



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **STAFFING COMMITTEE** HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON MONDAY 20th OCTOBER AT 2PM

PRESENT:

David Anderson

Mary Evans

Kay Montandon

Also in attendance: Faye LeBon (Town Clerk).

It was **agreed** that Kay Montandon would Chair this committee.

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received Trevor Bennett, Cheryl Bould, Michael Goodwin and Mitchell Philpott.

2. To Receive any Declarations of Interest or Requests for Dispensation

None raised.

3. To Agree Minutes from the Meeting of 13th October 2025

The draft minutes had been previously circulated. These were **agreed** by the committee and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. To Adjourn the Meeting to Allow Members of the Public and Councillors with Prejudicial Interests to Speak

No matters raised.

5. To Consider Programme of Review / Adoption of Staffing Policies, followed by adoption of new Staff Handbook

A list of model HR policies available to the council was provided. It was **agreed** to move forward with this project, to amend the policies to make them relevant to Aylsham, and then consider the staff handbook.

6. To Consider Updates to Financial Regulations to Ensure Delegated Authority in Clerk's Absence

Concerns had been raised about delegation to make urgent expenditure in the absence of the Clerk. It was **agreed** to propose to full council that the following amendment, detailed in bold, is made to Financial Regulation 4:

*Under the Local Government Act 1972 s101, urgent expenditure of up to £2500 (net sums) may be authorised by the clerk, notwithstanding any budgetary provision. Urgent is seen as items which pose a risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council property. **In absence of the clerk, delegation is passed to the Maintenance Manager.** Such spending should be reported to the Chairman and then to the Council as soon as possible and the budget should be amended accordingly.*

7. To Consider Merits of Increased use of HR Software

Mitchell Philpott had sent a report about consideration of HR Software which could assist in the administration of HR. An option for software had been suggested, which can be trialled. This is all part of a larger discussion around better utilisation of IT.

8. Staff Appraisals

a) To Review Staff Appraisal Forms

Consideration was given to amending the current appraisal forms to improve the process for both staff, and the council as the employer. The current appraisal form and two alternatives were provided for consideration. It was agreed to roll out form option 1 for this years appraisals.

b) To Appoint Members to Conduct Clerk's Probation Review and Appraisal

It was agreed that the Council Chairman and a volunteer from the Staffing Committee would conduct these. This will be done after the other staff appraisals had been completed.

9. Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was **agreed** to close the meeting to the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, for items 10 to 12, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The meeting was closed to the press and public

10. To Consider Staffing Budget for 2026/2027

A report was provided. It was agreed that:

- The Clerk would provide a report based on an alternative uplift.
- A review would be conducted to ensure all documentation was up to date.

11. To Receive Update on Confidential Staffing Matter

The Clerk provided an update. No decisions were required by the Staffing Committee at this point.

12. To Consider Process for Newly Raised Staffing Matter

Reports were provided for the committee to consider. The Clerk will take forward the agreed action points.

The meeting was reopened to the press and public

13. To Note Items for Information and Inclusion in a Future Agenda

Adoption of HR Policies

HR Software

Staff Appraisals

Staffing Budget 2026/2027

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday 27th November at 10.30am.

There being no further business to conduct the meeting was closed at 3.40pm

Staffing Committee 27th November 2025

Item 5 - Update on Programme of Review / Adoption of Staffing Policies, followed by adoption of new Staff Handbook

As reported at the last meeting, as part of the HR service the Town Council contract to, the council has the following model policies available that can be amended to better reflect the Town Council. The policies highlighted have been reviewed and are attached for committee consideration. Reviews of further policies will be put in place for subsequent meetings:

- 1) Recruitment Policy
- 2) Holiday Policy
- 3) Equal Opportunities
- 4) Drugs and Alcohol
- 5) Wellbeing
- 6) Menopause
- 7) Maternity and Family Friendly
- 8) Homeworking
- 9) Social Media
- 10) Harassment / Bullying
- 11) Performance Improvement
- 12) Absence Management
- 13) Grievance
- 14) Whistleblowing
- 15) Bribery
- 16) Data Protection
- 17) Modern Slavery
- 18) Disciplinary
- 19) Redundancy
- 20) Right to Work
- 21) Religious and National Holiday Celebrations
- 22) Car
- 23) Computers, Email and Internet
- 24) Appraisal
- 25) Training and Development
- 26) Lone Working
- 27) Chat GPT
- 28) AI Powered Wording Services
- 29) Short Term Sickness Absence
- 30) Long Term Sickness Absence
- 31) Neonatal Care Leave
- 32) CCTV in the Workplace
- 33) Dress Code
- 34) Flexible Working

A staff handbook is then available based upon these policies and other best practices.

HR07 – Menopause Policy

Aylsham Town Council



Adopted:
Revised:
Review: Biannually or as changes are required.

HR07 - Menopause Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The menopause is something that we are all affected by, either directly or indirectly. We want you to understand what the menopause is and how it might affect people. We want to remove any stigma associated with the menopause. This is the best way of making sure that everyone impacted by it feels supported and understood.
- 1.2. This Policy:
 - a Sets out what the menopause is
 - b Explains how it might affect people, both directly and indirectly
 - c Provides a clear explanation of the support networks in place across our business to help those who may need support on this issue
 - d Sets out expected conduct and behaviour towards colleagues who are affected, directly or indirectly, by the menopause
- 1.3. Please note that this Policy does not form part of your contract with us. We reserve the right to amend or remove this Policy.
- 1.4. This Policy applies to all employees, contractors, agency workers, casual workers, interns and volunteers working for us.

2. What is the menopause?

- 2.1. Menopause occurs when a woman stops having menstrual periods. It is triggered by a reduction in the production of the hormone oestrogen. Menopause usually occurs between 45 and 55 years old. However, the timing and symptoms are different for everyone.
- 2.2. It is not only those who identify as women who will experience menopause. Some transgender men, non-binary people and intersex people or people with variations in sex characteristics may also experience menopause. In this Policy, reference to a specific gender should be taken to include all genders.
- 2.3. The menopause is split into perimenopause and postmenopause. Perimenopause marks the start of menopausal symptoms and may last several years. Postmenopause is the time after a woman experiences her last period.

3. What are the common symptoms of the menopause?

- 3.1. The menopause affects each person differently. Three out of four women will have symptoms and one out of four women will have severe symptoms. Symptoms are both physical and psychological in nature and can change over time.

3.2. Common symptoms include:

- a Hot flushes
- b Headaches
- c Poor concentration
- d Dry eyes
- e Anxiety
- f Low mood
- g Lack of confidence
- h Panic attacks
- i Poor sleep
- j Weight gain
- k Fatigue
- l Poor memory
- m Joint and muscle pain

4. **The role of managers**

- 4.1. We are committed to supporting you through the menopause. This process starts with creating an environment where discussion about the menopause is not taboo – it is out in the open and understood. We do not want our employees to feel embarrassed or awkward.
- 4.2. For managers, recognising the symptoms of the menopause is vital to treating an affected employee fairly. It can explain certain behaviours that you might otherwise put down to a bad attitude or poor performance.
- 4.3. **Where we feel this is appropriate** [We will give managers specific training in handling all menopause-related issues sensitively and with confidence. This is not just about legal compliance; good support at work leads to happier and better-performing employees who have valuable skills and experience.] [If you are a manager and think that someone who reports to you may be going through the menopause and it is affecting their performance, if you are not sure what to do, please contact **the Town Clerk**.] Women who do not get the right support can lose confidence in their ability to do their job (some even decide to leave) and may find that their mental health suffers.

5. **Support through the menopause**

- 5.1. We know that the menopause is a very personal matter, so we will not raise it with you even if we think you are displaying symptoms. We might ask how you are, in general terms. You can then decide whether to talk to us about the menopause or not. We encourage you to do so because we want to support you.

