

MEMBER OFFICER PROTOCOL

Introduction

1. The purpose of this Protocol is to guide Members and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another in such a way as to ensure the smooth running of the Council. Given the variety of such relations, this Protocol does not seek to be either prescriptive or comprehensive. It seeks simply to offer guidance on some of the issues which most commonly arise.
2. The protocol seeks to reflect the principles underlying the respective Codes of Conduct, which apply to Members and Officers and should read in association with those Codes. The shared objective of the Codes is to enhance and maintain the integrity of local government.
3. Councillors and Officers are servants of the public. The effectiveness of the outcomes they are able to deliver for residents is dependent on a strong and constructive relationship which adheres to a set of clear principles. These principles are:
 - Mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities.
 - Dealings between Members and Officers should be courteous and conducted in a constructive and positive way.
 - Neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence.
 - Respecting the confidentiality of information given and received as part of Council business.
 - Concerns as to the conduct of Officers should be made to the Chairman of the Council, and of Members, to the Monitoring Officer at Breckland District Council.
4. This Protocol is mainly a written statement of current practice and convention but aims to promote greater clarity and certainty. If the Protocol is followed it should ensure that Members receive objective and impartial advice and that Officers are protected from accusations of bias and any undue influence from Members. It also reflects the principle underlying the Members Code of Conduct which is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government.
5. A Member should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an Officer at meetings held in public. This is a long-standing convention in public service. An Officer has no means of responding to such criticisms in public. If a Member feels they have not been treated with proper respect, courtesy or have any concern about the conduct or capability of an Officer, and fails to resolve it through direct discussion with the Officer, they should raise the matter with the chairman of the Personnel Committee who will then look into the facts and report back to the Member. Any action taken against an Officer in respect of a complaint will be in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Complaints Policy & Procedure and/or Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
6. Should a member of the public raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an Officer at meetings held in public it is the responsibility of the chairman to immediately insist they follow the Council's Complaints Policy & Procedure, and politely ask them to stop their remarks and allow due process to be undertaken. If this is ignored, or they behave offensively or improperly, the chairman shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct. Failing this, the chairman shall seek to adjourn or stop the meeting via the appropriate process.
7. Members and Officers should not disclose sensitive or confidential information that would undermine confidence in any Member or Officer other than in the discharge of their duties in accordance to agreed policies such as the Council's Complaints Policy & Procedure and/or Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, or as required by law.

Officer Advice to Members

8. It must be recognised by all Officers and Members that, in discharging their duties and responsibilities, Officers serve the Council as a whole and not exclusively any political group (if applicable), combination of groups or any individual Member of the Council.
9. There is now a recognition of political groups and in some Councils, it is common practice for such groups to give preliminary consideration to matters of Council business in advance of such matters being considered by the relevant Council decision making body. This is not presently the case at Attleborough. However, should this situation arise, Officers may properly be called upon to support and contribute to such deliberations by political groups, but they must at all times maintain political neutrality. All Officers must, when dealing with political groups and individual Members, treat them in a fair and even-handed manner.
10. Support provided by Officers can take different forms, ranging from the normal briefing with a Chairman prior to a meeting to responding to telephone queries. Such support is available to all Members regardless of political affiliation and will be available to all political groups should they become formalised in the future. When support such as this is given both Members and Officers should understand that it must not extend beyond providing information and advice in relation to matters of Council business; Officers should not be involved in advising on matters of party business.
11. Whilst any Member may ask a relevant Officer for written factual information about a service, such requests must be reasonable. Requests will be met, subject to any overriding legal considerations (such as the Data Protection Act) unless the recipient of any request considers the cost of providing the information requested or the nature of the request to be unreasonable. If that is the case, she/he will raise the matter with the Town Clerk who will discuss the issue with the Member.

Support Services to Members

12. The only basis on which the Council can lawfully provide support services (e.g. stationery, typing, printing, photocopying, transport, etc.) to Members is to assist them in discharging their role as Members of the Council. Such support services must therefore only be used on Council business. They should never be used in connection with party political or campaigning activity, or for private purposes.

Members' Access to Information and to Council Documents

13. Members are free to approach Officers to ask for information in accordance with paragraph 9. This right extends to such information, explanation, and advice as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as a Member of the Council. This can range from a request for general information about some aspect of the Council's activities to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent.
14. As regards the legal rights of Members to inspect Council documents, these are covered partly by statute and partly by common law.
15. Members have a statutory right to inspect any Council document which contains material relating to any business which is to be transacted at a Council or other meeting. This right applies irrespective of whether the Member is a member of the body which is meeting and extends not only to reports which are to be submitted to the meeting, but also to any relevant background documents. This right does not, however, automatically apply to background documents relating to certain items which may appear as an exempt item on the agenda for a meeting, e.g. information relating to employees or criminal investigations.

16. The common law right of Members is based on the principle that any Member has a prima facie right to inspect Council documents so far as his/her access to the document is reasonably necessary to enable the Member properly to perform his/her duties as a Member of the Council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.
17. The exercise of this common law right depends, therefore, upon an individual Member being able to demonstrate that she/he has the necessary "need to know". In this respect a Member has no right to a "roving commission" to go and examine documents of the Council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient. The crucial question is the determination of the "need to know".
18. Any Council information provided to a Member must only be used by the Member for the purpose for which it was provided, i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the Member's duties as a Member of the Council. This point is emphasised in the Code of Conduct for Members.

Officer/Member Relationships

19. It is important that there should be a close working relationship between the Chairman of a meeting and the Officers who report to or interact with that meeting. However, such relationships should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question the Officer's ability to deal impartially with other Members and other political groups.
20. For transparency and to help fulfil Member's duty of care to Officers, meetings between the Members and Officers shall be scheduled in the Councils internal diary, which Members and Officers have access to. Officers are entitled to have another Officer and/or appropriate Member (the chairman/deputy of the Council or the chairman/deputy of the Personnel Committee) attend these meetings at their discretion.
21. In relation to action between meetings, it is important to remember that the Council's political decision making structure only allows for decisions relating to the discharge of any of the Council's functions to be taken by a meeting or an Officer unless the procedures set out in the Standing Orders are invoked. There is no allowance for such decisions to be taken by a Chairman or indeed by any other single Member.
22. At some meetings, a resolution may be passed which authorises named Officers to take action between meetings in consultation with the Chairman and/or specified Member(s). It must be recognised that it is the Officer, rather than the Chairman and/or Member(s), who takes the action and it is the Officer who is accountable for it.
23. Finally, it must be remembered that Officers are accountable to the Town Clerk and that, whilst Officers should always seek to assist a Chairman (or indeed any Member), they must not, in so doing, go beyond the bounds of whatever authority they have been given by him/her.

Correspondence

24. Official letters on behalf of the Council should normally be sent in the name of the appropriate Officer, rather than in the name of a Member. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government Minister) for a letter to appear in the name of a Member, but this should be the exception rather than the norm. Letters which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council should never be sent out in the name of a Member.

Conclusion

25. Mutual understanding and openness on these sorts of sensitive issues and basic respect are the greatest safeguard of the integrity of the Council, its Members and Officers.



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CODE OF CONDUCT

In accordance with section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Attleborough Town Council has adopted this Code of Conduct to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its members whenever they conduct the business of the Council, including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed, or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, acknowledging that they each have a responsibility to represent the community and work constructively with the council's staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic, and environmental outcomes for Attleborough Town.

