



Public Document Pack

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

There will be a meeting of the Full Council on Tuesday, 23rd May, 2023 to be held at Newton Leys Pavilion, Furzey Way, Newton Leys commencing at 7.30 pm to transact the items of business set out in the agenda below.



Delia Shephard
Clerk to the Council
Monday, 15 May 2023

AGENDA

1. Election of chair of council and declaration of acceptance of office
2. Election of vice-chair of council
3. To note councillors' apologies for absence
4. To note councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda
(Under the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, made under s30 (3) of the Localism Act, councillors are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting)
5. Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 25 April 2023 of Full Council (Pages 1 - 6)
6. Public Speaking
To receive representations from members of the public on items on the agenda and to hear questions from members of the public about council business which may not be listed on the agenda.

Members of the public who wish to present a spoken or written representation should contact the Clerk no later than 12 noon on the day before the day of the meeting in order to register to be heard.

The public speaking session will generally last no more than 15 minutes and individuals will be permitted to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes.

Requests to speak or ask questions will be dealt with in the order in which they have been received by the Clerk.

For more information or to register to speak please contact:
Delia Shephard
Town Clerk
01908 649469
clerk@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

Please be aware that meetings may be recorded including the representations made by members of the public.
7. To note the minutes of recent meetings of committees of the council and to consider any recommendations contained therein
 - (i) Minutes of Meeting - Employment Policy Committee (Pages 7 - 10)
Recommendations from the Employment Policy Committee will be discussed at agenda item
 - (ii) Minutes of meeting of Environment and Planning Committee (Pages 11 - 14)
Members of the public and representatives of the media are welcome to attend but are warned that items marked with an asterisk () may involve discussion of confidential information and the council may resolve to exclude members of the public and press if this is deemed to be in the public interest*

8. To review and confirm scheme of delegations and committee structure including terms of reference for all committees, sub-committees and staff (Pages 15 - 48)
9. To elect members to committees
- (i) Finance & Governance Committee
 - (ii) Environment and Planning Committee
 - (iii) Community Committee
 - (iv) Appeals Committee
 - (v) Employment Policy Committee
 - (vi) Clerk Performance Management Sub-committee
10. To review and adopt Standing Orders (Pages 49 - 72)
No changes proposed by officers to previously agreed document.
11. To review and adopt Financial Regulations (Pages 73 - 92)
This document was amended and approved by full council on 25 April 2023. No further changes are proposed by officers.
12. To review and confirm the town council's adopted code of conduct for members and adopted member officer protocol (Pages 93 - 124)
No changes proposed.
13. To review arrangements with community partners
- (i) Partnership with Water Eaton Community Larder (Pages 125 - 126)
 - (ii) Partnership with Milton Keynes Canalside Forum (Pages 127 - 128)
14. To review representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back to full council (Pages 129 - 130)
- i Milton Keynes Parishes Forum – 2 representatives required, (Cllr Stephens and the clerk are prepared to continue as representatives)
 - ii Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils – 2 representatives
 - iii Lakes Estate Renewal Forum – 1 representative
 - iv Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal – membership of the Town Deal Board is to be reviewed now that the programme is moving into the implementation phase of the TIP projects. In view of this, it is suggested that no change is made to representation at the moment which would need to be agreed by the Town Deal Board in any event.
 - v Salden Chase Sub-Committee – two representatives
 - vi Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – 5 representatives or more (Cllrs Hussein has recently taken over as chair)
15. To review asset register including inventory of land (Pages 131 - 132)
16. To confirm the town council's arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks (Pages 133 - 134)
At the annual meeting on 24 May 2022, it was resolved that the recommendation of the Finance Committee on the that the Council enter into a three year agreement for insurance cover with Zurich Municipal; the renewal amount will be provided at the meeting.

17. To review and approve subscriptions to other bodies (Pages 135 - 136)
- i Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (BMKALC) including NALC contribution
 - ii Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
 - iii The Allotment Association (formerly National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners)
 - iv National Association of British Markets (NABMA)

Previously the Town Council has resolved that it no longer wishes to be a member of Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils.

18. To review the council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (Pages 137 - 152)
Replacement policies for consideration and adoption

19. To review the council's policy for dealing with the press/media (Pages 153 - 186)
Proposed changes are highlighted in red. Policy was previously reviewed at last annual meeting 24 May 2022.

20. To review the town council's complaints procedure (Pages 187 - 194)
No changes proposed by officers to this policy which was previously approved on 24 May 2022.

21. To review the council's employment policies and procedures (Pages 195 - 268)
No changes proposed, all policies previously adopted.

22. To review and confirm the town council's calendar of ordinary meetings for the year 2023-24 up to and including the next annual meeting of the council and including the place of those meetings (Pages 269 - 272)
Calendar previously approved, meetings will be held at Newton Leys Pavilion.

23. To review and comment on planning applications due to be considered by Milton Keynes Council

- (i) 23/00984/PRIOR - 27 The Concourse Brunel Centre Locke Road Bletchley (Pages 273 - 280)
Milton Keynes Prior approval for the demolition of two storey retail unit
Members are reminded of previous statements from MKCC/MKDP that this building would be demolished as soon as practicable in order to improve the area and to prevent further criminal damage/anti-social behaviour. Meanwhile a development brief for the Brunel Centre parcel of land is currently in preparation and this will be consulted upon in due course.

25. Financial Matters

- (i) To note a summary financial report showing income and expenditure against budget to 30 April 2023 (Pages 281 - 282)
The budget summary to April 2023 details accurate figures, however, year-end accruals have not all reversed. The summary of the rolling capital program includes budget figures that will require reviewing at the Finance Committee on 20 June 2023.
- (ii) To ratify a list of payments made or due to be made by the council before the next meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee (Pages 283 - 288)
- (iii) To approve expenditure on consultancy fees to support the two task force teams currently working to gather evidence for the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Plan as requested by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

26. To note draft minutes from annual meeting of electors held on Thursday 11 May 2023 and to consider any actions arising therefrom (Pages 289 - 314)
27. To consider exclusion of the public for consideration of the following item of business which may include discussion of individual staff members personal circumstances
28. To consider recommendations from the Employment Policy Committee including a proposal to add to the town council staff permanent headcount



Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Sports Hall - Newton Leys Pavilion on Tuesday, 25th April, 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs E Kelly-Wilson, R Graham, Elhasoglu, Palmer, G Bedford, S Browne, R Haine, M Imran, M McDonald, T Stephens, M Wymer, Hussein and Osumili

Absent: Cllrs L Campbell, E O'Rourke and A Khanom

Apologies: Cllrs S Clark, K Ely, E Hume and A Segebrecht

In attendance: Delia Shephard (Town Clerk) (Clerk) and John Fairclough (Support Services Manager)

Min Ref

FC23/24-1 **Councillors' apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and ran through the housekeeping arrangements. It was RESOLVED to note the apologies for absence and the absences without apologies as listed above.

The Chair announced that Sean Porter had resigned from the council with immediate effect as he had now moved away from Fenny Stratford and had been elected to office at Great Linford Parish Council. It was unanimously RESOLVED to thank former Cllr Porter for his 8 years of service as a town councillor for Fenny Stratford.

FC23/24-2 **Councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**

There were no declarations of interest.

FC23/24-3 **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 28 March 2023 of Full Council**

It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the meeting be approved as an accurate record.

FC23/24-4 **Public Speaking**

The Chair of Water Eaton Residents Association made representations concerning the town council's subsidised swimming scheme at Bletchley Leisure Centre noting the price increases which had been introduced and stressing the importance of providing swimming sessions for residents during the current cost of living crisis especially for those in receipt of benefits.

FC23/24-5 **Variation of order of business**

It was RESOLVED to vary the order of business and deal with agenda item 16 next.

FC23/24-6 **Increase in swimming prices at Bletchley Leisure Centre**

Members noted the comments made by the Chair of Eater Eaton Residents Association and discussion followed. It was noted that swimming prices were set by InspireAll and it was agreed that officers would seek information about the rationale for the differences in costs between the different categories of swimmers and this would be reported to the Community Committee which has responsibility for the swimming scheme. It was confirmed that the budget set for 2023-2024 the swimming scheme included sufficient funds to cover the anticipated price rise which provided usage remained at a similar level as in previous years.