5.2. We have a four-step procedure that applies to discussions around the menopause and the action we'll take.

5.3. Step 1

- a You could start by speaking with your GP or medical specialist about your menopause-related concerns.
- b You could also talk to *[your line manager]*, or you could go straight to your *[the town clerk]* (see Step 2) if you feel comfortable doing that.

5.4. Step 2

- a Meet with your *[the town clerk]*. ~~[All managers have been trained in understanding and helping employees through the menopause.]~~ You should expect to be able to have a private, friendly, honest and constructive conversation.
- b We will discuss with you ideas that could make things easier for you. Adjustments will depend on different factors, but things you could ask us to consider include:
 - Modifying your [uniform] [dress code]
 - Installing a water cooler *[already installed in the office]*
 - Giving you a desk fan
 - ~~Making a room available for rest~~
 - Allowing you more frequent breaks
 - Extending deadlines
 - Agreeing a flexible working arrangement (a change in working hours or homeworking, for example)
 - Altering some aspects of your duties
- c Your conversation with your *[the town clerk]* will be confidential. They will probably need to discuss issues and possible solutions with others, including *[The Staffing Committee]* ~~[other managers]~~ ~~[your GP]~~ ~~[a company doctor]~~ *[occupational health]*. Those people are subject to duties of confidentiality.
- d We will work hard to balance your needs with those of your colleagues; however, on occasions, we may not be able to find a solution that works for everyone.
- e We will keep notes of the things we discuss and will comply with our data protection responsibilities in respect of the information that passes between us, in line with our *[Data Protection Policy]*.
- f After your initial meeting with your *[the town clerk]*, and periodically after that, we may carry out health and safety risk assessments and/or seek advice from occupational health.

5.5. Step 3

- a Taking account of any specialist advice, we will agree with you the adjustments that we will make.
- b We will meet with you to make sure that the adjustments are working for you and us. If any modifications are needed, or if anything new needs to be put in place, we will discuss that with you.

5.6. Step 4

- a We will meet with you on an ongoing basis to check that your symptoms are being managed effectively.
 - b You may find that your symptoms change over time. Please tell us if that happens, so that we can look at making further or alternative adjustments. Once your symptoms pass, we expect you to tell us, and we may discuss with you removing the adjustments in place.
- 5.7. We may need to consult with [*occupational health/your doctor*] at various points to make sure everything is being done that should be done.
- 5.8. We are aware that you may be indirectly affected by the menopause. It may directly affect a loved one or family member, and this may cause concern or distress. We are committed to supporting you too. We urge you to talk to [*the town clerk*] so we can discuss how we might best support you.

6. Our expectations of our staff

- 6.1. We may not be able to tell you about any menopause-related issues that a particular colleague is experiencing. We need you to accept that and respect their privacy.
- 6.2. Employees must treat each other fairly. Any unfavourable treatment, harassment, teasing or inappropriate comments in relation to the menopause or a colleague's symptoms could constitute age, disability or sex discrimination. You are expected to treat each other with respect and compassion. We have a zero-tolerance policy on bullying and harassment (please see our [*Harassment & Bullying Policy*] for more information).
- 6.3. If you treat a colleague badly (including making unwanted comments or jokes) because of their menopause symptoms, you could be disciplined.

7. Useful links and contacts

- 7.1. The following internal policies contain additional information and guidance [*delete/amend as appropriate*]:
- a [*Disciplinary Policy*]
 - b [*Flexible Working Policy*]
 - c [*Equal Opportunities Policy*]
 - d [*Harassment & Bullying Policy*]

e [Data Protection Policy]

7.2. There are lots of web-based resources where you can find support and information. Examples include:

a <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause>

b <https://www.themenopausecharity.org>

8. **Administration of the Menopause Policy**

8.1. [*The Town Clerk*] is responsible for the administration of the Menopause Policy. Should you have any feedback, please contact [*the town clerk*].

DRAFT

HR12 – Performance Improvement Policy

Aylsham Town Council



Adopted:
Revised:
Review: Biannually or as changes are required.

HR12 - Performance Improvement Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. During your employment, there may be times when we think that your performance does not meet the standards we expect. If this happens, we will use this Policy to guide us in understanding why you might be experiencing performance issues and work with you to improve matters. Our aim is to make sure that you perform well in your role, maximise your own performance and, in doing so, ensure the Council delivers quality services for our local residents.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all employees in the Council.
- 1.3. This Policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend or remove this Policy.
- 1.4. We will use this Policy flexibly alongside other policies which might also be relevant to the issues you are having. For example, we may consider that an issue raised as one of poor performance is actually misconduct. If so, we will handle this under our [Disciplinary Policy]. Likewise, performance issues are sometimes connected to problems with attendance. We will normally deal with these under our [Absence Management Policy].

2. Our expected standards

- 2.1. The standards of performance which we expect you to achieve are communicated to you in several ways:
 - a In your job description. This sets out the basic requirements of the role which you are doing for us.
 - b Through our appraisal process. You will work with your [line manager] to set clear performance objectives which will be reviewed regularly. Please refer to our [Appraisal Policy] for more detail.
 - c Through your regular one to one meetings with your line manager.

- d Through day-to-day feedback you will receive from those you work with. Our managers are proactive in their approach. We encourage them to praise good performance and provide regular feedback on any performance issues they may observe.
- e *[Insert any other ways that you may communicate expected performance standards].*

3. **The first two years of employment**

- 3.1. We may not follow our performance improvement process during the early stages of the employment relationship. If we are not satisfied with your performance during your probationary period, or during the first two years of your employment with us, we may simply terminate your employment after following due process.]

4. **Initial steps: informal performance improvement**

- 4.1. When a performance issue is raised, we will usually approach you informally first to discuss it. Your [*line manager*] will usually lead this discussion. We will:
 - a Explain the issues that have arisen and discuss them with you to get your view on them. [*if relevant* We will show you evidence which supports our concerns.]
 - b Discuss any underlying issues which may have contributed to the performance issues. For example, any medical issues, any additional management support or training you feel you need or any interpersonal issues.
 - c Discuss any support we can provide to help resolve the performance issues, including additional training, additional support, reallocation of work and other measures. If a medical issue is underpinning a performance one, then we may ask for your consent to obtain a medical report from ~~[your doctor]~~ [*occupational health*] [*an appropriate specialist*]. We will refer to our [*Training & Development Policy*] for support with any identified training issues.
 - d Set out a plan for improvement, including a clear timescale which takes account of any additional supportive measures which may take time to put in place. We will put this plan in writing, give you a copy and retain a copy.
- 4.2. We will usually agree a time to meet to review the success of the measures we have agreed at this informal meeting. This will allow a reasonable amount of time for any supportive changes to take effect.

- 4.3. If, when we meet, your performance has not improved sufficiently, then we will either extend the informal process or move to the formal performance improvement process set out below.
- 4.4. Depending on the circumstances of each case, we may choose to omit the informal process and move straight to the performance improvement process set out below.

5. Performance improvement plans (PIPs)

- 5.1. A PIP is a document which we will put together with you to guide us through the formal performance improvement process. It is a document which sets out:
 - a The areas where improved performance is required
 - b Clear performance objectives which you will need to meet
 - c The evidence we will look at to check whether those objectives have been met
 - d The timescale for meeting those objectives
 - e Any supportive measures we will put in place to help you meet those objectives
- 5.2. It is a document which will help both you and us to focus on the improvement required and to assess improvement.
- 5.3. We usually use PIPs throughout the formal performance improvement process. We may also use them at an earlier stage of the process, when intervention remains informal.

6. The formal performance improvement process

- 6.1. If we have not seen an adequate improvement following the informal process set out above, or if we decide that the issues are sufficiently serious that they need to be placed on a formal footing at an early stage, then we will begin to follow our formal performance improvement process:
 - a Stage 1 meeting – At this meeting, we will aim to agree a PIP with you. This will highlight all performance concerns, the standard expected and how we will work together to achieve that standard. We will agree a timetable for improvement with you. This will depend on the issues but will generally be at least four weeks

in duration. If a PIP cannot be agreed between us, then we will set it without your agreement, but only after we have tried to understand why you think the standards we expect of you are not reasonable or attainable.