For the purposes of this Code, and unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a member of the Council includes a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.

1 Expected Behaviour

a) All members must be committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following general principles governing councillors conduct under the Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001, as set out below:

- Selflessness

Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

- Honesty and Integrity

Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

- Objectivity

Members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

- Accountability

Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

- Openness

Members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

- Personal Judgement

Members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

- Respect for Others

Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers, and its other employees.

- Duty to Uphold the Law

Members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

- Stewardship

Members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

- Leadership

Members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

b) When a member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, he/she has the following obligations:

- They shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
- They shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.
- They shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
- They shall use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.
- They shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.

2 Dress Code

Our dress code outlines how we expect our members to dress at meetings, and at other public events whilst representing the Council in front of residents, visitors or other parties. Members should note that their appearance can create a positive or negative impression that reflects on our Council and our Culture.

- Members must be clean and well-presented. Grooming styles dictated by religion and ethnicity aren't restricted.
- All clothes must be appropriate to a role in public office.
- Members must avoid clothes with stamps that are offensive or inappropriate.

3 Confidentiality Requirement

- a) Under the legal requirement of The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 to include a confidentiality clause in the Code of Conduct, the following must be observed by all Councillors.
- b) Members must not disclose to anyone else any information given to me in confidence; nor disclose any information coming into their possession (including at a meeting or committee meeting of the Council) which they believe or might reasonably be expected to believe to be of a confidential nature; except in one of the following circumstances:
 - they have received the consent of a person authorised to give it; or
 - they are required by law to do so; or
 - the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice, provided that the third party undertakes not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - the disclosure is reasonable and in the public interest and made in good faith to comply with a reasonable requirement of the Council.

4 Registration of Interests

- a) Within 28 days of this Code being adopted by the Council, or the member's election or the co-opted member's appointment (where that is later), he/she shall register with Breckland Council's Monitoring Officer of the interests which fall within the categories set out in clause 4.
- b) Upon the re-election of a member or the re-appointment of a co-opted member, he/she shall within 28 days re-register with Breckland Council's Monitoring Officer any interests set out in clause 4.
- c) A member shall register with Breckland Council's Monitoring Officer any change to interests or new interests in set out in clause 4 within 28 days of becoming aware of it.
- d) A member need only declare the existence but not the details of any interest which Breckland Council's Monitoring Officer agrees is a 'sensitive interest'. A sensitive interest is one which, if disclosed on a public register, could lead the member or a person connected with the member to be subject to violence or intimidation.

5 Description of Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession, or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession, or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made to the member during the 12 month period ending on the latest date referred to in clause 3(a) above for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a member, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Contracts	<p>Any contract made between the member or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of**) and the Council —</p> <p>a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the Council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the member or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licences	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.</p>
Corporate Tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the member's knowledge)—</p> <p>a) the landlord is the Council; and</p> <p>b) the landlord is the Council; and</p> <p>c) the tenant is a body that the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities** of.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities** of a body where—</p> <p>a) that body (to the member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council; and</p> <p>b) either—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the total nominal value of the securities** exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or • if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
Other Interests	<p>Any other interest which relates to or is likely to affect:</p> <p>a) any body of which the member is in a position of general control or management and to which he/she is appointed or nominated by the Council;</p> <p>b) any body—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exercising functions of a public nature; • directed to charitable purposes; or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which the member of the Council is a member or in a position of general control or management; <p>c) any gifts or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of £50 which the member has received by virtue of his or her office. Please refer to clause 6 for more information.</p>
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

** 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

6 Declaration of Interests at Meetings & Dispensations

- a) Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest listed in clause 3 the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. He/she only has to declare what his/her interest is if it is not already entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it. Please refer to the Council's Meetings Protocol for more information.
- b) On a written request made to the Proper Officer, the Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if he/she has an interest in clause 3 if the Council believes that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business; or it is in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the member to take part or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation. Please refer to the Council's Meetings Protocol for more information.

7 Gifts & Hospitality

- a) Councillors are required to register any gifts or hospitality worth £50 or over that you receive in connection with your official duties, and the source of the gift or hospitality. You must notify the Council in writing within 28 days of receiving it.
- b) As with other registered interests, you have a personal interest in any matter under consideration at a meeting if it is likely to affect a person giving you a gift or hospitality. You must declare the existence and nature of the gift or hospitality as an interest at the meeting. You will also need to consider whether your interest is prejudicial.
- c) The receipt of gifts or hospitality can be misinterpreted. This is intended to help you to consider the implications of receiving gifts and hospitality and to make an appropriate judgement.
 - Treat with extreme caution any offer or gift, favour or hospitality that is made to you personally which may possibly be perceived to be in connection with your position within the Council.
 - Your personal reputation and that of the Council can be seriously jeopardised by the inappropriate acceptance by you of gifts or hospitality.

8 Code of Conduct Complaints

- a) Upon notification by Breckland Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's Code of Conduct, the Clerk shall report this to the council.
- b) Where the notification in 7(a) above relates to a complaint made by the Clerk, the Clerk shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been concluded.
- c) The council may:
 - provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is required by law;
 - seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.
- d) Upon notification by Breckland Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's Code of Conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.



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MEETINGS PROTOCOL

It is the duty of councillors to attend the meetings of Attleborough Town Council and, as well as stating their own views, to fairly represent the views and needs of the community.

Councillors should read agendas in advance and prepare any notes prior to the meeting. They should also arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the start of a meeting, dress appropriately, and ensure their mobile phone is placed on silent to avoid unnecessary interruptions.

1 Conduct at Meetings

- a) All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights must observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.
- b) Councillors shall treat each other with mutual respect, listen to the points of view of others, and address the Chairman when speaking. If two or more councillors wish to speak, the Chairman shall decide who to call upon.
- c) No-one shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly, or in such a manner as to bring the Council into disrepute. If this is ignored, the Chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- d) If person(s) disregard the request of the Chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the Chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- e) If a resolution made under 1(d) above is ignored, the Chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest & Dispensations

- a) All members of the Council shall be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct on joining the council and all members shall conform to the Code of Conduct. A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the council's Code of Conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter. All members have to provide a record of their disclosable pecuniary interests in a public register of interest. Members must tell the Monitoring Officer at Breckland Council in writing within 28 days of taking office, or within 28 days of any change to the members register of interests of any interest which fall within the categories set out in the Code of Conduct.

- b) Unless granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- c) If a member has a non-pecuniary interest, they shall declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the existence and nature of the interest as required. The member may speak on the matter but not vote.
- d) Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e) A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- f) Subject to 2(d) and 2(e) above, dispensation requests shall be considered by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- g) A dispensation may be granted in accordance with 2(h) below if, having regard to all relevant circumstances the following applies:
 - without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business; or
 - granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or
 - it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.
- h) A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer and that decision is final, after consulting with the Chairman.