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It was RESOLVED to note the increase in prices as follows:

Swim category	2022 Price	2023 Price
3 – 16 years (junior)	£2.30	£2.50
16-19 in full time education (further education)	£2.30	£2.50
60+ (senior)	£2.20	£2.50
other*	£3.80	£4.00
*Includes those in receipt of <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Tax Reduction• Universal Credit• Personal Independence Payment• Employment and Support Allowance• Income Support• Invalid Care Allowance• Working Tax Credit• Pension Credit		

FC23/24-7 **Draft minutes of recent meetings of committees of the council and to consider any recommendations therein not included on the agenda**

FC23/24-7.i **Draft Minutes of Community Committee 4 April 2023**
It was RESOLVED that the minutes be noted and there were no recommendations for consideration by full council.

FC23/24-7.ii **Draft minutes of Finance and Governance Committee 18 April 2023**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes be noted. There were several recommendations for consideration by the town council which were included as individual items on the agenda following this item.

FC23/24-8 **Changes to the financial regulations as recommended by the Finance and Governance Committee**
It was RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Finance and Governance Committee be approved and the Town Council's Financial Regulations be amended as shown below.

Item 6.14 – updated to reflect the change to the single transaction limit approved in minute FC22/23-75. The item will now read as follows:

Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk [and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed. On-line purchases for software that are in excess of £1,500, delegated officer powers should be used (RFO or Proper Officer) in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Finance and Governance whose approval would be sought in advance.

Item 6.16 a – the current petty cash float is £250, however, on the basis that the local NatWest branch is closing in June 2023, the RFO would like the limit increased to



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£500. The item will now read as follows:

The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £500 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.

FC23/24-9 **Receipt and approval of internal auditor's final report for the financial year 2022-2023 as recommended by the Finance and Governance Committee**

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Finance and Governance Committee that the final internal audit report for the financial year 2022-2023 prepared by Auditing Solutions Ltd be noted and approved.

FC23/24-10 **Approval of the council's annual governance statement and accountability return as recommended by the Finance and Governance Committee**

It was RESOLVED that both the council's annual governance statement and accountability return (AGAR) for the financial year 2022-2023 be approved and signed as a correct representation of the council's position as had been recommended by the Finance and Governance Committee on 18 April 2023.

FC23/24-11 **Arrangements for advertising the period during which electors and interested persons may exercise rights relating to the annual accounts**

It was RESOLVED that the arrangements for advertising the period during which electors and interested persons may exercise their rights relating to the annual accounts during the period Monday 12 June 2023 to Friday 23 July 2023 be noted.

FC23/24-12 **Town Council's Annual Report for the year 2022- 23 to be presented at the annual meeting of electors on 11 May 2023**

It was RESOLVED that the Town Council's draft annual report for the year 2022-23 be noted and approved.

FC23/24-13 **Town Council's delivery plan for the year 2022-2023**

The Chair commented that the delivery plan for the past year had not included several projects which had not been anticipated and had, in any event, been an ambitious plan given the council's resources. There were some target which had not been achieved but these had been explored and did not reflect lack of effort on the part of team.

It was RESOLVED that the delivery plan for the year 2022-23 be noted.

FC23/24-14 **Town Council's delivery plan for the financial year 2023-2024**

The draft delivery plan for the year 2023-24 was discussed and a typing error was noted on key where Strategic Priority 5 had been overtyped with the word "Key" and this would be corrected by officers. The clerk noted that the plan was as yet incomplete (ie progress column) but members were asked to approve the project items within the plan. At the Finance and Governance Committee meeting on 18 April 2023 it had been recommended that the delivery plan was restricted to new projects and actions for review by members rather than included all the "business as usual" items which would be contained in a separate internal document which could be made available to councillors on request. The draft delivery plan had therefore been prepared on that basis.

It was RESOLVED that the draft delivery plan for the year 2023-24 be approved and adopted with the addition of an item to review the information and advice service to be provided to residents which had been included in the budget and had previously been



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delivered by MK Citizens Advice.

FC23/24-15

Town Council constitution document and associated policies including the scheme of delegations and committee structure

Members reviewed and discussed a report from the clerk on production of a Town Council constitution and it was RESOLVED that staff time be used to activate the constitution module of Modern Gov and produce an integrated space for all policy documents.

The Town Council's scheme of delegations and committee structure had been revised in line with decisions made during the year and the new draft was discussed. There was general agreement that the existing committee structure was working well for both members and officers. However several members expressed concern that not all their fellow councillors were attending the meetings they had been summoned to and not all were preparing for meetings in advance. Discussion followed on the obligations of those who took public office.

It was RESOLVED that the draft scheme of delegations document be approved and the current committee structure be retained for the year 2023-2024.

FC23/24-16

Town Council's draft communications action plan for 2023-24 which includes resumption of live streaming of town council and committee meetings

It was RESOLVED that the draft communications action plan for 2023-24 be approved and adopted. Councillors noted that the new website was an improvement and the clerk advised that further changes to the website were planned in the next few months. It was agreed that analytics data on the website be made available at the next Community Committee meeting. Members noted that the town council's communications were not reaching all parts of the community (as evidenced at a recent public meeting not organised by the town council) and it was agreed that thought be given to improved measurement of the efficacy of all communications.

Members also noted that arrangements had been made for recording and live streaming of town council and committee meetings and the introduction of hybrid meetings in order to encourage participation and transparency. The clerk advised that legislation required that members of the council must attend full council and committee meetings in person and be physically present in order to be marked as present in the minutes and in order to speak and vote on any business. If members were unable to attend physically in person they would be able to join the meeting remotely in the same way as any member of the public and would be permitted to speak at the discretion of the person chairing the meetings. It was agreed that the clerk would issue an internal briefing note to all members on hybrid meeting arrangements and etiquette.

FC23/24-17

Proposal to extend the free period of usage of Newton Leys Pavilion by Ping Pong Social at a cost of up to £2,574

A report on a request for an extended period of free hall hire up to a cost of £2,574 (representing 39 weeks) from Ping Pong Social was discussed. It was noted that the sessions on Wednesday evenings currently used by Ping Pong Social could be let to other organisations at the usual rate and an original period of 15 weeks free use had already been agreed to help the group get started. The equipment used was owned by the town council.

It was RESOLVED that a further period of 3 months usage at no charge would be offered to this group and that if the group could demonstrate at the end of this period



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that they had made an application for grant funding from third parties a further 3 month period would be considered.

FC23/24-17.i **Review of licensing application DBI04474 New Premises Licence Application - B2B, Unit 3 Stanier Square, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 2FY - Sale of alcohol: 4pm - 10.30pm indoors only. Late Night Refreshment and sale of alcohol 11pm - 4am via online/phone deliveries only.**

Following some discussion it was RESOLVED that no representations be sent to the licensing authority about this application as the town council had no evidence to support any objections. It was agreed that members would report to the clerk any incidents of concern about this or any other licensed premises in the area.

The meeting closed at 8.29 pm

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Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Policy Committee of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Meeting Room - Syc House on Tuesday, 2nd May, 2023 commencing at 8.00 pm

Present: Cllrs G Bedford, E Hume and E Kelly-Wilson

Absent: Cllr M Imran

Apologies: Cllr K Ely

In attendance: Delia Shephard (Town Clerk) (Clerk)

Min Ref

- EMPC23-2421 **Councillors' apologies for absence**
It was RESOLVED to note the apologies and absence without apologies as listed above.
- EMPC23-2422 **Councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**
There were no declarations of interests
- EMPC23-2423 **Minutes of the previous meeting of the committee and to note that the meeting due to take place on 31 March 2023 had not taken place.**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 21 February 2023 be approved. It was noted that the meeting scheduled to be held on 31 March 2023 did not take place.
- EMPC23-2424 **Public Speaking**
There were no representations from members of the public.
- EMPC23-2425 **Health and safety matters affecting employees and council activities**
With reference to outstanding items from the 2023 Health and Safety Action Report, the Environment and Premises Manager had reported a further delay in procurement of fire doors for Sycamore House as previous quotations were considerably higher than thought ideal.