- b Stage 1 review meeting – At the end of the review period, we will hold a Stage 1 review meeting at which your progress will be discussed. If your performance has not improved sufficiently, then we may issue a first written warning for performance and move to Stage 2 of the process. We will put a further review period in place (usually at least 4 weeks in duration). Changes to the PIP and additional support will also be discussed.
 - c Stage 2 review meeting – Following the Stage 2 review period, we will hold a meeting where your progress will be discussed. Again, if your performance has not improved, then we may issue a final written warning for performance and move to Stage 3 of the process. We will put a further review period in place (usually at least 4 weeks in duration). Changes to the PIP and additional support will also be discussed.
 - d Stage 3 review meeting – Following the Stage 3 review period, we will hold a meeting where your progress will be discussed. At this meeting, if your performance has not improved sufficiently, you may be dismissed from our employment with notice for capability.
- 6.2. At each stage of the formal process the outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to you in writing, including (if relevant) details of the possible consequences of failing to improve during the relevant timescale or of additional poor performance in other areas.
- 6.3. Other options at each stage of the formal process include taking no further action or extending the review period.
- 6.4. Sometimes, we may omit Stage 2 and move straight from Stage 1 to Stage 3 (meaning you get two rather than three periods in which to demonstrate your improvement). It is up to us whether this happens or not.

7. Performance improvement meetings

- 7.1. It is your responsibility to attend meetings under this Policy, but if you cannot, we will normally reschedule them, provided we are satisfied with your reason for not attending. We will normally only reschedule the meeting once unless there is a very good reason to justify a second rescheduling. If you fail to attend a rescheduled meeting, we may have to make decisions in your absence.

- 7.2. ~~[[Please do not record performance improvement meetings without our consent, as this suggests that you do not trust our process or the managers who are conducting the meeting. [We may decide to deal with any covert recording under our *Disciplinary Policy*].] If you have misgivings about either the process or the managers leading it, you should tell us openly so that we can address your concerns. In turn, we will not record the meeting without your knowledge.] Or [We may record the meeting, but we will not do so without telling you. You are welcome to record the meeting if you wish, but please tell us beforehand, as we think it is discourteous to the managers involved for you to make a covert recording. You will also get a better quality recording if you do so openly rather than covertly.]]~~
- 7.3. [A notetaker will usually attend formal meetings under this Policy to take notes.]
- 7.4. You will be given a copy of any evidence to be relied upon before the meeting and a copy of the notes after the meeting.
- 7.5. We will go through all the details at the meeting so that you fully understand our concerns with your performance and the standards of performance we need you to meet.
- 7.6. We would like to understand any reasons for your poor performance. If you consider that a medical condition or personal issues are affecting your performance, please tell us so that we can take medical advice where necessary and consider any reasonable adjustments.
- 7.7. We will give you the time you need to respond to the concerns raised and put your own case. We will also give you the chance to question us, present your own evidence, call your own witnesses, and respond to evidence that any of our witnesses put forward. If there are any questions you want us to ask anybody else, please tell us and (unless there is a good reason not to) we will make sure they are asked.
- 7.8. We will discuss with you the targets for improvement that we need you to meet and the timescale for that improvement. We will also let you know of any support we will provide (such as training or supervision) to help you.
- 7.9. If we decide at any point during the process to take no further action, we will tell you.

8. The right to be accompanied

- 8.1. You are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any meeting called under this Policy where you face a formal warning, or dismissal, as a result of that meeting. This right does not extend to any investigation or informal meetings that lead up to a formal performance improvement meeting.
- 8.2. If you want to exercise this right, you should tell us as soon as possible who you want to accompany you. It is your responsibility to arrange for them to attend. If you choose a work colleague, we will not prevent them from attending but we may rearrange the meeting if their absence from work would cause operational problems.
- 8.3. Your colleague or union representative can, if you'd like them to, explain the key points of your case to the meeting and can respond on your behalf. You can also confer with them during the meeting. However, they must not answer questions put directly to you or try to prevent us from asking questions or outlining our points.

9. Right of appeal

- 9.1. At each stage of the formal process, you have the right to appeal any warning given. In the case of dismissal, you have the right to appeal the dismissal. Please send your appeal in writing to [The Town Clerk]. A ~~manager~~ **panel of three town councillors who have not been involved in the performance improvement meetings** ~~has not had previous involvement in the process~~ will usually handle your appeal.
- 9.2. If you lodge a grievance during the performance improvement process, which we think arises from the performance improvement process, we will normally treat it as an appeal under this process rather than a free-standing grievance.
- 9.3. We may choose to continue with the performance improvement process while your appeal is being considered. This is to prevent the process from being derailed, or delayed, by one or more appeals being inserted into the timeframe.

10. A flexible process

- 10.1. Our performance improvement process is focused on the positive: improving your performance at work. We will not allow the process to confine us and get in the way of this aim. We may choose to extend formal warnings under this process or pause them whilst training or other supportive steps are undertaken.

10.2. We are also aware of the close relationship between performance issues, attendance issues and conduct issues. Sometimes, the circumstances may mean that we need to follow more than one policy at the same time or switch to using a different policy, for example, if after investigation, we decide that the issues are misconduct-related rather than performance-related. If that happens, steps taken under this Policy will be regarded as taken under the other Policy (i.e. we won't do the same things twice unless there's a compelling reason to do so).

11. Useful links

11.1. The following internal policies contain additional information and guidance [delete/amend as appropriate]:

- a [Disciplinary Policy]
- b [Training & Development Policy]
- c [Appraisal Policy]
- d [Absence Management Policy]
- e [Grievance Policy]

12. Administration of the Performance Improvement Policy

12.1. [The town clerk] is responsible for the administration of the Performance Improvement Policy. Should you have any feedback, please contact [the town clerk].

H14 – Grievance Policy

Aylsham Town Council



Adopted:
Revised:
Review: Biannually or as changes are required.

HR14 - Grievance Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. A 'grievance' is an issue or problem with something at work. If you are having a problem at work or wish to raise a complaint, then you should use the process set out in this Policy to do so. We want to make sure that you feel comfortable to raise with us any problems you may have.
- 1.2. This Policy:
 - a Sets out the informal and formal processes that can be followed when raising a grievance
 - b Explains what we will do if we receive a formal grievance
 - c Explains how grievance meetings operate
 - d Sets out how we will deal with tricky situations like related grievances and grievances raised during a disciplinary process
 - e Explains the role of the grievance officer
 - f [Provides an introduction to mediation and the circumstances in which it might be offered when a grievance has been raised]
- 1.3. Please note that this Policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend or remove this Policy.
- 1.4. This Policy should be read alongside our [*Whistleblowing Policy*] and [*Bullying & Harassment Policy*].
- 1.5. This Policy applies to all employees. It does not apply before your employment starts. If your employment has ended, we may refuse to investigate any grievance, or we may use a different procedure.

2. What we will do if we receive a formal grievance

- 2.1. If we receive a formal grievance from you we will:
 - a Follow a full and fair procedure

- b Investigate all matters raised
- c Act promptly
- d Keep you regularly updated with the status of the grievance investigation
- e Be mindful of the impact of the grievance and the grievance process on your wellbeing and provide appropriate support in line with our [*Wellbeing Policy*]
- f Not treat you unfavourably for having raised a grievance
- g Retain all documentation collected as part of the grievance process securely, in accordance with our [*Data Protection Policy*]

3. The informal grievance process

- 3.1. If you have an issue or complaint, before doing anything else, you should approach your [*line manager*], as most grievances can be resolved informally. If your grievance involves your [*line manager*] – or there is some other reason you don't want to raise it with them – you should instead tell [*The Chairman of the Staffing Committee*].
- 3.2. You do not have to put anything in writing. The issue can be discussed verbally if you prefer.
- 3.3. If this informal approach does not solve your problem, or you do not want to first raise the matter informally, you can use the formal procedure.