3 How Decisions are Made

- a) The Council and its Committees take decisions by means of voting on a motion at meetings. A motion is a proposal which is discussed and voted upon, and a simple majority decides. The outcome then forms a resolution upon which the Council acts.
- b) A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event must relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- c) Except as provided by the Standing Orders, no motion may be moved at a meeting unless the business to which it relates it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- d) Significant proposals shall be supported by an explanation of the recommendations, which will be published with the agenda for the meeting.
- e) The Proper Officer may correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

- f) If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least 5 clear days before the meeting.
- g) If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the Chairman of the forthcoming to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- h) Subject to 3(g) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final, after consulting with the Chairman.
- i) The following motions may be moved at a meeting without prior written notice to the Proper Officer;
- to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - to move to a vote;
 - to defer consideration of a motion;
 - to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - to require a written report;
 - to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
 - to extend the time limits for speaking;
 - to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
 - to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
 - to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
 - to temporarily suspend the meeting;
 - to suspend a particular Standing Order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
 - to adjourn the meeting; or
 - to close a meeting.
- j) A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least four councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with 3(c) above, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- k) When a motion moved pursuant to 3(j) above has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

4 Handling Motions & Amendments

- a) Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting.
- b) A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c) A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the Chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.

- d) If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e) An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f) If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion as amended becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g) A councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- h) If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the Chairman.
- i) Subject to 4(h) above, only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the Chairman of the meeting.
- j) One or more amendments may be discussed together if the Chairman of the meeting considers this expedient, but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- k) A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- l) The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- m) Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate of the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- n) Unless permitted by the Chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
- to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
 - to make a point of order;
 - to give a personal explanation; or
 - in exercise of a right of reply.
- o) During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the Standing Order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- p) A point of order shall be decided by the Chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
- q) When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- to amend the motion;
 - to proceed to the next business;
 - to adjourn the debate;
 - to put the motion to a vote;
 - to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - to exclude the public and press;
 - to adjourn the meeting; or
 - to suspend particular Standing Order(s), excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements.

- r) Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the Chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.
- s) Excluding motions moved to suspend particular Standing Order(s), excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory requirements, the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the Chairman of the meeting.

5 Voting

- a) Voting shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor voted for or against that question or abstained. Such a request must be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- b) The Chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.
- c) Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Chairman of the meeting.

6 Handling Confidential or Sensitive Information

- a) The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.
- b) Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

7 Public Participation & Press at Meetings

- a) Members of the public may make representations, answer questions, and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- b) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with 7(a) above shall not exceed 10 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- c) Subject to 7(b) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- d) In accordance with 7(a) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- e) A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort).
- f) A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- g) Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- h) The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- i) The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 provides that a person may not orally

report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if they are present but otherwise may:

- film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting;
- use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later;
- report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.

8 Annual Meeting

a) Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Deputy Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council, the business of the annual meeting shall include:

- In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
- Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
- Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
- Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- Appointment of members to existing committees;
- Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing orders;
- Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- Review of arrangements, including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities;
- Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment;
- Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks;
- Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- Review of the council's Complaints Procedure;
- Review of the council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998;
- Review of the council's policy for dealing with the press/media; and
- Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next Annual Meeting of full council.

9 Extraordinary Meetings

- a) The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.
- b) If the Chairman of the Council does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place, and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.
- c) The chairman of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- d) If the chairman of a committee or a sub-committee does not or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested by to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee and the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee and a sub-committee.

10 Committees & Sub-Committees

- a) Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.
- b) The members of a committee or sub-committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.
- c) The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - shall determine their terms of reference;
 - shall permit a committee to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - shall appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - shall permit a committee to appoint its own chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
 - shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee, which shall be no less than three;
 - shall determine if the press and public may attend a meeting of a committee;
 - shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee that they are permitted to attend;
 - may dissolve a committee.



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Attleborough Town Council

VIRTUAL MEETING PROTOCOL & GUIDANCE

The guide below provides an overview of how to attend virtual meetings using the Zoom video and audio conferencing tool.

Pre-requisites

Before you attend the virtual meeting, you should check the Zoom conferencing software is downloaded on your device. You can access the meeting from any internet connected device with audio and video capability. Please ensure your device is fully charged before attending the meeting, and if possible, have it connected to a power supply throughout to avoid the possibility of the battery running low and your device turning off during the meeting.

Attending the Meeting – Zoom

An invite will be sent to you by email. The invite will include a link in the message to join the meeting or register prior to the meeting.

You can also join the meeting from any device with Zoom installed by typing in the unique 9-digit meeting code which will be included in your invite, or approved registration code.

When joining the meeting you may be held in the 'Waiting Room' and will be admitted to the meeting by the host/co-host, you will then be asked to provide your name. Please do so using your full forename and surname prefixed with the word "Cllr" as this will allow all participants to see who has joined the meeting.

Please be mindful of the physical location you are joining the meeting from.

Meeting Etiquette

The meeting will be live streamed on YouTube. Once you join the meeting please mute your microphone audio. This avoids unnecessary background noise disturbing the meeting. Controls to mute/unmute your audio will be displayed on the screen; however, you should only use this button in the circumstances mentioned below. Remember the public can hear and see you, even if you cannot see or hear them.

General Rules

- Please ensure your background, which will be visible on video, is suitable;
- Please ensure you dress appropriately;
- Please ensure you are sitting in clear view of the camera;
- Please close all doors to the room you are sitting in to avoid unnecessary interruptions;
- Please keep your mobile phone on silent to avoid unnecessary interruptions;
- Please ensure you read the agenda fully in advance of the meeting;
- Please prepare any notes prior to the meeting for ease of reference during the meeting – this may save you time when referring to the agenda during the meeting;
- You may find it useful, if you have 2 devices, to view your papers on one and the meeting on the other.
- Please ensure that no confidential papers can be seen on screen.
- Please join the meeting at least 10 minutes prior to the start to ensure any technical issues can be resolved;
- When discussing an exempt item, the Councillor/Officer must ensure that they are alone and cannot be overlooked/overheard.

Practical steps

1. Attendance at the meeting.
 - a. When you join the meeting please ensure that your name appears correctly. You can 'rename' by clicking on the 'Participants' button and choosing the rename option.
 - b. The Chairman will work through the agenda inviting the lead Councillor/Officer to introduce and speak on each item as appropriate. Any members who wish to ask a question will need to raise their hand.
 - c. Remain on mute until invited to speak – and then to avoid feedback, re-mute after you have asked your question.
 - d. The Chairman will seek Declarations of Interests in the usual manner. Members with a declaration should indicate this by raising their hand. The Chairman will invite the councillor to unmute and declare their interest. This councillor will, at the relevant item, be removed from the meeting and placed in the virtual waiting room until discussion and voting on that item has completed, after which they will return to the meeting.
2. Voting at the meeting.
 - a. Once a motion/report has been discussed and all questions answered, the Chairman will ask for a proposer and a seconder (if required) – this again should be done by raising your hand – each councillor will then be invited to speak in turn.
 - b. The Chairman will then invite the Councillors to vote, again by raising their hand.
 - c. At the end of the votes the Chairman will read out the conclusion of the votes.
 - d. A record of how each member voted will not be recorded unless a formal recorded vote has been requested in accordance with Standing Orders.
3. At the conclusion of the meeting the Chairman will formally close the meeting and all Councillors will need to leave the meeting.