It was RESOLVED to note the position and express the committee's concern that this health and safety matter was not being assigned sufficient importance and should be expedited.
- EMPC23-2426 **Financial management report showing expenditure against budget for the year to date on employment matters**
It was RESOLVED to note a report showing expenditure on staff matters for the financial year to 31 April 2023.
- EMPC23-2427 **Recommendation from the Finance and Governance Committee concerning employee holiday**
Following discussion it was RESOLVED to approve a recommendation from the Finance & Governance Committee (minute reference FC23/24-11) to approve compensation for additional hours worked by staff by way of an additional day of annual leave. The clerk noted that all leave allowances had recently been increased by one day under the national agreement and that there was an extra bank holiday for



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the coronation; provision of any extra leave had an impact on productivity and it was suggested that this should be avoided in future though the staff team appreciated this recognition of their hard work.

EMPC23-2428 Exclusion of Public and Press

It was RESOLVED that members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted which would include discussion of individual employees including their personal circumstances and conditions of employment.

EMPC23-2429 Confirmation of individual salary increments for specified staff due to take effect from 1 April 2023 to be backdated to that date and included in the May payroll

The clerk presented a confidential report with information about the town council's contractual obligations to provide annual increments for members of staff. This report was reviewed and discussed in the light of the recent pay comparison review undertaken by Paydata and reported upon at the last meeting of the committee. Those employees who had reached the top of the pay banding for their role were not entitled to any increments.

It was RESOLVED that the following increments be confirmed and implemented with effect from 1 April 2023:

Employee role	Increment by number spinal column points on the approved pay scales
Support Services Manager	1
Environment and Premises Manager	1
Finance Manager	2
Projects and Media Officer	2
Administration Officer	2
Bookings and Facilities Officer	1
Environment Officer	1

Those employees who received two increments were contractually entitled to one increment but two had been awarded to bring pay into line with the findings of the pay review.

EMPC23-2430 Proposed pay bandings for existing roles using the levels assigned in the Paydata report discussed at the last meeting of the committee

The clerk reported that further work was required on pay bandings associated with some job descriptions and this item was deferred to the next committee meeting so that a decision could be considered when all the information was available.

EMPC23-2431 Confidential report on matters affecting employee performance and ability to meet the council's current and future needs

The clerk tabled a confidential document which was supported by an oral report. The presentation included information about changes to the council's workload over the previous year and anticipated changes which would be implemented when the town council began delivery of the landscaping services. The presentation also included an overview of the work of the Support Services and the Environment and Premises teams.

It was RESOLVED that the review of the work of the Environment and Premises team



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would be extended to include a review of the work of the Support Services team.

The clerk reported that recent recruitment activity for a full-time employee for a fixed term contract to cover parental leave and to provide additional temporary capacity in the Support Services team had not been successful. Discussion followed and it was recognised by the committee that employment market conditions meant it was difficult to recruit to fixed term contracts. Different options were explored.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to full council that a new full time and permanent post of Support Services Officer be added to the existing staff structure. The proposed job description and the rationale for this would be presented to all members at the annual meeting of council. It was to be noted that this post had not been included in the 2023-24 budget.

The meeting closed at 9.27 pm

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Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Planning Committee of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Community Hall - Newton Leys Pavilion on Tuesday, 16th May, 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs R Graham, R Haine, I Hussein, E Kelly-Wilson, E O'Rourke and A Palmer

Absent: Cllr L Campbell and S Clark

Apologies: Cllr A Segebrecht

In attendance: Tom Chapman, Network Rail
Will Allen, Environment and Premises Manager, acting as Clerk

Min Ref

- EPC23/24-1 **Councillors' apologies for absence**
It was RESOLVED that the apologies for absence and absences without apologies be noted.
- EPC23/24-2 **Minutes of the last meeting of the committee**
It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.
- EPC23/24-3 **Councillor's declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**
In relation to agenda item 5i Councillor Hussein declared a personal interest in the Premier Academy but as this was not a pecuniary interest Councillor Hussein was not precluded from discussing or voting on any proposals relating to the agenda item.
- EPC23/24-4 **Public Speaking Time**
Several members of the public including members of Water Eaton Residents Association expressed their objections to the planning application to be discussed at item 5i (The Premier Academy). Their objections related to safety and parking. It was stated that a continual flow of small planning applications was leading to approval of plans that, if taken as a whole, would not have been granted. Concern was expressed about impediments to access by emergency vehicles.

Members of the public including members of Water Eaton Residents Association also expressed their objections to the planning application to be discussed at items 5iii Lamb Sidings. These objections related to the impact of additional traffic and of additional HGVs accessing this site. Concerns were expressed that Water Eaton Road was already difficult for traffic and pedestrians due to the traffic lighted single lane under the bridge which led to build up of traffic at peak times. It was opined that the addition of further vehicles would worsen this and would have a negative impact to traffic along Duncombe Street, Clifford Avenue and Windsor Street.
- EPC23/24-5 **Planning applications due for determination by Milton Keynes Council**
It was RESOLVED to vary the order of business and deal with agenda item 5iii next which a representative of Network Rail was in attendance.
- EPC23/24-5i **23/00888/PRIOR - Lamb Sidings Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 3BF - Construction of rail depot**
Tom Chapman of Network Rail answered questions in relation to the planning



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application at Lamb Sidings. It was acknowledged that the fence had not always been well maintained by Network Rail and a commitment was given to improving the maintenance of the fencing and embankment in the area and erecting bat boxes as part of the development. Mr Chapman explained that the transport strategy submitted with the planning application mitigated many of the issues raised. Shifts would be staggered meaning that additional vehicles would not all be arriving or leaving at the same time. The entrance to the site would be set 110m back from the entrance with Water Eaton Road to prevent any “backing up” of vehicles attempting to access the site from the highway. Mr Chapman also committed to periodic meetings in the future to engage with residents.

It was RESOLVED to object to the proposed development on the grounds of increased throughput of traffic on an already busy road (Water Eaton Road) with problems because of the road under the railway bridge only being wide enough for a single car and therefore subject to traffic lights allowing flow in one direction at a time.

EPC23/24-5ii **23/00686/FULM - The Premier Academy Saffron Street MK2 3AH - Variation of wording for conditions 5 (Pedestrian Gate opening hours) and 6 (Restricting Vehicular Access only to emergency vehicles) seeking to allow use of the entrance gates on Tiffany Close for pedestrian access at school drop off and pick up times (relating to permission ref. 08/01033/MKCOD3 - erection of multi purpose school hall together with the creation/retention of vehicular access from tiffany close (resubmission of 08/00660/MKCOD3))**

It was RESOLVED to object to the proposed development because of the impact on parking and on highway safety. It was further RESOLVED to request that, if approved, a condition of the approval be that vehicular access not be allowed through the school connecting Saffron Close/Mossmans Close with Tiffany Close.

EPC23/24-5iii **23/00802/COU - 2 Marquess Drive Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 2FP - Change of use from dwellinghouse (C3) to HMO (Class 4)**

It was REOLVED to make no comment on the proposed development.

EPC23/24-6 **Report on allotment site occupancy and maintenance**

It was RESOLVED that an update report on allotment site occupancy showing 3 vacant plots and 43 on the waiting list be noted.

EPC23/24-7 **Report showing income and expenditure against budget which falls within the remit of the committee**

It was RESOLVED that a report showing income and expenditure against budget circulated with the agenda be noted.

EPC23/24-8 **Update on approval of Community Infrastructure Funding projects for 2023/24**

Correspondence from MKCC on the town council's 2023/24 applications to its Community Infrastructure had been circulated before the meeting. It was RESOLVED to note that approval of all three of the town council's submitted Community Infrastructure Fund projects for 2023/24 had been confirmed as follows:

- i Signage for multistory car park (£10,000 total project fee, 50% to be met by the town council, 50% by Milton Keynes City Council)
- ii Planters on Queensway (£10,000 total project fee, 50% to be met by the town council, 50% by Milton Keynes City Council)
- iii Speed Indicator Devices (£10,000 total project fee, 50% to be met by the town council, 50% by Milton Keynes City Council)



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and officers were authorised to begin work on the projects as soon as possible.