4. The formal grievance process

We follow a three-stage process when dealing with formal grievances.

4.1. Stage 1: Submission of a written grievance

Put your grievance in writing and send it to [*the town clerk*]. Your letter/email should include the following:

- a What your complaint is – please provide as much specific information as possible.
- b Any evidence you have to support your grievance – this can be sent as an accompanying file or bundle if necessary.

- c What outcome you are hoping to achieve from the grievance process – this is particularly important, as if we don't know what you want, we cannot help you achieve it.

We will confirm receipt of your grievance promptly. We will then investigate the complaint you have raised. How we do this will depend on the nature of your grievance. For example, it may involve a review of documents or it may involve interviewing others involved in the complaint. You must cooperate with our investigation.

4.2. Stage 2: Grievance hearing

We will invite you to a grievance hearing to discuss your grievance. We will usually do this within [*ten*] working days of receiving your grievance, although the process may take longer if the complaint is complex. We aim to act without unreasonable delay throughout the grievance process.

You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative (see section 5 for more details).

If you or your chosen companion are unable to attend the meeting at the time arranged, then you should let us know without delay and we will organise an alternative date and time. Unless there is a good reason, we are unlikely to rearrange a meeting more than once. If you do not attend a grievance meeting that we have set up (or rearranged) for you, and you do not give us a good reason, we may treat the grievance as withdrawn by you.

At the meeting, our appointed grievance ~~officer~~ panel consisting of three town councillors (see below) will discuss your grievance with you, including any desired outcome. [[A note-taker will usually be present.] **and/or** [We may record the meeting. If we propose to do so, we will let you know in advance.]] [We will let you have copies of any notes taken or recording made.]

~~[[You may record the meeting yourself, but please tell us you plan to do so.] or
[Please do not record the meeting without our consent, as this suggests that you do not trust our process or the managers conducting the meeting. If you record the meeting covertly, we will normally regard that as serious misconduct.]]~~

After the meeting, we will complete our investigation. Sometimes, this will involve looking at documents or interviewing other people. We may ask you for more information or for another meeting. We may conclude that there is no need for any further investigation.

We will tell you of the outcome of your grievance in writing.

4.3. Stage 3: Appeal

You have the right to appeal any finding we make in relation to your grievance. Any appeal should be submitted in writing within **[five]** working days of receiving the grievance outcome letter. In your appeal letter, you should explain clearly why you are appealing and provide us with any additional evidence you would like us to consider as part of your appeal.

We will appoint an appeal ~~officer~~ **panel consisting of three town councillors to deal with your appeal, none of which will have been appointed to the initial grievance panel**. An appeal hearing will be held with you. We usually aim to arrange an appeal hearing within **[two]** weeks of the submission of your appeal. You have the right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a work colleague or trade union representative (see section 5).

Following the appeal meeting, we will carry out any additional investigation which we feel is required. Our final decision will be sent to you in writing. We will try to do this within **[two]** weeks of the appeal hearing. You do not have any further right of appeal, and this marks the end of the grievance process.

5. The right to be accompanied

- 5.1. You are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any grievance or grievance appeal meeting called under this Policy.
- 5.2. If you want to exercise this right, you should tell us as soon as possible who you want to accompany you. It is your responsibility to arrange for them to attend. If you choose a work colleague, we will not stop them from attending, but we may rearrange the meeting if their absence from work would cause operational problems.
- 5.3. Your colleague or trade union representative can, if you'd like them to, explain the key points of your grievance at the meeting and you can confer with them during the meetings. However, they must not answer questions put directly to you or try to stop us from asking questions or outlining our views.

6. Grievance and grievance appeal officers

- 6.1. When we receive a formal grievance from you, we will appoint a grievance ~~officer~~ panel from the Council to investigate it. **The panel will consist of three town councillors**. The grievance ~~officer~~ **panel** will, wherever possible, have had no

involvement in the subject matter of the grievance. The grievance ~~panel's~~ ~~officer's~~ role usually includes investigating the grievance, holding a grievance hearing with you and communicating the outcome of your grievance.

- 6.2. If you appeal the outcome of a formal grievance, then we will appoint a grievance appeal ~~officer~~ ~~panel~~ to handle it. Wherever possible the grievance appeal ~~officer~~ ~~panel~~ will have had no prior involvement in the grievance process or the subject matter of the grievance **and will not have had represented the council on the original grievance panel**. The grievance appeal ~~officer's~~ ~~panel's~~ role includes reviewing the background, undertaking any further investigation, holding a grievance appeal hearing with you and communicating the outcome of your grievance appeal in writing.
- 6.3. If you wish to raise any issue regarding an appointed grievance or grievance appeal ~~officers~~ ~~panels~~, or if you are concerned about their actions, then please contact [**the town clerk**] to discuss the matter further. We will not normally give credence to a belief by you that a grievance or grievance appeal ~~officer~~ ~~panel~~ is biased or has a personal animosity towards you unless you have raised it at the very earliest opportunity. The fact that someone does not agree with you, or tests your account by asking probing questions, is not evidence of bias or animosity.

7. Mediation

- 7.1. Depending on the subject matter of the grievance, we may consider offering mediation to resolve it.
- 7.2. Mediation involves an independent, impartial person working with both sides to find a solution. It can help to diffuse tension and avoid issues escalating.
- 7.3. We are not obliged to offer mediation, and it is an option which we will only look into with your agreement.]

8. Competing or related grievances

- 8.1. Where we receive competing grievances, we will usually follow the full formal process set out above in relation to both. We will not prioritise one over the other. We will keep all information confidential and separate in relation to the two processes.
- 8.2. Where grievances cover similar or related subjects, we may approach all those involved to seek to agree that the grievances can be joined, and a joint meeting held to discuss them. However, this would require the agreement of each person

involved. Each person has the right to follow the full process individually if they wish to.

9. Grievances raised during a disciplinary or performance management process

- 9.1. Our approach is driven by the fact that we do not normally want a grievance to delay (or even derail) an ongoing disciplinary or performance management process.
- 9.2. Where a grievance is raised whilst a disciplinary or performance management process is in progress, we may choose any of these three options:
 - a Pause the existing process whilst we investigate the grievance
 - b Deal with the existing process at the same time as the grievance, as part of the same overall process
 - c Deal with the existing process at the same time as the grievance but run two independent processes concurrently
- 9.3. When making our decision on this, we will take into account the most appropriate course of action in each case and the need to act without delay.

10. Temporary changes to the working environment during the grievance process¹

- 10.1. Most grievance investigations can be conducted while you remain in your usual working environment. However, there will be some situations when we may consider moving you or others to a different work location or role while the investigation is carried out. This would be a temporary move only. We will act reasonably and treat you fairly when considering any transfer.

11. Useful links

- 11.1. The following internal policies contain additional information and guidance [delete/amend as appropriate]:
 - a [Disciplinary Policy]
 - b [Bullying & Harassment Policy]

¹ You cannot move an employee into a role falling outside their job description without their consent unless the employment contract contains an express right for you to do so.

c [Whistleblowing Policy]

d [Data Protection Policy]

12. Administration of the Grievance Policy

12.1.[*The town clerk*] is responsible for the administration of the Grievance Policy. Should you have any feedback, please contact [*the town clerk*].

HR15 – Whistleblowing Policy

Aylsham Town Council



Adopted:
Revised:
Review: Biannually or as changes are required.

HR15 - Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Policy outlines what you should do if you suspect something at work is putting you or others in danger or is illegal or unethical.
- 1.2. This Policy applies to our employees, workers, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and interns.
- 1.3. This Policy does not form part of your contract with us. We reserve the right to amend or remove this Policy.