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GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice. It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. 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.
2. Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. Employees should aim to settle most grievances informally with their manager.
3. This policy confirms:
 - Employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a companion who can be a workplace colleague, a trade union representative, or a trade union official. This includes any meeting held with them to hear about, gather facts about, discuss, consider, or resolve their grievance. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employee's case for his/her grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case.
 - The Council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the 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 unless it is unreasonable not to propose a later date.
 - Any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the Council.
 - An employee has the right to appeal against the decision about his/her grievance. The appeal decision is final.
 - Information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the

- Council in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Audio or video recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure is prohibited, unless agreed by all affected parties 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 he/she raised the grievance in good faith.
- The Council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate, (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the consent of affected parties.
- Employees can use all stages of the grievance procedure if the complaint is not a code of conduct complaint about a councillor. Employees can use the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure to deal with all grievance issues, including a complaint about a councillor. Employees cannot use the formal stages of the council's grievance procedure for a code of conduct complaint about a councillor.
- If the complaint about the councillor is not resolved at the informal stage, the employee can contact the monitoring officer of Breckland Council who will inform the employee whether or not the complaint can be dealt with under the code of conduct. If it does not concern the code of conduct, the employee can make a formal complaint under the council's grievance procedure.
- If the grievance is a code of conduct complaint against a councillor, the employee cannot proceed with it beyond the informal stage of the council's grievance procedure. However, whatever the complaint, the council has a duty of care to its employees. It must take all reasonable steps to ensure employees have a safe working environment by ensuring staff and councillors are properly trained and by protecting staff from bullying, harassment, and all forms of discrimination.
- If an employee considers that the grievance concerns his or her safety within the working environment, whether or not it also concerns a complaint against a councillor, the employee should raise these safety concerns with his or her line manager at the informal stage of the grievance procedure. The council will consider whether it should take further action in this matter in accordance with any of its employment policies and in accordance with the code of conduct regime.

Informal Grievance Procedure

4. 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 his/her manager to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage. If the employee does not want to discuss the grievance with his/her manager (for example, because it concerns the manager), the employee should contact the Chairman of the Personnel Committee or, if appropriate, another member of the Personnel Committee. If the employee's complaint is about a councillor, it may be appropriate to involve that councillor at the informal stage. This will require both the employee's and the councillor's consent.

Formal Grievance Procedure

5. If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally and the employee's complaint is not one that should be dealt with as a code of conduct complaint (see above), the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.
6. The Personnel Committee will appoint a sub-committee of three members to hear the grievance. The sub-committee will appoint a Chairman from one of its members. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee.

Investigation

7. If the sub-committee decides that it is appropriate, (e.g. if the grievance is complex), it may appoint an investigator to carry out an investigation before the grievance meeting to establish the facts of the case. The investigation may include interviews (e.g. the employee submitting the grievance, other employees, councillors, or members of the public).
8. The investigator will summarise their findings (usually within an investigation report) and present their findings to the sub-committee.

Notification

9. Within 10 working days of the Council receiving the employee's grievance (this may be longer if there is an investigation), the employee will normally be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The written notification will include the following:
 - The names of the Sub-committee Chairman and other members.
 - The date, time, and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will normally be within 25 working days of when the Council received the grievance.
 - The employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative, or a trade union official.
 - A copy of the Council's grievance policy.
 - Confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend (or submit witness statements) on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of his/her witnesses as soon as possible before the meeting.
 - Confirmation that the employee will provide the Council with any
 - supporting evidence in advance of the meeting, usually with at least two days' notice.
 - Findings of the investigation if there has been an investigation.
 - An invitation for the employee to request any adjustments to be made for the hearing (for example where a person has a health condition).

The Grievance Meeting

10. At the grievance meeting:

- The Sub-Committee Chairman will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee.
- The employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence.
- The Chairman will ask the employee questions about the information presented and will want to understand what action he/she wants the Council to take.
- Any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness.
- The employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case.
- A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were
- raised during the meeting to be investigated by the sub-committee.

11. The Sub-committee Chairman will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision, in writing, usually within five working days of the meeting. The letter will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the Council will take and of the employee's right to appeal.

The Appeal

12. If an employee decides that his/her grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the sub-committee, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Personnel Committee. An appeal must be received by the Council within five working days of the employee receiving the sub-committee's decision and must specify the grounds of appeal.

13. Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, for example:

- A failure by the Council to follow its Grievance Policy & Procedure.
- The decision was not supported by the evidence.
- The action proposed by the sub-committee was inadequate or inappropriate.
- New evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting.

14. The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members 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 Personnel Committee. The appeal panel will appoint a Chairman from one of its members.

15. The employee will be notified, in writing, usually within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will normally take place within 25 working days of the Council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative, or a trade union official.

16. At the appeal meeting, the Chairman will:

- Introduce the panel members to the employee.
- Explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the staffing sub-committee.

- Explain the action that the appeal panel may take.
17. The employee (or companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of appeal.
 18. The Chairman will inform the employee that he/she will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, within five working days of the appeal meeting.
 19. The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the Personnel Committee or substitute its own decision.
 20. The decision of the appeal panel is final.



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COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. The council will endeavour to deal with complaints in an efficient, equitable, and respectful manner.
2. The Council will try to keep the lines of communication open, with appropriate support for a complainant with special needs; suggesting a representative to help them present their case.
3. This policy and procedure can be used by members of the public and councillors.
4. Some types of complaint are handled outside this procedure:
 - Financial irregularity is handled by the Council's own auditor / Audit Commission.
 - Criminal activity by the Police.
 - Member conduct by the Monitoring Officer of Breckland Council.
 - Employee conduct by internal disciplinary procedure.
5. This procedure covers routine complaints and those that could be described as habitual and vexatious.
6. The Chairman or in their absence the Deputy Chairman of the council will deal with complaints unless they are directly involved with the case.
7. The Clerk should normally represent the council through the proceedings, but a nominated councillor may act as the council representative instead at the discretion of the full council.

Procedure

8. The complainant should complain in writing to the Chairman of the council.
9. After receiving a complaint, the Chairman or in their absence the Deputy Chairman of the council should contact the complainant within 10 working days in an effort to resolve the issue informally and confidentially in the first instance.
10. The Chairman or in their absence the Deputy Chairman of the council should:
 - Provide the complainant with a copy of the Complaints Policy & Procedure.
 - Listen to the grievance/complaint.
 - Assure the complainant of confidentiality with personal details.
 - Offer any relevant support about the complaint's procedure to the complainant.

- If applicable, carefully explain what action the council has taken within its remit to resolve the complaint.
 - Suggest complaint routes available if complaint is outside the council's remit.
 - Explain what actions the council may take.
 - Explain the outcome and relevant details of any complaints meeting will be noted.
11. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the Chairman or in their absence the Deputy Chairman of the council will nominate three councillors, who are not directly involved with the case, to form a Complaint Sub-Committee within 5 working days of this decision. This committee will appoint a Chairman and follow The Complaints Meeting procedure (see points 12 to 14).

The Complaints Meeting

12. Before the meeting:

- After their appointment, the Complaints Sub-Committee should advise the complainant within 10 working days when the matter will be considered.
- The complainant should be invited to attend a meeting with a representative if wished.
- Not later than five working days prior to the meeting, the complainant and the complaint sub-council will exchange copies of any documentation or other evidence to be relied on.