- EPC23/24-9 **Update on progress with environmental audit**
The Support Services Managed advised that the independent carbon footprint and energy audit was now underway and that documents relating to the town council's fuel use, utility bills and waste disposal had been supplied. The audit at Sycamore House had taken place but further visits were due to be carried out to the council's other premises.
- EPC23/24-10 **Update report on preparations for landscape devolution in September 2023**
It was RESOLVED to note the contents of a report which circulated before the meeting which included progress on key elements relating to the devolution of landscape maintenance to start in September 2023. In addition a Cantt chart was included showing the project plan between now and September.
- EPC23/24-11 **Update report on transfer and details of the delivery plan for the maintenance of the football pitches at Newton Leys**
It was RESOLVED to note the contents of the report which stated that transfer of the pitches was imminent and gave details of the planned yearly pitch maintenance plan.
- EPC23/24-12 **S106 funding for improvements to fencing at Orchardside Allotments**
It was RESOLVED to note MKCC's approval of use of of £10,331 of S106 funding associated with the former Reckitt and Coleman site Milward Drive, Bletchley for the improvement of fencing at Orchardside Allotments. This application had previously been approved by the town council on 14th March 2023 and officers were authorised to progress the necessary work.
- EPC23/24-13 **Update report on the work of the neighbourhood plan task teams**
Members had been provided with the briefing documents being used by the Neighbourhood Plan Taskforce Teams one of which was gathering data on the local environment and one of which was gathering data on local development sites. In the absence of the Clerk, Cllr Hussein on the progress of the two teams. Members noted that the information had been gathered primarily to inform the Neighbourhood Plan but would also be available to the town council as a useful source of intelligence when considering future projects.

The meeting closed at 8.54 pm

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Committee Structure & Scheme of Delegations

This scheme of delegation authorises standing committees and sub-committees of the council and the proper officer and the responsible financial officer to act with delegated authority in the specific circumstances prescribed. The scheme should be read in conjunction with the council's standing orders, financial regulations and other relevant documents contained in the council's constitution/list of policies.

Version: 2023-24 V2	Status: Adopted	Adopted: April 2023	Review date: April 2024
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Summary of Council Structure

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council has adopted an internal structure which allows committees of the council to undertake specified work and decision-making on behalf of the full council. The specific responsibilities of each committee are laid out in this document in the relevant terms of reference. Additionally, individual officers also have delegated powers which are also laid out below. The scheme of delegations includes the duties which the council must perform. However the scheme also includes delegated authority for powers which the council may or may not choose to use from year to year.

Standing Committees

Standing committees have delegated decision making powers in respect of matters specifically delegated to them. These powers must be exercised in accordance with the law, the council's standing orders and financial regulations and any approved policy framework and budget.

The council may at any time, following resolution, revoke any delegated authority.

Committees may decide not to exercise delegated responsibilities and may instead make a recommendation to the full council. Similarly, where a committee has no delegated power to make a decision it may make a recommendation to council.

The minutes of each standing committee will be reported to and noted by the full council at the next meeting of the council.

Sub-committees

Sub-committees have no delegated financial powers at the present time. Sub-committees may make recommendations to their parent committee on matters which fall within their terms of reference and parent committees may delegate specific issues to them.

Full council, committee and sub-committee meetings are supported by the attendance of officers of the council and are conducted in public in accordance with the relevant legislation and standing orders. These meetings cannot proceed unless they are quorate. Sub-committee minutes will be reported to and received by the parent committee at the next meeting of the parent committee where recommendations will be considered.

Working Groups

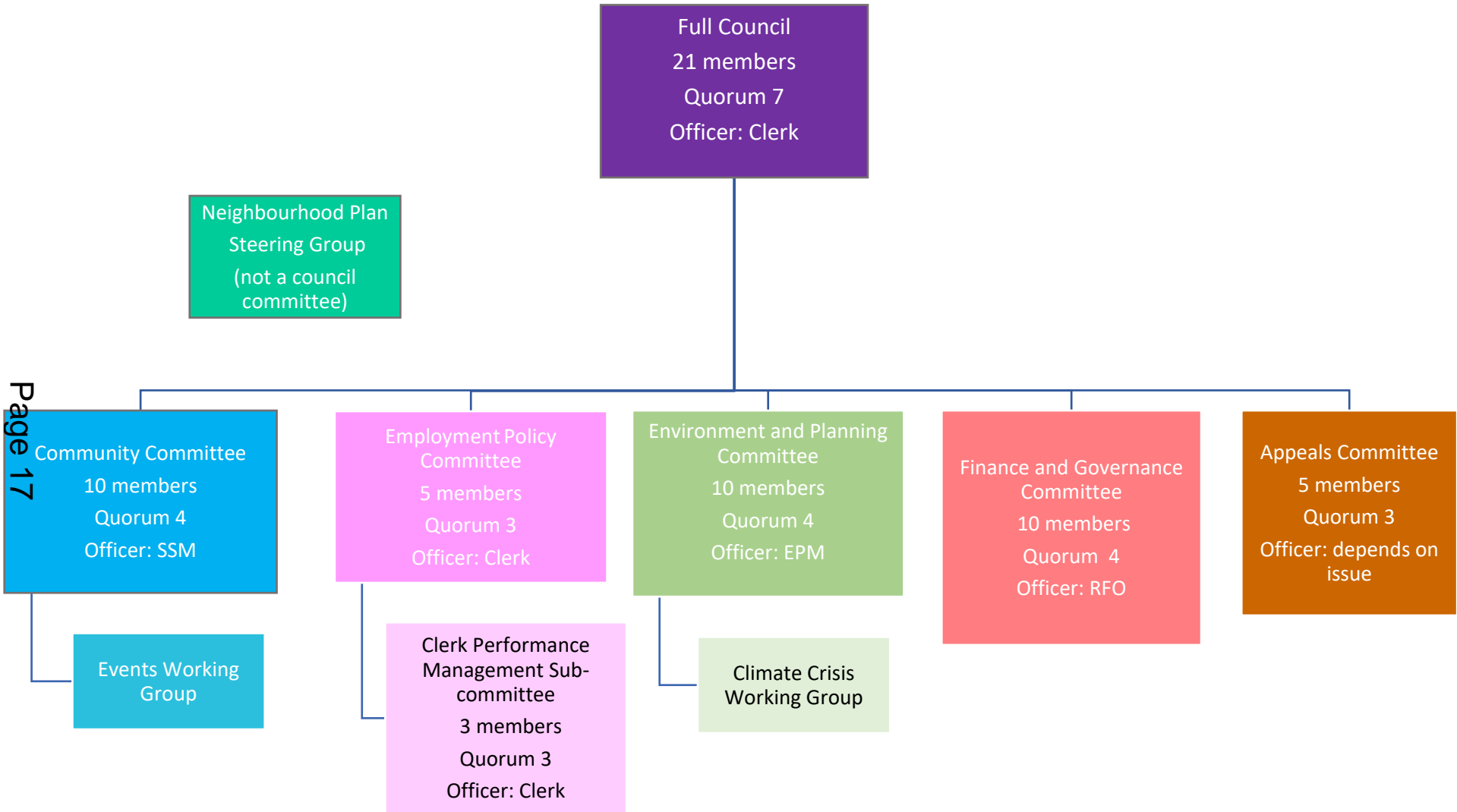
All committees have the power to create and appoint members to informal "working groups" or "task and finish" groups which by law can have no delegated executive powers and which report their findings to the body which created them for decisions. Working groups will be supported by officers as far as other council priorities and workloads allow. Working group meetings are not held in public and there is no formal quorum. Officers supporting working groups will produce notes not formal minutes.

Officers

The role of officers is to advise the council and to implement its decisions. Key officers are delegated to make specified decisions on behalf of the council.

Councillors

Councillors have no individual decision-making powers on behalf of the council.



NB Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is an independent body with its own Terms of Reference.

Summary of Town Council responsibilities which cannot be delegated

The following matters are reserved to the Council for decision, notwithstanding that appropriate committee(s) may make recommendations for the Council's consideration.