2. What is whistleblowing?

- 2.1. Whistleblowing is the name given to the reporting of certain types of wrongdoing by people who work for us. This will usually, although not always, be something you have seen or noticed at work. We aim to maintain high standards of integrity in everything we do. However, all organisations can occasionally be affected by conduct that is dangerous, against the law or that breaches ethical or professional codes. We will take your concerns seriously; they will be thoroughly investigated, and you can be confident there will be no reprisals.
- 2.2. The types of concerns you may want to 'blow the whistle' about include any activity which you suspect:
 - a Is criminal
 - b Shows a failure to comply with any legal, professional or regulatory obligation
 - c Poses a danger to health and safety
 - d May damage the environment
 - e May breach of our [*Bribery Policy*]
 - f May facilitate tax evasion

g Shows financial fraud or mismanagement or the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters

- 2.3. Genuine concerns raised in relation to any of the above are likely to amount to whistleblowing. If you are not sure whether something you wish to raise is covered by this Policy, then speak to [*the town clerk*] or [*Chairman of the Council*] who will be able to provide guidance.

3. What you should do if you have a complaint but are not 'blowing the whistle'

- 3.1. If you have a complaint or issue which does not fall into the categories listed above or relates to a personal matter, then these should generally be raised using our [*Grievance Policy*]. If your complaint relates to the conduct of others towards you, then you should also refer to our [*Bullying & Harassment Policy*].

4. How to raise a whistleblowing concern

- 4.1. You should usually raise a whistleblowing concern with [*the town clerk*] This can be done informally and does not need to be done in writing. *The town clerk* can provide advice regarding appropriate next steps. If the matter involves *the town clerk* or if the concern you wish to raise is very serious, then you should proceed immediately to the more formal process set out below.
- 4.2. If the matter is not or cannot be resolved informally, you should put your concern in writing and send it to [*the town clerk or the Chairman of the Council*]. This can be done either by letter or by email. You should state that you are raising a concern under the Whistleblowing Policy. Include as much information in your correspondence as possible, including facts, events, dates, times and the people involved.
- 4.3. We will hold a meeting with you to discuss the issues you have raised. You are entitled to be accompanied at this meeting, and any other meetings held under this Policy, by a work colleague or trade union representative. You (and your companion, if appropriate) may be asked to keep the matter confidential whilst an investigation takes place.
- 4.4. We will investigate your concerns in full. We will keep you informed of our progress insofar as we can, but there may be elements which we decide should remain confidential.

- 4.5. We will confirm the outcome of our investigation to you insofar as we can. If you are dissatisfied with the process in any way, then you can raise this with [*insert relevant person*].

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1. We discourage you from making anonymous disclosures as they are very difficult for us to investigate. We cannot properly establish whether allegations are credible without being able to ask you for more details or clarification, and this makes it hard to reach an informed decision.
- 5.2. We will protect anyone who blows the whistle in good faith, even if we do not agree that the allegations they raise are correct. You should feel able to openly raise issues with us under this Policy. However, we understand that the subject matter covered by whistleblowing can be sensitive. If you are concerned about possible reprisals, whether from colleagues or others, you should tell [*HR*] who will be able to provide you with appropriate support and reassurance.
- 5.3. The sensitive nature of whistleblowing investigations means that, aside from those involved in the whistleblowing process set out above, we will try to keep your personal involvement confidential. There may be circumstances where we cannot do this, and in those circumstances, we will discuss the matter with you to explain our position.

6. External disclosures

- 6.1. This Policy outlines the process for raising, investigating and resolving wrongdoing in the workplace. It is rarely necessary – or, from our point of view, desirable – for anyone outside the business to become involved when a whistleblowing allegation is made.
- 6.2. In some exceptional circumstances, you may decide to go to an external body – an industry regulator, for example. That might be the case if you believe, for example, that someone senior is involved in a cover-up – but again, it is better to raise the matter internally first.
- 6.3. This Policy covers the actions of third parties such as suppliers, service providers and clients, as well as those of our staff. Should you have concerns about a third party, you are encouraged to raise them with us before approaching anyone else. Your [*line manager*] will be able to explain how you should proceed.

- 6.4. Telling the media about a concern – particularly before or during an internal investigation – is almost never justified or appropriate in any situation. We strongly discourage you from doing so, and we will treat any such contact with the press as a serious disciplinary issue justifying dismissal unless exceptional circumstances exist. We would normally expect you to have taken all reasonable steps to deal with the matter internally or with an external regulator and to have taken full advice from a lawyer or from Protect (see contact details below) before being justified in approaching the press.

7. Protection for whistleblowers

- 7.1. If you raise genuine concerns under this Policy, even if you turn out to be mistaken, we will support you and you will not face any action as a result.
- 7.2. We will not dismiss you, or treat you less well, because you've blown the whistle in accordance with this Policy.
- 7.3. You must not treat others badly if they have raised concerns under this Policy, nor must you threaten them in any way. If you do, you may face disciplinary action which could include dismissal for gross misconduct. The whistleblower may also be able to bring legal action against you.
- 7.4. If you believe that you have been treated badly in any way after having raised a whistleblowing concern with us, then you should raise this matter with your [*line manager*] and/or raise a grievance under our [*Grievance Policy*].

8. Abuse of this Policy

- 8.1. All whistleblowers must act in good faith. If we believe that you have raised issues under this Policy – which you knew were untrue – in bad faith or maliciously, then we will deal with this as a disciplinary matter under our [*Disciplinary Policy*]. You may be subject to sanctions up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

9. Useful links and contacts

- 9.1. The following policies contain additional information and may be relevant [delete/amend as appropriate]:
- a [*Disciplinary Policy*]

- b [*Bribery Policy*]
- c [*Grievance Policy*]
- d [*Bullying & Harassment Policy*]
- e [*Dignity at Work Policy*]

9.2. You can get further advice on whistleblowing, confidentiality, and protection from reprisals at <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>. Protect is an independent charity that also offers an advice line (020 3117 2520).

10. Administration of the Whistleblowing Policy

10.1. [*Insert relevant person or department*] is responsible for the administration of the Whistleblowing Policy. Should you have any feedback, please contact [*insert contact details*].

HR19 – Disciplinary Policy

Aylsham Town Council



Adopted:
Revised:
Review: Biannually or as changes are required.

HR19 - Disciplinary Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. We have clear standards of conduct which all of our employees must meet. These standards are set out in our policies and procedures and your contract of employment, and they are communicated on a day-to-day basis through management instructions. They are also often a matter of common sense.
- 1.2. This Policy sets out the procedure which we will follow if you breach the conduct standards expected of you. We will normally follow this process in disciplinary situations, but we are not obliged to do so (particularly if you are in your probationary period).
- 1.3. This Policy applies to all employees in the Council
- 1.4. This policy it does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend or remove this Policy.

2. Minor conduct issues and informal action

- 2.1. Minor conduct issues will often be addressed through informal discussion with your **line manager**. In such cases, the procedure set out in this Policy will not be followed. We may make a note of the discussion, which will be placed on your personnel file for future reference, but we will not issue a formal warning.
- 2.2. If your conduct does not improve (and in any case, where we believe it appropriate to do so), we will follow the formal process set out below.

3. Suspension

- 3.1. If there is an allegation of misconduct, then the first thing we will consider is whether there is a need to suspend you from work whilst we follow the disciplinary process. We will generally only do this where the allegation is one of gross misconduct (see below) and/or if we have concerns regarding preserving evidence.
- 3.2. Suspension is a neutral act. It is not an indication of our position on any allegation you may face.
- 3.3. If we suspend you:

- a You must stay away from work; not visit our premises; and not make contact with staff, clients, suppliers or contractors (unless we authorise this in writing).
 - b You may contact somebody specifically to ask them to be a witness, or to accompany you at a meeting under this Policy, without asking us first.
 - c If pre-approved holidays fall during a period of suspension, they will still count as holiday leave and will be deducted from your holiday entitlement as normal.
- 3.4. You will continue to be paid as normal during any period of suspension unless your contract of employment says otherwise.
- 3.5. We will only suspend you for as long as reasonably necessary to allow us to complete our investigation and any formal process which follows it.
- 3.6. We will keep any suspension under review and may lift your suspension at any time if we decide that it is no longer necessary. Likewise, we may decide to suspend you at any point during the disciplinary process even if at the start of the process we did not choose to do so.