13. At the meeting:

- The Chairman of the meeting should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
- The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint before any questions from the appointed council representative (see point 7) and then from members of the Complaint Sub-Committee.
- The appointed council representative should explain the council's position before any questions from the complainant and then from members of the Complaint Sub-Committee.
- The complainant and the appointed council representative should then summarise their position; they then leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made.
- If the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day an estimated date will be given.

14. After the meeting:

- The decision should be confirmed in writing within 5 working days together with details of any action to be taken.
- The result of the proceedings should be reported at the next council meeting after the appeal period has passed, ensuring that agreed confidential issues are appropriately respected.

- Appeals

15. Should the complainant not agree with the decision they are entitled to appeal the decision within 10 working days of receipt of the result of the proceedings. They should make their appeal in writing and address it to the Chairman of the council.

16. The Chairman or in their absence the Deputy Chairman of the council will nominate three councillors to form an Appeal Sub-Committee. Councillors should not have been part of Complaints Meeting or be directly involved with the case.
17. The Appeal Sub-Committee should handle the appeal within 15 working days of receiving the appeal and examine the way in which the council dealt with the complaint.
18. If procedures were correctly handled by the council then the appellant should be notified that the appeal has not been successful. If the complaint was not handled correctly it must be referred back to the Chairman or in their absence the Deputy Chairman of the council for consideration.
19. The appellant should be notified of the result of their appeal within 5 working days of the appeal process.

Habitual and Vexatious Complaints

20. Habitual or vexatious complaints are defined as unreasonable complaints, enquiries or outcomes that are repeatedly or obsessively pursued.
21. The possibility of there being an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complaint should be brought to the attention of the Chairman or in their absence the Deputy Chairman of the council to ensure that the complaint has been dealt with according to the council's complaints procedure.
22. Councils should endeavour to deal with complaints in an efficient, equitable and effective manner.
23. The council may have to initiate further action, if the complainant behaves in ways which can: impede the investigation of the complaint; have significant resource implications; hinder the complaints service for others; be offensive, abusive, or threatening.
24. Any action taken as a result of proven persistent and/or vexatious complaint should be proportionate to the degree of annoyance/aggravation caused.
25. The complainant should be warned in writing that their complaint is considered persistent and/or vexatious and be given an opportunity appropriately restate or withdraw their complaint before any further action is taken.
26. If the complainant continues to behave in unreasonable and/or vexatious way, the Chairman or in their absence the Deputy Chairman of the council should seek the approval of the council to follow the policy and agree what action(s) to take, which may include restricting or refusing any further contact. In this case the following actions must take place:
 - The complainant must be advised by letter from the Clerk of this action, including any further actions the complainant may take with other bodies including their right to obtain independent advice.
 - The council must record the decision and hold all relevant correspondence except all personal details about the complaint and the complainant, which will be stored appropriately in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.
 - The Clerk must notify all councillors and members of staff as appropriate.
 - Any new complaint from any person who has come under this policy must be treated on its merit.
 - The decision taken should be reviewed after 6 months. The complainant must be notified of the result if the decision to apply this policy has been reversed.



ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Equality Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

1. **Attleborough Town Council** recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Council and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the Council to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the **protected characteristics**).
2. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
3. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.
4. All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
5. Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the Council's goods and services.
6. This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

OUR COMMITMENT

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Members and CEO & Town Clerk. Members will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Each will ensure that:

- all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.

The Personnel Committee will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

THIRD PARTIES

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties. **Attleborough Town Council** will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee concerned should inform their manager / supervisor at once that this has occurred. **Attleborough Town Council** will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

RELATED POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Council policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

The Council attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

Under the terms of this policy, Members are required to:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
- include disabled people in training/development programmes;
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

EQUALITY TRAINING

Training will be provided on this policy and the associated arrangements.

MONITORING

- The Council deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.
- The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.
- There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.
- We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance and Bullying & Harassment.
- The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.
- If monitoring shows that the Council, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the Council, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, Council policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal Positive Action.

GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINE

Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Council Grievance or Harassment Procedures.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the Council Disciplinary Procedure.

REVIEW

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed

Adopted: 1 August 2016

Reaffirmed: At the Attleborough Town Council Meeting held on 13 May 2019



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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT POLICY & PROCEDURE

Attleborough Town Council supports the principle of openness, transparency and accountability and will continue to improve access to information.

1 Introduction

This Freedom of Information Policy ensures that the Council acts in compliance to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The aim of this Policy is to:

- Promote a more open council;
- Promote a better informed public debate;
- Improve public confidence in operations of the council;
- Improve decision making to promote accountability;
- Improve regulation;
- Increase public participation to enhance democracy;
- Promote the FOIA, in terms of accuracy and objectivity; and
- Improve information management.

2 Legislation or Executive Summary

The FOIA provides public access to information held by the Council. It does this in two ways:

- The Council is obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and
- Members of the public are entitled to request information from the Council.

The Act covers any recorded information held by a public authority. The Act does not, however, give people access to their own personal data - these requests should be made under the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Council seeks to demonstrate its commitment to all aspects of the FOIA and will continue to promote its values and ensure that the Council is compliant with legislation.

3 Requests for Information

A request for information under the FOIA must be;

- In writing;
- State the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence; and
- Describe the information requested.

4 Fees

Wherever possible, the Council will provide information free of charge. However, in some cases this is not possible. We are entitled to charge for information under Section 9 of the FOIA and the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, the Council will issue an appropriate fee notice which must be paid within 3 months. If no payment is received we will close the request for information.

5 Time of Compliance

The Council aims to comply with requests for information as quickly as possible. Section 10 of the FOIA states that a public authority must respond to a request promptly and, in any event, no later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt. Working day means any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or bank holidays. The time for compliance is subject to change if:

- The Council seeks clarification under Section 1(3) of the FOIA;
- There is a need for an extension to consider the Public Interest Test under Section 10(3) of the FOIA; or
- A fees notice is issued under Section 9.

6 Appropriate Limit

Under Section 12 of the FOIA the Council does not have to comply with requests where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit. Section 12 applies if the following factors would cost the Council more than four hundred and fifty pounds or 18 hours of officer time:

- Determine whether the information is held;
- Locating the information;
- Retrieving the information; and
- Extracting the information.

Under Section 13 of the FOIA and the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 the Council is able to charge for the cost of disbursements.

7 Vexatious or Repeated Requests

Under Section 14, the Council will not comply with vexatious requests where there is a strong likelihood that such requests are being made to intentionally cause disproportionate or unjustified levels of disruption, irritation, or distress.

The Council will not comply with a request where it has received an identical or similar request from the same individual unless a reasonable interval has elapsed between compliance with the original request and the current request.

8 Advice & Assistance

In compliance with Section 16 of the FOIA, the Council will provide advice and assistance in response to all requests for information as far as reasonably practicable.

9 Refusals

In some cases, the Council may refuse requests for information under Section 17 of the FOIA. The Council may issue a refusal notice for the following reasons;

- Information is not held; or
- An exemption applies (see Part II of the FOIA).

In some cases, we may not hold the information requested - it may be that it is held by another party. If possible, the Council shall provide the requestor with information to re-direct the request. However, for Data Protection reasons the Council will not transfer the requestor's request.