- i Approval of the annual budget
- ii Setting the precept
- iii Borrowing money
- iv Approving the council's annual accounts
- v Authorising any expenditure over £20,000
- vi Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or this Scheme of Delegation
- vii Making, amending or revoking by-laws
- viii Making of orders under any statutory powers
- ix Matters of principle or policy
- x Nomination and appointment of representatives of the Council to any other authority, organisation or body (excepting approved conferences or meetings).
- xi Any proposed new undertakings
- xii Prosecution or defence in a court of law
- xiii Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Council at any inquiry on matters affecting the Town, excluding those matters specific to a committee
- xiv Creation or dissolution of standing committees and sub committees
- xv Adopting or revising the council's code of conduct
- xvi Confirming (by resolution) that it has satisfied the statutory criteria to exercise the general power of competence

Detailed Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers of Council

Terms of Reference: Full Council	
21 Members of the Council	Quorum = 7
Meetings are held every second month starting from the Annual Meeting which is held in May.	
The Town Council has full authority for all functions, duties and responsibility, but may delegate certain decisions to a committee, sub-committee or to an officer. It cannot legally delegate such decisions to an individual councillor. Certain decisions are reserved to Council either by legislation or the choice of the Council.	
Function of the Council	Delegation of Function
General Governance	
Adoption and amendment of any strategies and policies.	None, but to receive advice from committees as appropriate. Human Resources policies & Pensions Discretions Policy delegated to Employment Policy Committee
Comments on Milton Keynes Council's Strategic plans, community plans or strategies	None but to receive advice from relevant committee
Comments on strategic plans and strategies of other public sector bodies, at national, regional or sub-regional level.	Reserved for Council unless within terms of reference of a specific committee. • Planning as set out in committee TOR.
Endorsement of plans or strategic documents produced by the community or partner organisations, including principal council.	None, reserved for Council
Consulting with the Police and other outside bodies on matters pertaining to the Town	To individual committees within their terms of reference.
Approval or amendment of Neighbourhood Plan	None • Production of Neighbourhood Plan delegated to Community Partnership (Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group)
Adopting and changing the Constitution, Standing Orders, any Standing Orders for Contracts, Financial Regulations or Delivery Plan	None
Approval of annual budget, Precept, and Medium-Term Financial Plan	None, but to receive advice from Finance & Governance Committee
Any delegated decision which may mean a breach of Council Policy or Budget outside virement rules	None, but to receive advice from Finance & Governance Committee re budget.

Election of the Chair, appointment of Vice Chair, and appointment of Chairs of committees and sub-committees established by Council.	None
Agreeing and/or amending the terms of reference for committees, deciding on their delegation limits, composition and making appointments to them.	None
Appointment of Members or Officers to outside bodies. Members reporting back from outside bodies	None <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Committee
Adopting an allowance scheme for Chairman or other members.	None
Changing the name of the Town Council.	None
Deciding on honorary titles or awards such as outstanding service.	None <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judging of Community Pride awards delegated to panel elected by Council
Making, amending, revoking, re-enacting or adopting Bylaws	None
Making, amending, revoking, re-enacting or adopting Bylaws.	None
To represent the view of the local community on matters of significance.	None
Power to make payments or provide other benefits in cases of fault or maladministration.	Finance & Governance Committee up to £5,000 Appeals Committee up to £500 Town Clerk up to £250
Appeals against any decision made on behalf of the Authority	As set out in complaints procedures, employment policies and Appeals Committee terms of reference
Decisions on issues relating to Data Protection, Access to Information, Freedom of Information & Human Rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk to renew Data Protection Registration and make amendments if necessary • Town Clerk to repones to requests from the public and matters raised by the Information Commissioner, taking advice from the Data Protection Compliance Officer as necessary. • Council or Finance & Governance Committee will determine refusal of information for vexatious reasons
To monitor the Council's ethical framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk to obtain register of interests forms and give annual reminder to Members and to act for the Monitoring Officer as necessary • Granting of dispensations is reserved to Council and delegated to the Town Clerk where a decision is required in advance of a committee meeting when no Council meeting is to take place

To institute or defend legal proceedings including proceedings for an injunction, to authorise the conducting of works in default of a notice, and to lodge an appeal against any Court decision.	None generally but in cases of urgency the Clerk on consultation with two of the Chair, Vice-Chair or another Committee Chair
All powers of the Council in the case of a civil emergency	The Town Clerk in consultation with two of the Chair, Vice-chair or f another committee Chair subject to reporting justification to next Council meeting up to £5,000 expenditure outside approved budget
All powers of the Council in the case of urgency	The Town Clerk in consultation with two of the Chair, Vice-chair or another committee Chair (subject to reporting justification to next Council meeting) up to £5000 expenditure outside approved budget
Election issues and filling of vacancies, including co-option of councillors	None
Power to direct as to the custody of town documents	None
All duties of the Proper Officer under legislation, standing orders, financial regulations or regulations for contracts including issue of notifications and signing of documents	Town Clerk or in their absence the nominated deputy to have authority after seeking relevant advice if necessary
All duties of the Responsible Financial Officer under legislation, standing orders financial regulations or any regulations for contracts including issue of notifications and signing documents	Finance Manager and Town Clerk to deputise
To do anything calculated to facilitate or conducive or incidental to the discharge of any function	Council unless specifically delegated to a committee
Human Resources	
To direct which postholders will be designated Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer and Data Compliance Officer	None – but on recommendation of Employment Policy Committee
To determine overall staffing structure and approval of additional posts	None – none but on recommendation of Employment Policy Committee
Confirming the appointment of the Town Clerk	Interviewing is delegated to the Employment Policy Committee (or panel of) and the Chair of Council.
Other personnel matters	As set out in the terms of reference of the Employment Policy Committee.
Health and Safety Policy – General Statement	None <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and arrangements to Employment Policy Committee
Quality and Integrated Management	
Matters relating to quality and integrated management and the Local Council Award Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance & Governance Committee oversees the processes • Resolutions regarding Local Council Awards reserved to Council • Town Clerk to manage
Administration of complaints procedure	As set out in complaints procedure and terms of reference for Appeals Committee
Customer care and equality in service delivery and access	None but on advice of relevant committees
Delegated Services	

To take on services from other local authorities or public bodies (LGA 1972 S101,111 & 112 or Localism Act 2011)	None <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service overview to specific committees • Town Clerk to manage operations
To undertake services for another public body or local authority	None
Powers of all Committees	
To undertake all functions within their terms of reference. The committee may choose not to use its delegated power eg because of uncertainty as to whether the function is delegated or because of sensitivity, controversy or seriousness of a matter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To arrange extra meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk or nominated deputy in consultation with Chair or Vice-Chair
To make spending or income recommendations to Council during the budget process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To monitor actions on minutes of the Committee or relevant Delivery Plan actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To manage services for which they are responsible within an approved budget and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To authorise spending/issue works orders within budgets delegated to a committee up to £20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee up to £20,000 • Town Clerk up to £3,000
To contribute to the Annual Report and other publicity materials relation to the responsibilities of the committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk
To appoint to sub-committees including chair of sub-committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
Land	
Power to acquire by agreement, to appropriate to dispose of – Local Government Act 1972 S124, 126, 127	None
Power to accept gifts of land – LGA 1972 S139	None
Power to acquire land for open spaces - Public Health Act 1875 s164; Open Spaces Act 1906 S9 and 10	None for acquisition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant committee for management and maintenance in accordance with terms of reference
Finance and audit	
Authorisation of payment of accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council/Finance and Governance Committee/other committees/Town Clerk/RFO in accordance with regulations
Approval of annual return and statement of accounts (AGAR)	None
Power to approve capital projects on recommendation from standing committees within or without budget	Council only if not approved in principle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant committee if within policy and budget and to implement
Approval of banking arrangements and selecting insurers	None
Approval of orders for work, goods or services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council/committees/Town Clerk/RFO in accordance with Financial Regulations or delegation to committees
Audit arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk/RFO to manage in accordance with financial regulations Council to approve annual external audit report, internal audit reports and to agree responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance & Governance Committee to consider and action interim internal audit reports and to make know any internal audit matters which require consideration Council to appoint external auditor