4. Investigation

- 4.1. It is important that all disciplinary allegations are investigated fully before any action is taken.
- 4.2. The investigation officer will gather evidence in relation to the allegation. How much investigation is required will depend on the nature of the allegation. The investigation officer may need to interview other witnesses, gather documents and view recordings. They will usually (but not always) hold a meeting with you to discuss the allegation. You do not generally have the right to be accompanied at an investigation meeting. You should cooperate fully with any investigation.
- 4.3. Investigation meetings are solely for the purpose of fact-finding, and no decision on disciplinary action will be taken until after a disciplinary hearing has been held.
- 4.4. At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigation officer will usually collate the evidence and pass it to the disciplinary ~~officer~~ **panel, made up of three town councillors**,¹ who will generally be someone who has not been involved in the

¹ The ACAS Code recommends having two different people carry out the investigation and disciplinary roles, but in smaller businesses, or cases where the nature of the allegations means that the investigation required is limited, it will be reasonable for the same person to carry out both roles.

process up to this point. There may, however, be occasions where the investigation is carried out by the same person who will conduct the disciplinary hearing.

5. Right to be accompanied

- 5.1. You are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any meeting where you face formal sanctions (including dismissal). If we are holding separate investigation and disciplinary meetings, then your right to be accompanied only applies to the disciplinary meeting.
- 5.2. If you want to exercise your right to be accompanied, you should tell us as soon as possible who you want to accompany you. It is your responsibility to arrange for them to attend. If you choose a work colleague, we will not prevent them from attending, but we may rearrange the meeting if their absence from work could cause operational problems.
- 5.3. Your colleague or union representative can, if you prefer, explain the key points of your case to the meeting and can respond on your behalf. You can also confer with them during the meeting. However, they must not answer questions put directly to you or try to prevent us asking questions or outlining our arguments.

6. Disciplinary meetings

- 6.1. If a decision is taken that an allegation should be taken forward to a disciplinary hearing, then we will write to you to:
 - a Set out the disciplinary allegation which has been made against you
 - b Provide all the evidence we will look at when considering the allegation
 - c Confirm the date, time and venue for a formal disciplinary hearing
 - d Set out the possible outcomes of the meeting (including whether dismissal might result)
 - e Set out details of your right to be accompanied
- 6.2. You should let us know as soon as possible if there is a reason why you cannot attend the meeting at the arranged time. We will usually reschedule the meeting once, provided we are satisfied with your reason for not attending. We will not reschedule the meeting a second time unless there is a very good reason to justify this. Note

that we may not reschedule at all if we decide it is likely to lead to unreasonable delay, and we may instead have to make our decision on the disciplinary issue without you being present.

- 6.3. You should review the evidence provided and contact us as soon as possible if there are any other documents, or further evidence, which you would like us to consider. Please provide copies of anything you want us to look at.
- 6.4. We will usually arrange for a note-taker to attend formal disciplinary hearings, or we may choose to record the meeting. ~~[[Please do not record the meeting without our consent, as this suggests that you do not trust our process or the managers who are conducting the meeting. [We may decide to deal with any covert recording under our [Disciplinary Policy].] If you have misgivings about either the process or the managers leading it, you should tell us openly so that we can address your concerns. In turn, we will not record the meeting without your knowledge.] Or [We may record the meeting, but we will not do so without telling you. You are welcome to record the meeting if you wish, but please tell us beforehand, as we think it is discourteous to the managers involved for you to make a covert recording. You will also get a better quality recording if you do so openly rather than covertly.]]~~
- 6.5. At the meeting, we will go through all of the evidence with you and make sure that you understand the allegation you are facing. We may call witnesses as part of this process, but we are not obliged to do so.
- 6.6. We will give you time to respond to the allegations and to put your own case. We will also give you the opportunity to ask us questions, present your own evidence, call your own witnesses and respond to the evidence we put forward. If there are any questions you want us to put to our witnesses, please tell us and (unless there is a good reason not to) we will make sure they are asked.
- 6.7. We will not usually make a decision on the day of the meeting. We will usually send you our decision in writing. We will try to do this within [two weeks] of the disciplinary meeting.

7. Appeal

- 7.1. You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action taken against you under this Policy. You should set your grounds of appeal out in writing to the person or department detailed in the outcome letter you receive. You must submit your appeal within [seven] days of receiving your outcome letter, setting out the grounds of your appeal and any additional evidence you wish to be taken into account.

- 7.2. Once we have received your letter of appeal, we will arrange an appeal hearing. An appeal officer ~~panel made up of three town councillors~~ will be appointed to hear your appeal. ~~They will not usually have had any involvement in the process or the allegation up to this point.~~ Appeal panel members may not have been part of the disciplinary panel
- 7.3. You will receive a letter inviting you to the appeal hearing, at which you have the right to be accompanied (see above). It may be necessary to conduct further investigation depending on your grounds of appeal.
- 7.4. The appeal could involve a review of the original decision, taking account of the specific grounds of appeal you have raised. Alternatively, it could involve a full re-hearing of the matter. We will decide which approach is most appropriate for your case.
- 7.5. You should be aware that our appeal officers ~~are~~ panel is not limited in their options when considering your appeal. They can, if they believe it appropriate, decrease a sanction, approve the original outcome, remove a sanction or increase a sanction.
- 7.6. Following your appeal hearing, we will send details of the outcome to you in writing. We will usually aim to do this within [two weeks] of your appeal hearing. The decision you receive on appeal is our final decision. There is no further right of appeal.

8. Disciplinary action and dismissal

There are three stages in our procedure for dealing with cases of misconduct. We may start at any stage of this procedure, and we may skip stages if we think it appropriate.

- 8.1. First stage – We will give you a first written warning. Unless you already have active written warnings relating to disciplinary matters on your work record, a first written warning will usually remain in place for [12 months] from the date you are notified of the decision. It will then be removed from your record.
- 8.2. Second stage – If there is an active first written warning on your record and you are involved in further misconduct, we will usually issue you with a final written warning. In serious cases of misconduct, we may issue a final written warning *without* first issuing a first written warning. In either case, the final written warning will usually remain in place for [12 months] from the date you are notified of the decision. It will then be removed from your record.
- 8.3. Third stage – If there is an active final written warning on your record and you are involved in further misconduct, you may be dismissed. You may also be dismissed for

a serious case of misconduct, or if you are involved in gross misconduct. We explain what we mean by 'misconduct' and 'gross misconduct' below.

9. What is misconduct?

9.1. Misconduct is a general term referring to behaviour that falls below the standards we expect. You will not usually be dismissed for a first allegation of misconduct, unless it amounts to gross misconduct, which we discuss in the next section).

9.2. The following list gives examples of what we would normally regard as misconduct:

- a Minor breaches of Council policy
- b Minor breaches of your employment contract
- c Unauthorised use of, or minor damage to, council property
- d Poor attendance and timekeeping
- e Refusing to follow instructions, where doing so is not serious enough to be gross misconduct
- f Making an excessive number of personal calls using company phones
- g Sending and receiving an excessive number of personal emails
- h Using the internet or email for personal purposes, other than on an occasional basis
- i Using obscene language or otherwise behaving offensively
- j Being careless when carrying out your duties
- k Wasting time during your contracted working hours
- l Smoking in areas where smoking is not allowed

10. What is gross misconduct?

10.1. You will usually be dismissed without warning, without notice and without payment in lieu of notice if we find you have committed an act of gross misconduct. This is known as summary dismissal.

10.2. The following list gives examples of what we would normally regard as gross misconduct. This list is not exhaustive and should be referred to as a guide.