10 Exemptions

There may be certain circumstances under which the Council is not obliged to release information. The Council may decide to apply exemptions under Part II of the FOIA. The exemption, if relied upon, will be explained thoroughly in the Council's refusal notice under section 17.

Some exemptions are 'absolute', which means that the exemption applies to any information falling within a defined type. Other exemptions are 'qualified' and require a public interest test to be applied. The Council will ensure that the public interest test is carried out for each of the qualified exemptions. If an exemption is applied, it will be authorised by the Proper Officer.

11 Internal Review

If a requestor is unhappy with a decision that the Council has made, or with the information provided by the Council, it may request an internal review.

The Council's internal review comprises one stage, an independent review by the Chairman of the Council, or deputy chairman if the Chairman is not available. The Council has 20 working days to complete the review and respond to the requestor. Additional time may be requested if the review is particularly complex (the requestor shall be notified in such cases).

The Personnel Committee will periodically review Freedom of Information requests and report any issues to the full Council. They will also ensure appropriate staff are trained to handle these requests.

12 Data Protection

A request for information may relate to personal data of the requestor or third parties. The Council may refuse the request if to disclose information in relation to third parties would be an actionable breach of confidence or would breach one or more of the data protection principles.

In cases where the request relates to personal data of the requestor, the authority will refuse under Section 40(1) and shall ask for the request to be submitted as a Data Subject Access request under the Data Protection Act 1998 Section 7. This process is detailed within the Council's Data Protection Policy.

13 Information Commissioner

The Council will consult with the Information Commissioner when required. The Council will refer to Commission guidance and ensure that it is compliant with any good practice that the Commissioner promotes. The Commissioner will investigate complaints in relation to Freedom of Information requests.



Attleborough Town Council Grant Awards Policy

Attleborough Town Council approves a budget each year for the purpose of allocating grants to local organisations and community groups.

Eligibility

The following criteria must be met for a group to be considered for a grant:

- The group must be a charity, voluntary or community organisation.
- The group must be able to demonstrate that any funding from the Town Council will benefit the residents of Attleborough.
- The group must be formally constituted and have a management committee made up of volunteers who are the employing body.

Individuals and businesses are not eligible for grant funding.

Scope of grants

Applications will be considered for the following purposes which must benefit some or all of the residents of Attleborough up to the maximum amount of £250:

- For purchasing equipment either in part or in full.
- For funding of transport that will enable group members to participate in a group trip or outing regardless of their incomes.
- For training activities or to purchase the expertise of an outside trainer or facilitator.
- For activities that raise the profile of the area.
- For running costs of a viable group that is experiencing a period of hardship.
- For hosting special events or celebrations.
- For the provision of recreational facilities.

Conditions

- Multiple applications within a 12-month period will not normally be considered.
- Prior approval of the Town Council is required for any change of purpose of the grant. The Town Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant not being used for the purpose specified on the application

- All awards must be properly accounted for and evidence of expenditure should be supplied as requested. If the Town Council is not satisfied with the arrangements, they reserve the right to request a refund of monies awarded.
- An acknowledgement on receipt of the grant cheque is required.

Application process

Applications should be made by completing the Grants Award Application Form and enclosing a copy of the latest set of annual accounts available for the group making the application. Evidence of a planned budget will be required. Applications are accepted at any time of the year and will be considered by the Full Council. Applicants are usually informed within two weeks of the meeting and the grant money sent by cheque the following month.

Promotion

The Town Council will ask for recognition from successful groups in the form of promotion of the Town Council in newsletters or any press releases. The Town Council will also recognise successful groups in its own reports to parishioners.

Adopted: 5 December 2011

Reaffirmed: Attleborough Town Council Meeting 13 May 2019



ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Lost / Found Child Policy

FORWARD

The Committee/Council has a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure the protection of children attending its events. We have given full consideration as to how children will be protected during our events and to the safe management of 'lost' 'found' herein addressed as 'lost' children.

POLICY

At any event attended by children, there is the potential for them to become separated from their parents or responsible adult. Unfortunately not all adults have good intentions towards children and could seek to harm children who become separated. The following procedure has been adopted to help the event manager and the committee best manage lost children situations safely, it is also advisable that these procedures are adopted for the dealing with lost vulnerable adults.

Guidance for keeping lost children safe

ANY LOST CHILDREN MUST BE TAKEN TO THE FIRST AID VEHICLE

1. All staff/marshals/volunteers/organisers should be informed where children are to be taken in the event of them becoming separated from their parents or the responsible adult.
2. Location of and lost children facilities should be put in the events programme, schedules or programme.
3. The 'lost' child should be in the presence of at least two nominated adults at all times, within the control tent in a screened off area.
4. Find out the child's name and age where possible.
5. Make a public announcement over the PA system stating only that a lost child has been found and where they can be collected. Do not give the name or a description of the child.
6. When an adult comes to collect the child make sure you are satisfied as to their identity. You must ask for identification and receive satisfactory identification before handing over the responsibility of the child.
7. **WHERE ANY DOUBT EXISTS THE POLICE SHOULD BE CONTACTED FOR ADVICE.**
8. **IF AT ANY TIME THE CHILD IS IN OBVIOUS DISTRESS THE POLICE SHOULD BE CONTACTED IMMEDIATELY.**
9. The police should be contacted if the responsible adult fails to appear within thirty minutes after the first announcement.

When parents/responsible adult reports a child lost

1. Where parents are reporting a lost child, the police should be notified if the child has not been found after fifteen minutes.
2. Where parents are reporting a lost child, the Event Manager, and two other committee members must be made aware. The events manager will ensure that an announcement with description of child is given over the PA system. The event marshals will be placed on alert, supplied with a description/photo of the missing child. The event marshals will be contactable throughout the event by two way radio and mobile phone. The marshals will be placed at the road exits with the remaining marshals walking through the event.

Logging Details

1. When the child is reunited, if the child is not reunited quickly, or if any doubt exists, a log (see Appendix A) should be made which includes:
 - a. The name and description of the child
 - b. The name and description of the responsible adult collecting the child.
 - c. A brief description of time and location found and of any concerns

This should be signed by both nominated adults and passed to the Police if required.

WHEN A CHILD IS SUCCESSFULLY REUNITED WITH THE RESPONSIBLE ADULT, DON'T FORGET TO TELL ALL THOSE ORIGINALLY INVOLVED IN THE SEARCH, INCLUDING THE POLICE AS APPROPRIATE.

Adopted: 2015

Reaffirmed at the Attleborough Town Council Meeting 13 May 2019

Lost Dependant Report

Date	
Time in	
Report written by	
Information about dependant (as Known)	
Name	
Address	
Age	
Phone Number	
Location dependant was found	
Name of who found dependant	
Contact details including telephone number	
Description of Dependant	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Clothing description	Top Skirt/trousers Footwear Hat Other
Unique physical features-visual	
Information about Parent/carer(caregiver)	
Name	
Address	
Phone number	
Identification (source)	
Signature of caregiver dated	
Signature of committee member-dated	
Time out	



ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

The Flying of Model Planes and Drones on Council Land Policy

The Town Council requires permission to be obtained for public flying of model aircraft/drones on its Council land. Decisions to grant permission are unlikely to be granted for most areas due to the need to consider the needs of many other people using public space.