	Council to appoint internal auditor
Power to accept gifts, Local Government Act 1972 S139	None
Power to participate in schemes of collective investment, Trustees Investments Act 1962, S11	None
Power to borrow – Local Government Act 1972 S111 and Sch 13	None
Writing off bad debts	Council or Finance & Governance Committee in accordance with Standing orders or Financial Regulations
Proceedings or other steps to recover debt owing to the Council	Town Clerk or RFO
Planning and Development Control	
To make observations on major or controversial planning applications referred to it by another committee	None
To make observations on Planning consultation documents from the Milton Keynes council or other bodies.	None for local plan but to receive recommendations from other committees where appropriate
All other Planning and Building Control matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Environment Committee and other committees in accordance with their terms of reference
Housing	
Policy of the Town Council	None
All other housing matters	None
Emergency Planning	
To prepare an Emergency Plan for the Town which supports that of Milton Keynes Council and the Buckinghamshire Resilience Forum	Council (for approval) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational management by Town Clerk
Young People	
Support public & community services and facilities for the young and support young people in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Committee for management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
Co-ordinate the involvement of young people in decision making and governance	None
Community Engagement	
To promote the social wellbeing of the Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Committee for management overview. • Town Clerk for Operational management
To facilitate and support local community and voluntary organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Committee for management overview. • Town Clerk for Operational management
To support Citizens Advice for the Town, Local Government Act 1972, s 142	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Committee for management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To promote social inclusion within communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Committee for management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To provide website and publish information about the council its services and the services provided in the council's area by other local authorities, government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Committee for management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management

departments, charities and other voluntary organisations (Local Government Act 1972 S142)	
Civic Functions	
To administer and oversee civic functions and events of the Town Council in consultation with other committees where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Committee for management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To administer the office of the Chairman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Governance Committee for management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To maintain, repair and protect war memorial (War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Governance Committee for management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management

NB. Any actions delegated to the Town Clerk/Proper Officer may in their absence be undertaken by the nominated Deputy, after seeking advice if appropriate, if the matter cannot wait until the Town Clerk's return

Definition of "Management Overview": To recommend policy and new initiatives to Council, decide on service expansions and contractions or options within budget and policy and to ensure service objectives and relevant policies are adhered to.

Definition of "Operational Management" That part of the service which is considered necessary in the delivery of an initiative or service which is within Policy and Budget

Summary of Committee Responsibilities

Community Committee	Employment Policy Committee	Environment & Planning Committee	Finance & Governance Committee	Appeals Committee
Contribute to the development and implementation of the Council's policies, strategies and business plans	Contribute to the development and implementation of the Council's policies, strategies and business plans	Contribute to the development and implementation of the Council's policies, strategies and business plans	Contribute to the development and implementation of the Council's policies, strategies and business plans	Determine any appeals under the Council's Complaint Procedure which is delegated to this Committee
To work in partnership with other Councils, agencies and groups to encourage and secure an improved level of community engagement and develop initiatives which support the community the economy and social infrastructure of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford	Oversee the implementation of the Town Council's approved arrangements for employment and management of staff	Consider and comment on all environmental matters and work in partnership the other agencies and groups to secure improvements in the physical environment	Oversee management of the council's finances	Hold appeal hearings under the Town Council's Human Resources policies if delegated to this Committee
Consider any matters relating to the education, health and well-being of the community and oversee management of approved well-being services	Oversee the Council's health and safety at work responsibilities in relation to employees and councillors	Consider and comment on all matters relating to planning policy and individual planning applications	Oversee Council's risk management procedures, insurance arrangements and banking	
Oversee the management/use of Town Council community buildings	Authorise expenditure of up to £20,000 within budget allocated to committee	To oversee the management and maintenance of allotments, community orchard, football pitches and any other outdoor spaces for which the council has a responsibility or a designated interest.	Oversee the maintenance of all the Town Council's Town Council buildings and leases and provide recommendations to full council on acquisition and disposal of assets	
Approve and oversee the management of an annual programme of community events		Consider and comment on all Highways matters and contribute towards improving local transport infrastructure	Oversee the Council's agreed corporate governance arrangements	
Consider and award (within an approved budget) financial grants to local organisations		To oversee the management of the Town Council's Street furniture and fittings, including dog bins, seats etc.	Consider any other matter falling outside the remit of the Council's other standing committees	
To oversee the Council's approved community engagement strategy and action plans				

Assemble and submit annual estimates to the Finance & Governance Committee		Assemble and submit annual estimates to the Finance & Governance Committee	Assemble and submit annual budget estimate in accordance with policy and agreed financial plan	
Authorise expenditure of up to £20,000 within budget allocated to committee	Authorise expenditure of up to £20,000 within budget allocated to committee	Authorise expenditure of up to £20,000 within budget allocated to committee	Authorise expenditure of up to £20,000 within budget allocated to committee	
Consider planning applications which cannot be considered at Environment and Planning Committee, Town Council or dealt with by officers due to the time constraints of the planning cycle			Consider planning applications which cannot be considered at Environment and Planning Committee, Town Council or dealt with by officers due to the time constraints of the planning cycle	

Detailed Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers of Committees

NB. Any actions delegated to the Proper Officer/RFO may in their absence be undertaken by the nominated Deputy, after seeking advice if appropriate, if the matter cannot wait until the Town Clerk's return

Definition of "Management Overview": to recommend policy and new initiatives to Council, decide on service expansions and contractions or options within budget and policy and to ensure service objectives and relevant policies are adhered to. Definition of "Operational Management": that part of the service which is considered necessary in the delivery of an initiative or service which is within Policy and Budget

Terms of Reference: Community Committee	
10 Members of the Council	Quorum = 4
Meetings are held every second month in the meeting cycle.	
The Community and Grants Committee is responsible for all community matters including some civic and all community events and supporting external community events. It had delegated powers for the administration of the Council's approved Community Grant Scheme. It is also responsible for overseeing the Council's community communications with the community and for community safety initiatives.	
It has delegated powers to respond to planning matters which fall outside the timetable of the Planning and Environment Committee meeting schedule.	
Function of the Committee	Delegation of Function
Community Engagement	
To promote the social wellbeing of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee to have management overview. Town Clerk for operational management

To develop, facilitate, implement and update any community plan developed in partnership with the community to promote and improve the health, social and cultural wellbeing of those who live, work, study or visit within the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To support the development and implementation of Milton Keynes Council's Community Development Strategy and Strategic Partnership Action Plans when they benefit the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for Operational Management • Finance & Governance Committee for grants
To facilitate and support statutory, community, voluntary and faith sector organisations to deliver improvements for the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To promote social inclusion within communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To support, promote and lobby for public, community and wellbeing services and facilities within the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To maximise the benefit to the Town of external funding directly or in partnership matters which fall within the remit of the committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee. • In the case of urgency for an application, the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Committee.
To develop, facilitate and implement matters related to community engagement and support for community assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To support a Citizens Advice service for the area and other information or advice services for the benefit of the community, (Local Government Act 1972, s 142).	<p>Council to determine financial contribution to new services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview within budget and policy. • Town Clerk for operational management • Committee for allocation of grants within budget
Personal Health	
To collaborate with partner organisations to improve the health of people in the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
To lobby for improved access to services which can contribute to health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
To promote healthy living through the Council's communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
Support the development and co-ordination of NHS services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management

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Young People	
Support and promote public & community services and facilities for young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget • Town Clerk for operational management
Coordinate and facilitate the involvement of young people in the decision making of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget and to recommend policy to Council • Town Clerk for operational management
Provide and coordinate services and events for young people in their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within policy and budget • Town Clerk for operational management
To have oversight of the Council's involvement with outside bodies which support young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget • Town Clerk for operational management
Grant Scheme	
To administer the Council's Community Grant Scheme in accordance with its grant policy and corporate strategic priorities	Committee for management overview within Policy & Budget. Town Clerk for operational management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for approvals up to £5000. • Recommend grants above £5000 to Council
To advise on the formulation and amendment to Grant Policy to ensure alignment with Corporate Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
Projects & Events	
To approve and deliver environmental, community and economic projects and events	Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget. Town Clerk for operational management
To organise, support or promote events which promote the environmental, community or economic well-being of the Town.	Committee to have management overview. Town Clerk for Operational Management
To collaborate with partners to develop a "brand" for the Town	Committee to have management overview. Town Clerk for Operational Management
To support local business associations and consult with local businesses regarding projects, events and communications	Committee to have management overview. Town Clerk for Operational Management
Communications/Public Relation and Marketing	

