 30 minutes later on a Friday provide the additional required 30 minutes to achieve a 37-hour working.
- Unlike the existing arrangement, this arrangement is not reliant and the variability of TOIL.

If agreed, my working pattern would be:

Mon – 08:30 – 17:00

Tue – 08:30 – 14:00

Wed – Fri – 08:30 – 17:00

I consider this proposal to be a balanced and proportionate adjustment which maintains availability during core working hours and supports continuity for Members and officers.

Yours sincerely



Andy Jeffery

CC: Members of Godalming Town Council Staffing Committee.

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL

Disclosure by a Member¹ of a disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest (non-pecuniary interest) in a matter under consideration at a meeting (S.31 (4) Localism Act 2011 and the adopted Godalming Members' Code of Conduct).

As required by the Localism Act 2011 and the adopted Godalming Members' Code of Conduct, **I HEREBY DISCLOSE**, for the information of the authority that I have [a disclosable pecuniary interest]² [a registerable interest (non-pecuniary interest)]³ in the following matter:-

COMMITTEE:

DATE:

NAME OF COUNCILLOR: _____

Please use the form below to state in which agenda items you have an interest.

Agenda No.	Subject	Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	Other Registerable Interests (Non-Pecuniary Interests)	Reason

Signed _____

Dated _____

¹ "Member" includes co-opted member, member of a committee, joint committee or sub-committee

² A disclosable pecuniary interest is defined by the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) regulations 2012/1464 and relate to employment, office, trade, profession or vocation, sponsorship, contracts, beneficial interests in land, licences to occupy land, corporate tenancies and securities

³ A registerable interest (non-pecuniary interest) is defined by Section 9 of the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.