- a Serious breaches of council policy
- b Bullying or physical violence
- c Fraud, theft or any act of dishonesty
- d Continued absence without leave
- e Altering records, ~~such as sales records~~, to put yourself in a better light even if there is no immediate financial benefit to you
- f Malicious misuse of any of our procedures, for example, if you make up allegations when taking out a grievance against someone
- g Serious negligence or carelessness, particularly if it leads to us losing trust and confidence in you
- h Serious health and safety breaches
- i Serious breaches of data protection legislation or our [*Data Protection Policy*]
- j Serious and/or intentional damage to company property
- k Unlawful harassment or discrimination
- l Viewing, receiving or sending anything that breaches our [*Harassment and Bullying Policy*] or our [*Equal Opportunities Policy*]
- m Knowingly accessing websites containing offensive, obscene or pornographic material
- n Misuse of internal email, external email or other internet and computer-based facilities, including the storage and/or transmission of obscene, illicit or undesirable material
- o Serious insubordination or refusal to obey management instructions

- p Serious breaches of confidence
- q Covertly recording your colleagues or any management (or other) meeting where the participants do not know you are recording
- r Being under the influence of, or possessing, illegal drugs
- s Being under the influence of alcohol unless this is with your manager's express knowledge and permission – for example, where you are involved in entertaining on the Council's behalf
- t Conduct that violates common decency, or engaging in behaviour that might bring the Council's name into disrepute

11. Sickness absence during the disciplinary process

- 11.1. Should you be absent due to sickness once you have been notified of a disciplinary investigation meeting or disciplinary hearing, you will be paid under the sick pay rules set out in our [\[Absence Management Policy\]](#) (which may not involve being paid full pay). We may decide not to pay you any company sick pay during that period of sickness absence, even if we would normally pay you company sick pay. Your rights to Statutory Sick Pay are unaffected.
- 11.2. If you say you are unable to attend a disciplinary hearing due to sickness, we will offer you a new date for the hearing. However, if you are unable to attend a hearing within what we consider to be a reasonable period of time, then we will look at alternative ways of conducting the hearing. This may involve conducting the hearing by phone or virtually, inviting you to send written submissions or asking a colleague to attend on your behalf.

12. Criminal offences

- 12.1. If the police are involved in any issues which we are also investigating, we will not usually delay our internal processes whilst we await the outcome of any decision to charge or criminal prosecution.
- 12.2. Conduct outside of work which is alleged to be criminal may be considered a disciplinary matter by us if we reasonably believe that it is relevant to your job.

13. Administration of the Disciplinary Policy

- 13.1. [The Town Clerk] is responsible for the administration of the Disciplinary Policy.
Should you have any feedback, please contact [the town clerk]

DRAFT

HR25 – Appraisal Policy

Aylsham Town Council



Adopted:
Revised:
Review: Biannually or as changes are required.

HR25 - Appraisal Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Our appraisal process celebrates success; reflects on past performance; identifies any training, development or performance needs; and motivates you to perform in the ~~the~~ ~~[[year] or [insert period]]~~ ahead.
- 1.2. This Policy:
 - a Explains the principles that underpin our approach to appraisals
 - b Sets out the different roles and responsibilities that you and your ~~line manager~~ have as part of the appraisal process
 - c Provides guidance on how to set strong objectives against which to measure your future performance
 - ~~d [Explains our 360-degree approach to feedback and what this might mean for you]~~
 - e Sets out some of the opportunities presented by our appraisal process
 - f Explains how we will store appraisal materials and how you can access them to appraise your ongoing performance
 - g Explains the connection between our appraisal structure, training and development and performance management
- 1.3. Please note that this Policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend or remove this Policy.
- 1.4. This Policy applies to all employees of the Council.

2. Key principles underpinning our approach to appraisals

- 2.1. We will be guided by the following principles in our approach to appraisals:
 - a All employees will be appraised fairly.
 - b Discussion in relation to performance will be evidence-based where possible.
 - c Appraisal meetings will be held privately.

- d We will provide constructive feedback on past performance.
- e We will recognise good work.
- f We will make sure that the appraisal process does not exist in a vacuum – it should form the basis of an ongoing discussion between you and us regarding your performance and direction.
- g We will set clear objectives for the period ahead.

3. How our appraisal process works

- 3.1. *[Insert a brief explanation of how appraisals operate within your Council. Some templates are set out below, taken from the most common types of appraisal processes.]*

[EITHER (if you operate a traditional annual appraisal process)

*[We have an annual appraisal cycle with appraisals being carried out once a year [in around **October**]]. You will generally be appraised by your **[line manager]**. You will be contacted by your **[line manager]** to arrange an appraisal meeting. Before your appraisal meeting, you should complete the appraisal form and carry out any necessary preparation. You should review your previous appraisal to consider whether previously set objectives have been met. ~~Your completed appraisal form should be shared with your **[line manager]** a week before your appraisal meeting.]~~*

OR (if you have a ‘regular check in’ approach to appraisals)

*[We operate a ~~quarterly~~ check in appraisal process, in which the first meeting each year is more formal and then regular check ins held throughout the year are less formal. By holding regular check ins, we aim to focus on issues as and when they arise rather than allowing issues to become stale over time. The general structure of our check in approach is that annual objectives will be agreed at the first appraisal meeting. These will then be assessed, reviewed and amended as appropriate at the first check in and second check in, which will be held **[at the end of each quarter]**. A final meeting will be held **[at the end of the year]**, at which performance over the whole year will be reviewed. At this final meeting, there will be an opportunity to discuss wider issues, such as career aspirations and council plans, and objectives will be set for the year ahead.]]*

4. Our role in the appraisal process

- 4.1. Having a positive experience of the appraisal process can have a big impact on your motivation. We know it is important that our appraisal structure is fit for purpose, that those involved are appropriately trained, that all necessary preparation is undertaken and that appraisals are carried out in an atmosphere of respect. We make the following commitments in terms of our conduct as part of the appraisal process *[Delete/amend as appropriate. Not a legal requirement]*:

- ~~a [We will arrange to send out 360 degree feedback requests to your colleagues.]~~
- b We will gather evidence to support our position on attainment.
- c We will encourage self-assessment.
- d We will listen and ask open questions.
- e We will aim to agree solutions with you to any issues which arise.
- f We will identify any training and development needs.
- g We will provide constructive criticism which is improvement focused.
- h We will work with you to create clear objectives to take forward.
- i We will ensure that our discussions, outcomes and objectives are recorded in writing.

5. Your role in the appraisal process

5.1. To get the best out of the appraisal process, you need to take an active role. This means you should:

- a Review your objectives and your previous appraisal in good time before the meeting.
- b Take the time to gather evidence to show the extent to which you have met your previous objectives.
- c Be in a position to explain where and why you have not met your previous objectives and have proposals for how we can help you make sure similar objectives can be met fully in the future.
- d Ensure that any new proposed objectives are SMART (see section 6).
- e Prepare all paperwork in advance of the meeting.
- ~~f [Suggest colleagues from whom it would be appropriate for us to seek 360 degree feedback.]~~
- ~~g Ensure that your documentation is sent to your appraiser seven days before the meeting itself.~~

- h Take time in advance of the meeting to reflect on what outcome you would like from the appraisal process, including thinking about any training requests, career aspirations and any points of concern you may wish to raise.

6. Tips for setting strong objectives and how to assess achievement against them

6.1. We want all objectives set as part of the appraisal process to be **SMART**. This means that they should be:

- a **Specific** – They should be simple and clearly written.
- b **Measurable** – They should include a mechanism by which to judge achievement.
- c **Achievable** – They should be attainable, even if they involve some stretching.
- d **Realistic** – They should be within your capabilities and relevant to your role.
- e **Time-bound** – They should include a timeframe within which they should be completed.

You should have this acronym in mind whenever you create or discuss a new objective.

6.2. In assessing performance against objectives, we will generally want you to set out examples of achievement using an **SBI** approach. **SBI** provides the following structure within which examples of performance against objectives can be set out:

- a **Situation** – Set out the situation within which you believe the objective was met.
- b **Behaviour** – Explain what you did.
- c **Impact** – Set out the impact that your behaviour had and how it demonstrates performance against a given objective.