To co-ordinate and promote access to Council services and public information and to advise Council on a Communications & Marketing Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
To prepare annual communications plan and oversee delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
To monitor social media communications, website and digital and printed newsletters and to provide feedback to officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
Use of Community Buildings	
Power to provide and equip community buildings, Local Government Act 1972, s 133	<p>NB Fabric of community buildings is managed by the Finance and Governance Committee or Full Council as are charges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview of community building use within Council policy & budget • Town Clerk for operational management
Power to provide & equip community centres for use of clubs having athletic, social or recreational objectives, Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 S19.	
Power to provide & encourage the use of conference facilities, Local Government Act 1972, S144	
Power to provide public buildings & halls. Local Government Act 1972, S215	
To consult with users of community services provided from Town Council community buildings and to propose new services and policies	Committee to make recommendations to Council or to Finance & Governance as appropriate.
Community Safety	
To install & maintain CCTV equipment for detection & prevention of crime. (Local Government & Rating Act 1997, S31.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
To support initiatives of the Community Safety/ Crime Reduction Partnership, which benefit the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To lobby for road safety improvement schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To consult with the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To collaborate with the Police to maintain a presence and service in the Town and to support rehabilitation of offenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To support home safety initiatives in the town and work with Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire authority on fire safety initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
To use the Council's communication channels to provide information on improving home, fire, community, road and water safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management
Annual Estimates	
Assemble and submit annual estimates to the Finance & Governance Committee (Including recommendations for charges)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee

Planning and Development Control	
To make observations on all Milton Keynes Council's Planning applications; Listed Building applications; Conservation Area consents; Certificates of Existing or Proposed Lawful Use or Development; Display of Advertisement Regulations; and development involving telecommunications, including prior notification determinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee if planning cycle does not permit consideration at Environment & Planning Committee • Town Clerk may respond on behalf of the Council to the following types of applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - certificates of existing or proposed lawful use or development, display of advertisements, development applications restricted to telecommunications, discharge of conditions of approved applications and prior notification determinations provided that all Members of the committee are notified in advance and can ask for the matter to be referred to a committee with delegated planning powers • Committee may decide that a major or particularly controversial application be referred to full Council and may make recommendations for Council's consideration

Terms of Reference: Employment Policy Committee	
5 Members of the Council The Chair of the Council is an ex officio Member of the Committee	Quorum = 3
Meetings are held 2-3 times per year or as required.	
All non-committee members may attend meetings of the Committee except for confidential items or matters relating to grievance or discipline and may speak at the Chair's discretion but are unable to vote.	
The Employment Policy Committee is responsible for employment policy and health and safety in the workplace and advises the Council on staff establishment and structure. It undertakes management overview of staff performance the operational management of which is delegated to the Town Clerk.	
Function of the Committee	Delegation of Function
To recommend to Council the overall employee structure and the approval of any additional posts.	None – approval remains with Council
To agree pay and conditions of service for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk reserved for Council • Regrading of all other posts to Committee • Annual increments and payment of honoraria within agreed budget to Committee.
To approve Human Resources policies and Employee Handbook	Committee, including discretionary provisions of National Joint Agreement.
Management and Appointment of Staff (Local Government Act 1972 s112-119)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend appointment of Town Clerk to be endorsed by Council. Selection of long list and preliminary interview by Recruitment Panel from Employment Policy Committee +Council

	<p>Chairman Final Interview-Committee + Council Chairman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of other Staff Scale Point 27 and above to Committee. • Appointment of Staff below Scale Point 23 to Town Clerk. • Town Clerk for casual staff and temporary appointments to approved positions below Scale Point 27 • Decision on whether to fill vacant positions is delegated to Town Clerk. • Decision on recruitment of contract staff or interim contract staff to Town Clerk in consultation with Chair of Committee subject to identification of budget. • Decision on recruitment of consultants to Committee subject to identifying budget. • Recruitment of Locum or Acting Town Clerk after decision in principle by Council or Committee is delegated to Chairman of Council, Deputy Chair and Employment Policy Chair • Management of staff in accordance with Council policy, procedures and budget to Town Clerk.
Disciplinary matters under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk with appeal to Employment Policy Committee • Employment Policy Committee in the case of the Town Clerk with appeal to Appeals Committee (only members not on Human Resources Committee) • Dismissal of Town Clerk to be ratified by Council
Determination of individual grading issues and job evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee, except Town Clerk reserved to Council with recommendation from Committee
Issues relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme as it affects individual employees and administration of retirement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee (Council in case of Town Clerk) • Administration of retirement in cases of permanent ill health, after appropriate medical advice via Buckinghamshire Local Government Pensions to Committee • Pensions Discretions Policies to Committee
Absence issues under the Council's Attendance Management Guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk except Committee in the case of Town Clerk
Appeals Procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeals Committee.
To place staff at the disposal of other local authorities for the purpose of joint arrangements or Partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee (Council in case of Town Clerk)
Competence Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk except Committee in the case of Town Clerk • Appeals to Appeals Committee
Issue of Contracts of Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk except Committee in the case of Town Clerk • Model Contract approved by Committee
Redundancy & Redeployment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee (Council to ratify in case of Town Clerk)
Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy to Council • Annual staff and member Plan to Committee • Implementation to Town Clerk
Approval of Officer Codes of Conduct, supplements & Member-Officer Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council
Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for approval of Policy other than General Statement which is reserved for Council • Committee to oversee responsibilities for Council within budget and policy • Town Clerk for routine management
Grievance Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing Panel from Committee • Appeals to Appeals Committee.

Administration of other Human Resources procedures	• Town Clerk except Committee in the case of Town Clerk
Employee Development Review and assessment at end of Probationary period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk for all staff, often delegated to direct manager. • Chair of Council, Chair and one other Member of Employment Policy Committee
Consultation and negotiation with Trade Unions	• Committee (Council to ratify for Town Clerk)
Volunteers Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk to administer • Committee to monitor & recommend policy to Council
Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk to administer • Committee to monitor & recommend to Council
To administer the Council's Equality Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk to administer for employees, services, volunteers and democratic processes • Committee to monitor & recommend to Council
First line of contact for Town Clerk.	<p>Hierarchy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of Council • Vice Chair of Council • Chair of Employment Policy Committee
Assemble and submit annual estimates to the Finance & Governance Committee (Including recommendations) Cost Centre 501	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee

Terms of Reference: Environment & Planning Committee

Members of the Council	Quorum = 4
Meetings are held every second month in the meeting cycle.	
<p>The Environment & Committee is responsible for aspects of the built and outdoor environment within the area as well as having delegated powers to respond to planning matters. It is responsible for management of diverse services including allotments, public toilets, dog bins etc.</p> <p>All non-committee members may attend meetings of the Committee except for confidential items and speak on ward issues at the Chairman's discretion but are unable to vote.</p>	
Function of the Committee	Delegation of Function
Strategic Planning	
Making observations on Local Plan, or Waste and Mineral Plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council on the advice of Committee for Local Plan • Committee for Waste & Mineral Plans.
Making observations on supplementary planning documents or non-statutory plans.	• Committee
Planning guidance and policy by the Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to oversee and recommend <p>Approval reserved to Council</p>
Planning and Development Control	