The regulations for recreational model aeroplane/drone flights are contained within the Air Navigation Order 2016 (ANO) which is the primary document for all aviation regulations within the United Kingdom. In order to keep the regulations at a proportionate level for these small drones, a set of specific, simpler, regulations apply to aircraft that have a mass of 20kg or less (which are termed 'small unmanned aircraft' within the Air Navigation Order).

In simple terms, these regulations state that: -

- The operator is responsible for flying the model plane/drone in a safe manner.
- The operator must keep the model plane/drone in direct sight at all times while it is flying, to ensure it does not collide with anything.
- The operator must not endanger anyone, or anything with your model plane/drone, including the any articles that drop from it.
- The operator must not fly more than 400ft above the surface.
- The operator must be aware if their model aeroplane/drone weights more than 7 kg, additional rules apply if flown in certain types of airspace.

Collection of Images via First Person View

Model Planes/Drones that are fitted with video cameras often provide an opportunity to downlink 'live' video to the operator, either via a mobile phone, tablet computer or other screen, or even through video goggles – this capability provides the operator with a pseudo 'pilots eye view' from the drone itself and is generally given the term 'First Person View' (FPV).

However, the law [at Air Navigation Order article 94(3)] requires that the person in charge of a model aeroplane/drone must maintain direct visual contact with the aircraft which is sufficient to monitor its flight path so that collisions may be avoided. This is obviously not possible if that person is wearing video goggles or otherwise constantly monitoring a display.

Therefore, 'First Person View' flight is only permitted if the activity has been approved by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and a General Exemption has been issued which allows an element of 'First Person View' flight to be conducted.

The Town Council will request a copy of the General Exemption prior to granting any permission to fly a model aeroplane/drone.

Guidance on the exemption and the conditions that must be observed whilst employing this privilege.

If you wish to conduct a 'First Person View' flight which cannot be accommodated within the terms of this General Exemption, then you will need to apply to the Civil Aviation Authority for an exemption to do so.

Note: Images captured by a camera and displayed on a flat screen afford the pilot little by way of depth perception and no peripheral vision. This can make it difficult for the pilot to accurately judge speed and distance and to maintain sufficient awareness of the area surrounding the aircraft to effectively 'see and avoid' obstacles and other aircraft.

The use of 'First Person View' equipment is not an acceptable mitigation for Beyond Visual Line of Sight flight unless the relevant operator has received a specific approval to do so from the Civil Aviation Authority.

Drone registration

Registration and remote pilot competency requirements will come into force in November 2019.

Further information on the Air Navigation Order 2016 and 13 March 2019 updates can be found via the link below:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/>

Adopted: At the Environment Committee held on 15 October 2018

Reviewed: At the Attleborough Town Council Meeting 13 May 2019

ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Communications and Media Policy

All Councillors and staff are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality and interests of the council, its services, employees, partners and community.

Town Council Correspondence

- The point of contact for Attleborough Town Council is the Clerk, and it is to the Clerk that all official correspondence for the council should be addressed.
- The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting unless agreed otherwise.
- No individual Councillor or Officer should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the council, a committee, sub-committee or working party.
- Councillors and Officers do not have a right to obtain confidential information/documentation unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.
- All official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the council using council letter headed paper.
- Where correspondence from the Clerk to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person.

Communications with the Press and Public

- The Clerk will clear all press reports, or comments to the media, with the Chair/Vice Chair of the council or the Chair of the relevant committee.
- Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.
- Unless a Councillor is absolutely certain that he/she is reporting the view of the council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.
- If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the council's adopted complaints procedure, or via a council agenda item.

Councillor Correspondence to External Parties

- Any correspondence from a Councillor to other bodies sent on behalf of or representing the view of the council needs to make clear that it is written in their official capacity and has been authorised by the council.
- A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the council or a Councillor's role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and it be noted on the correspondence, e.g. "copy to the Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

Communications with Council Staff

- Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff, unless authorised to do so (for example, three or more Councillors sitting as a committee or sub-committee with appropriate delegated powers from the council).

- No individual Councillor, regardless of whether or not they are the Chair of the council, the Chair of a committee or other meeting, may give instructions to the Clerk or to another employee which are inconsistent or conflict with council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.
- Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the council.
- E-mails:
 - Instant replies should not be expected. Where a response is required as a matter of urgency reasons should be stated. Behaviour required by the code of conduct applies.
 - Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk;
 - E-mails from Councillors to external parties should be copied to the Clerk;
 - Councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.

Electronic Communications

The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables the Town Council to interact in a way that improves the communications both within the Town Council and between the Town Council and the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

The Town Council has a Website, Facebook page, Twitter account and uses email to communicate. The Town Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time the Town Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur, this Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

Town Council Email

The Clerk to the council has her own council email address: townclerk@attleboroughtc.org.uk which is monitored mainly during office hours, Monday to Friday, alongside the enquiries@attleboroughtc.org.uk email account. We aim to reply to all correspondence sent as soon as we can and an 'out of office' message will be used when appropriate.

The Clerk is responsible for dealing with emails received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk, and otherwise will always be copied to the Town Clerk.

Councillor Email Accounts

- All Councillors are given a council email address to use for council business which can be found on the council's website.
- The use of this email for personal purposes is not permitted.
- Individual councillors are free to communicate directly with their constituents and the wider community in relation to their own personal views.
- All correspondence from Councillors must comply with the council's policies, protocols and procedures.
- Behaviour required by the code of conduct shall apply.

- The council may monitor email activity, so that compliance with this policy and other relevant policies and regulations can be effectively managed.
- Access to Councillor email accounts is restricted to individual users and must not be shared accounts.
- If you suspect there has been a data breach, or your email/IT has been hacked, you must inform the Clerk immediately so the relevant action can be taken (in accordance with the council's data protection policy).
- Unless authorised by the individual, do not forward personal information on to other people or groups outside of the Council, this includes names, addresses, email and telephone numbers.

Time should be set aside on a regular basis for "housekeeping", in order to delete old or unwanted items from mailboxes. The councils document retention and disposal policy must be complied with.

Any emails copied to the Clerk become official and will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act. On the receipt of a Freedom of Information or Subject Access Request it may be necessary for a member of staff to be given access to the Councillor email account. These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Any communication by a Councillor that is not associated directly with Attleborough Town Council business (i.e. it is carried out by a Councillor acting on their own or on behalf of another) is not considered as acting as a Councillor by the ICO "the business of the Council". Therefore, you are not covered by the Council's data protection fee requirement to the ICO and as such you will be responsible (as an individual) for complying with all of the GDPR regarding data security.

SMS (texting)

Members and Officers may use SMS as a convenient way to communicate at times. All are reminded that this policy also applies to such messages.

Video Conferencing

If this medium is used to communicate please note that this policy also applies to the use of videoconferencing.

Social Media

The councils Facebook page and Twitter account intends to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within the town and promote our community positively. The Clerk will be responsible for publishing content on the council's social media. All Councillors are encouraged to put forward suggestions at the end of meetings or email them to the Clerk.

Communications from the council will meet the following criteria:

- Be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libelous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;

- Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright;
- Not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details;
- If official council business it will be moderated by the Town Clerk;
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

In order to ensure that all discussions on the council's social media pages are productive, respectful and consistent with the council's aims and objectives, we ask you to follow these guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including the councillors or staff, will not be permitted.
- Share freely and be generous, but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from using the council's Facebook page or Twitter site for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products.