7. Feedback

~~7.1. [Amend or delete as appropriate.] Our appraisals are 360 degree. They look not only at performance but also collaboration, teamwork and behaviours towards others. We will usually ask you to nominate colleagues from whom you would be happy to receive 360 degree feedback. We trust that you are best placed to know who you work with most closely, although we may, on occasion, request 360 degree feedback from others who have not nominated. The replies received will be discussed during the appraisal meeting.~~

~~7.2. If you are asked to complete 360 degree feedback for a colleague, then you must provide fair and honest feedback. Where you can, provide evidence to support any specific feedback given.]~~

8. Next steps following your appraisal

- 8.1. After your appraisal meeting, you should work with us to make sure that all necessary follow-up is completed. **Appraisals will be reviewed by the Staffing Committee, as the group representative of the employer** ~~and that the completed forms are sent to [our HR department] where they will be reviewed and then stored in accordance with our [Data Protection Policy].~~
- 8.2. You can access your previous appraisal documentation at any time by [*contacting the town clerk*].
- 8.3. If a performance management concern has been discussed as part of the appraisal process, then we may take matters forward in line with our [*Performance Management Policy*].
- 8.4. If a training or development need has been highlighted as part of the appraisal process, then this will be taken forward in line with our [*Training and Development Policy*].
- 8.5. If you are unhappy with any part of the appraisal process, then you should raise this in the first instance with your appraiser. If you are not able to do this, or if the matter remains unresolved following these discussions, then you should refer to our [*Grievance Policy*].

9. Useful links and contacts

- 9.1. The following internal policies are referred to in this Policy and contain additional information and guidance [***amend as appropriate***]:
 - a [*Training and Development Policy*]
 - b [*Performance Management Policy*]
 - c [*Grievance Policy*]
 - d [*Data Protection Policy*]

10. Administration of the Appraisal Policy

[*The town clerk*] is responsible for the administration of the Appraisal Policy. Should you have any feedback, please contact [*the town clerk*].

DRAFT

HR26 – Training and Development Policy

Aylsham Town Council



Adopted:
Revised:
Review: Biannually or as changes are required.

HR26 - Training and Development Policy¹

1. Introduction

- 1.1. We understand the importance of having a clear training and development structure in place within the Council. We want you to have the skills necessary to carry out your roles to the best of your ability. We want to provide opportunities for training which help you develop and grow.
- 1.2. This Policy:
 - a Explains the principles that underpin our approach to training and development
 - b Sets out the different types of training we can offer
 - c Explains the interplay between training and development, and our appraisal structure
 - d Sets out the process for you to request training
 - e Explains how we approach time off for, and paying for, external training
- 1.3. This Policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend or remove this Policy.
- 1.4. This Policy applies to all employees of the Council. It does not generally apply to workers, agency staff, self-employed contractors or volunteers (although we may offer training to any of these categories of person²).

2. Our training and development principles

- 2.1. We are guided by the following principles:
 - a We will communicate the aim of your training to bolster your engagement.

¹ Please note that section 1 of the *Employment Rights Act 1996* requires that details of any training you offer (whether compulsory or not), and any training the employee must do and are required to pay for themselves, must be set out in an employee's statement of initial employment particulars. It must be issued either before employment starts or on the first day of employment.

² Training and Development are usually focused on employees – all employees.

- b We will not discriminate in the provision of training. We will ensure that all employees have access to training and support in their development.
- c We will make reasonable adjustments where necessary to the content, timing and location of training courses to support those with disabilities.
- d We will conduct a cost/benefit analysis on each occasion when responding to requests for training.
- e We will have a joined-up approach between our appraisal process (which is the basis of our assessment of development) and the organisation and provision of training.
- f We may refuse training requests if you are under investigation in relation to a disciplinary matter, if you are absent from the Council for a long period of time or if you have given or received notice of termination of employment.
- g We will seek feedback from you on the effectiveness of both internal and external training.

3. Our approach to training

3.1. We will follow a four-step approach when considering a training need:

- a **Assess:** We will always start with an assessment of the training need. This will be done in different ways, depending on the type of training involved. For example, it may be done by way of a one-to-one discussion between you and your [*line manager*]; it may come out of the appraisal process; it may form part of a performance management process; or it may be a more general form of training for a group within the workforce.
- b **Design/source:** Having decided that a training need exists, we will design or source the relevant training. We will have regard to our own internal expertise and capabilities. We will, if appropriate, engage with external organisations for training delivery.
- c **Deliver:** We will deliver the agreed training – either internally or externally – in a timely manner and in a way which is accessible to all to whom it applies.
- d **Evaluate:** We will seek feedback from course attendees regarding the effectiveness of the training provided and any areas where it could be improved.

4. Different types of training

4.1. There are several different types of training which may be applicable to employees, including:

- a **Induction training** – New employees and those moving to new roles with us will normally have induction training. This will [train you on our systems and equipment, provide relevant contact details and introduce you to the Council]. *[Insert any other elements of induction training here.]*
- b **Employee relations training** – From time to time, [*the council*] will implement training courses in key areas of employee relations. We want all of our employees to be aware of their legal obligations and the standards of behaviour which we require them to uphold.
- c **[Health and safety training** – We will provide training in all relevant areas of health and safety to ensure a safe place and safe systems of work for all.]
- d **Management training** – We will provide training for our managers to make sure that their management skills are developed and kept up to date. We will use training to make sure that they have a clear understanding of key employee issues.
- e **Technical training** – It is of key importance that you have the skills necessary to do your job well. Through the appraisal process and the performance management process, we will highlight any technical training needs and aim to provide training in the identified area.
- f **Team training** – We will assess training and development needs at a team and department level and, where appropriate, deliver team/department training on key issues.

5. How we will identify training needs

5.1. We will use our appraisal process to identify training needs. Please refer to our [*Appraisal Policy*] for more details. Where a performance issue is identified, we will consider whether training is required/suitable. Please see our [*Performance Management Policy*] for more details.

5.2. We encourage you to communicate any training or development needs you believe you may have. Any request for training should be made to your [*line manager*].

6. Practical considerations in relation to training and development

6.1. The following practical considerations should be borne in mind in relation to training and development:

- a [All training courses attended should be logged with *[the town clerk]* and listed in *[relevant appraisal documentation]*.]
- b You should, as soon as possible, tell *[your line manager / the course organiser]* about any adjustments needed to help you attend any training session.
- c You are responsible for organising your attendance at any external training. Reasonable expenses may be recoverable – please check the matter with your *[line manager]* before committing to any cost.
- d If you fail to attend a training session without good reason, we may deduct the cost of such training from your wages (or, if you are no longer employed by us, require you to repay us)³.
- e If we ask, you must agree to enter into a separate training fees agreement in relation to external training courses.

7. Useful links and contacts

7.1. The following internal policies are referred to in this Policy and contain additional information and guidance *[amend as appropriate]*:

- a *[Appraisal Policy]*
- b *[Performance Management Policy]*

8. Administration of the Training and Development Policy

8.1. *[The town clerk]* is responsible for the administration of the Training and Development Policy. Should you have any feedback, please contact *[the town clerk]*

³ Please note that for this clause to be actionable, you will need to have an express deductions clause in the employee's contract of employment. If fees are likely to be incurred, then you may wish to include a specific clause such as this in a separate training fees agreement, which would typically be drafted to provide for the recovery of fees paid should an employee leave within a certain period following the training.

Staffing Committee 27th November 2025

Item 6 - To Consider Merits of Increased use of HR Software

Further to initial research by Mitchell Philpott, Talent HR has been installed. Further time must be spent by the Clerk reviewing it, but it seems a reasonable system to use to help manage holiday / sickness etc. Further time must be spent looking at how well it works for part time employees and pro rata holidays etc.