Our social media pages are not monitored 24/7 and we will not always be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities. Please do not include personal/private information in your social media posts to us.

Sending a message/post via Facebook or Twitter will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the council's Town Clerk and/or members of the council by emailing enquiries@attleboroughtc.org.uk

We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libelous statements.
- Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Alleges a breach of a council's policy or the law

The council's response to any communications received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available. Any information posted on our social media pages not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. The council may post a statement that 'a post breaching the council's communications and media policy has been removed'. If the post alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

Town Council Website

Where necessary, we may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or we may forward their question to one of our Town Councillors for consideration and response.

The Town Council may, at its discretion, allow and enable approved local groups to have and maintain a presence on its website for the purpose of presenting information about the group's activities. The local group would be responsible for maintaining the content and ensuring that it meets the council's rules and expectations for the website. The council reserves the right to remove any or all of a local group's information from the website if it feels that the content does not meet our rules and expectations. Where content on the website is maintained by a local group it should be clearly marked that such content is not the direct responsibility of the council.

Images

To use images of minors under the age of 18 and/or vulnerable adults, written consent must be obtained. Please complete relevant forms on page -

Internal communication and access to information within the Town Council

The Town Council is continually looking at ways to improve its working and the use of social media and electronic communications is a major factor in delivering improvement.

ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL Communication and Media Policy ACCEPTANCE SLIP

I have received, read and understood the council's communication and media policy. I understand that:

- My use of Attleborough Town Council's email may be monitored for management and security purposes.
- If I use my own computer/laptop/tablet for council business I confirm I am responsible for ensuring I comply with IT security and data protection as required under the General Data Protection Regulations.
- Breaches of the policy may result in action being taken against me by the Information Commissioner's Office.
- I confirm that when my role ends as a Councillor for Attleborough Town Council, I will delete all Council business from my device immediately.

Signed

Name

Date

Please return completed forms to Town Clerk.

SMOKEFREE POLICY

PURPOSE

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

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

POLICY

It is the policy of ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL that all our workplaces are smokefree, and all employees have a right to work in a smokefree environment. The policy shall come into effect on Sunday, 1 July 2007. Smoking is prohibited in all enclosed and substantially enclosed premises in the workplace. This includes company vehicles. This policy applies to all employees, consultants, contractors, customers or members and visitors.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

NON-COMPLIANCE

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

HELP TO STOP SMOKING

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

Signed

Date

On behalf of the Company ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL



Attleborough Town Council

"Whistleblowing" Policy

(Making a Disclosure in the Public Interest)

Introduction

Attleborough Town Council is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability.

An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable staff and other members of the Council to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs. Nevertheless, where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal, and there should be arrangements to enable this to be done independently of line management (although in relatively minor instances the line manager would be the appropriate person to be told).

The Public Interest Disclosure Act, which came into effect in 1999 and updated in May 2013, gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. The Council has endorsed the provisions set out below so as to ensure that no members of staff should feel at a disadvantage in raising legitimate concerns.

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It is not designed to question financial or business decisions taken by the Council nor should it be used to reconsider any matters which have already been addressed under harassment, complaint, disciplinary or other procedures. Once the "whistleblowing" procedures are in place, it is reasonable to expect staff to use them rather than air their complaints outside the Council.

Scope of Policy

This policy is designed to enable employees of the Council to raise concerns internally and at a high level and to disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice or impropriety. This policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest and may at least initially be investigated separately but might then lead to the invocation of other procedures e.g. disciplinary. These concerns could include

- Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or Statutes
- Dangers to Health & Safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour
- Attempts to conceal any of these

Safeguards

i. Protection

This policy is designed to offer protection to those employees of the Council who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made:

- in good faith
- in the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice or impropriety and if they make the disclosure to an appropriate person (see below). It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure. In an extreme case malicious or wild allegations could give rise to legal action on the part of the persons complained about.

ii. Confidentiality

The Council will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

iii. Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the Council.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

iv. Untrue Allegations

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

Procedures for Making a Disclosure

On receipt of a complaint of malpractice, the member of staff who receives and takes note of the complaint, must pass this information as soon as is reasonably possible, to the appropriate designated investigating officer as follows:

- Complaints of malpractice will be investigated by the CEO & Town Clerk unless the complaint is against the CEO & Town Clerk or is in any way related to his/her actions. In such cases, the complaint should be passed to the Chairman/Mayor for referral.
- In the case of a complaint, which is any way connected with but not against the Chairman/Mayor, the CEO & Town Clerk will nominate a Member to act as the alternative investigating officer.
- Complaints against the CEO & Clerk should be passed to the Chairman who will nominate an appropriate investigating officer.
- The complainant has the right to bypass the line management structure and take their complaint direct to the Chairman. The Chairman has the right to refer the complaint back to management if he/she feels that the management without any conflict of interest can more appropriately investigate the complaint.

Should none of the above routes be suitable or acceptable to the complainant, then the complainant may approach one of the following individuals who have been designated and trained as independent points of contact under this procedure. They can advise the complainant on the implications of the legislation and the possible internal and external avenues of complaint open to them:

Monitoring Officer, Breckland District Council
Trade Union Representative
Citizens Advice

If there is evidence of criminal activity then the investigating officer should inform the police. The Council will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal police investigation.

Timescales

Due to the varied nature of these sorts of complaints, which may involve internal investigators and / or the police, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations. The investigating officer should ensure that the investigations are undertaken as quickly as possible without affecting the quality and depth of those investigations.

The investigating officer, should as soon as practically possible, send a written acknowledgement of the concern to the complainant and thereafter report back to them in writing the outcome of the investigation and on the action that is proposed. If the investigation is a prolonged one, the investigating officer should keep the complainant informed, in writing, as to the progress of the investigation and as to when it is likely to be concluded.

All responses to the complainant should be in writing and sent to their home address.

Investigating Procedure

The investigating officer should follow these steps:

- Full details and clarifications of the complaint should be obtained.
- The investigating officer should inform the member of staff against whom the complaint is made as soon as is practically possible. The member of staff will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a trade union or other representative at any future interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures.
- The investigating officer should consider the involvement of the Council auditors and the Police at this stage and should consult with the Chairman / Chief Executive
- The allegations should be fully investigated by the investigating officer with the assistance where appropriate, of other individuals / bodies.
- A judgement concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the investigating officer. This judgement will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgement. The report will be passed to the Chief Executive or Chairman as appropriate.
- The Chief Executive / Chairman will decide what action to take. If the complaint is shown to be justified, then they will invoke the disciplinary or other appropriate Council procedures.
- The complainant should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and, if appropriate, of the final outcome.
- If appropriate, a copy of the outcomes will be passed to the Council Auditors to enable a review of the procedures.

If the complainant is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with by the investigating officer, they have the right to raise it in confidence with the Chief Executive / Chairman, or one of the designated persons described above.

If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, the Council recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons (such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Audit Commission, or the utility regulators), or, where justified, elsewhere.

Adopted: 1 August 2016

Reviewed: Attleborough Town Council Meeting 13 May 2019



Scope

This Health and Safety Manual defines the Health and Safety Policy, the organisation and the arrangements made by:

Attleborough Town Council
Town Hall Square
Attleborough
NR17 2AF

at its sites as required by Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.