To make observations on all Milton Keynes Council's Planning applications; Listed Building applications; Conservation Area consents; Certificates of Existing or Proposed Lawful Use or Development; Display of Advertisement Regulations; and development involving telecommunications, including prior notification determinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Committees with delegated powers to respond to planning matters (Finance & Governance, Community) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk may respond on behalf of the Council to the following types of applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - certificates of existing or proposed lawful use or development, display of advertisements, development applications restricted to telecommunications, discharge of conditions of approved applications and prior notification determinations provided that all Members of the committee are notified in advance and can ask for the matter to be referred to a committee with delegated planning powers • Committee may decide that a major or particularly controversial application be referred to full Council and may make recommendations for Council's consideration
Referring any planning enforcement issue to the principal Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk
To make observations on all planning aspects and licensing aspects of waste applications or mineral applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk after consultation with Members, if there is not time for reference to Committee, subject to reporting the matter to the next meeting.
To comment on Tree Preservation applications or the making of Orders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk after consultation with Members, if there is not time for reference to Committee, subject to reporting the matter to the next meeting.
To respond to consultations from adjoining authorities outside of Milton Keynes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk after consultation with Members, if there is not time for reference to Committee, subject to reporting the matter to the next meeting.
To make observations on Planning policy consultation documents from Milton Keynes Council or other bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee except Local Plan which is reserved for Council
To make observations at the time of planning appeals and to authorise witnesses (officers, councillors or consultants) on behalf of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To make observations on Hazardous Substance applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To make observations on applications for amendments to planning and other related consents previously granted by any authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To make observations on applications for the discharge of conditions in respect of planning permissions and other related consents issued by Milton Keynes Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk may respond on behalf of the Council provided that all Members of the committee are notified in advance and can ask for the matter to be referred to a committee with delegated planning powers instead
Making observations on applications and other actions in relation to hedgerows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk after consultation with Members, if there is not time for reference to Committee, subject to reporting the matter to the next meeting.
Making observations and recommendations on Street naming or numbering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To consult with the Milton Keynes Council on any matter relating to building control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk
To monitor proposals from developers under Section 106 Agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To request Milton Keynes Council or one of their Members to "call in" applications to be determined their Development Control Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee

To undertake the Council's role in the making, review or management of conservation area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
Licensing	
Making observations on any matter relating to gaming or gambling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk after consultation with Members, if insufficient time for reference to Committee, subject to reporting the matter to the next meeting
Making observations on applications and other matters under the Licensing legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk after consultation with Members, if insufficient time for reference to Committee, subject to reporting the matter to the next meeting.
Strategic Highways & Transportation	
To take policy lead on the Local Transport Plan and general transportation issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for Management overview & to advise Council. • Town Clerk for operational management
To respond to consultation on any temporary or permanent highways changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk after consultation with Members, if there is not time for reference to Committee, subject to reporting the matter to the next meeting.
Power to complain to Highway authority as to unlawful stopping up or obstruction of highway or unlawful encroachment on roadside land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk after consultation with Members if consensus view
Consent for ending maintenance at public expense or stopping up or diversion of highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk after consultation with Members, if there is not time for reference to Committee, subject to reporting the matter to the next meeting.
Non-Strategic Highways & Transport	
Power to maintain footpaths & bridleways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy • Town Clerk for operational management
Powers to provide parking places for vehicles & cycles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy • Town Clerk for operational management
Improve off street parking & on street parking enforcement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy • Town Clerk for operational management
Power to provide roadside seats & shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy & budget • Town Clerk for operational management
Power to enter into agreement as to dedication & widening of highways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee within budget & policy.
Power to contribute financially to traffic calming Schemes. (Highways Act 1980, S274A.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy & budget • Town Clerk for operational management
Power to provide traffic signs and other objects or devices warning of danger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy & budget • Town Clerk for operational management
Power to plant trees and lay grass verges and to maintain them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy & budget • Town Clerk for operational management
Powers relating to car sharing schemes, taxi fare concessions & information about transport; Local Government & Rating Act 1997, S26, 28, 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy & budget • Town Clerk for operational management
To support approved community transport schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy & budget

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk for operational management
Power to erect flagpoles in highway land. Highways Act 1980 s 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Council policy & budget • Town Clerk for operational management
Environment & Sustainability	
To promote the environmental wellbeing of the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
Conservation of the built & natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
To lead on the sustainability of the Council as an organisation and to approve and action environmental audits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview and to recommend Policy • Town Clerk for operational management
To monitor the steps which the Council needs to control its carbon footprint and help reduce climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
To promote environmental awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
To lead the Town and partner the community in addressing climate change, sustainability and transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview and to recommend Policy • Town Clerk for operational management
Housing	
Town Council Policy or response to consultation on Milton Keynes Council's Policy.	None but Committee may provide advice
To lobby for a suitable mix of housing and adequate affordable homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget and to recommend policy to Council • Town Clerk for operational management • Planning Committee through the Planning system.
To collaborate with partners to tackle other housing matters which may affect Bletchley & Fenny Stratford, including property owner supervision, design guidance, homelessness and rough sleeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget • Town Clerk for operational management
Economic Wellbeing & Tourism	
To promote the economic wellbeing of the Town through partnership with the businesses, the community sector and with the principal council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget. • Town Clerk for operational management
To promote tourism within the Town and power to encourage visitors. Local Government Act 1972, s144. (See power to provide conference and other facilities- Services Committee).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget. • Town Clerk for operational management
To promote regeneration in the Town and coordinate/support the work of partner organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget. • Town Clerk for operational management

To lobby for sufficient high quality employment sites in the Town & support initiatives promoting inward investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget. • Town Clerk for operational management. • Planning Committee through the Planning system.
To support skills & training for local businesses and to improve the skills of the unemployed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget. • Town Clerk for operational management.
Provision directly or indirectly of Christmas lights. Local Government Act 1972, s144.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within Policy and Budget. • Town Clerk for operational management.
Leisure & Recreation	
Power to maintain land for open spaces, Public Health Act 1875, S164; Open Spaces Act 1906, S9 &10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
Power to acquire land for or to provide recreation grounds, public walks, parks, pleasure grounds and to manage and control them. Power to provide gymnasiums, playing fields, & boating pools; Local Government Act 1972, Sch. 14; Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890, S44, Local government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act S19; Public Health Act 1961, s54.)	<p>None for acquisition refer to Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview & development within budget & policy • Town Clerk for operational management
Management and enhancement of parks, playing fields, play areas and public open spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview & development within budget & policy • Town Clerk for operational management
Liaison or partnership with other organisations which have an interest in recreational facilities in the town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
Public Realm and Public Facilities	
To contribute to the improvement of the public realm, both directly and by supporting and coordinating the contribution of other partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within budget. • Town Clerk for operational management.
To manage the Ranger service to ensure a response resource which supports and enhances the public realm services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management.
To manage the Landscaping service to ensure a response resource which supports and enhances the public realm service.	
Matters relating to street cleaning, litter, fly posting, graffiti.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management.
Fixed penalty notices for littering, graffiti & fly posting (adoptive). PSPO monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within budget & policy • Operational Management to Town Clerk.

Dog fouling prevention and provision of dog bins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within budget & policy • Operational Management to Town Clerk.
Provision of litter receptacles, Litter Act 1983, S5 & 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within budget • Town Clerk for operational management.
Provision and maintenance of street furniture and signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within budget • Town Clerk for operational management.
Power to provide & maintain public conveniences, Public Health Act 1936, s87.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within budget & policy • Town Clerk for operational management
Power to maintain, repair, protect & alter war Memorials; War Memorials (Local authorities Powers) Act 1923, S11 as extended by Local Government Act 1948 S133.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within policy and budget • Operational management to Town Clerk
To deal with issues involving ancient monuments and areas of archaeological interest,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within policy and budget • Operational management to Town Clerk
To promote and support floral and planting Initiatives, Local Government Act 1972. s 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within policy and budget • Operational management to Town Clerk
Waste and recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within budget & policy • Town Clerk for operational management
Bus Shelters	
Power to provide & maintain bus shelters, Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953 S4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview within budget & policy • Town Clerk for operational management •
Allotments and Community Orchard	
To provide allotments where there is a proven need, improve land and let rights under S 23, 26, &42 of the Small Holding & Allotments Act 1908.	None for acquisition or disposal but advice to Council
To oversee management and development of allotments and orchard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview & development within budget • Town Clerk for operational Management • Recommendations to Finance & Governance Committee for setting of charges
Market	
To lead on Market Town initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to have management overview. • Town Clerk for operational management

To oversee the power to operate and protect the town's markets under the Food Act 1984 s50-61 or Charter Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee within policy & budget • Operational management to Town Clerk
Setting of all fees and charges relation to the Markets.	To make recommendations to Finance & Governance Committee
To maximise the benefit to the Town of external funding directly or in partnership for matters which fall within the remit of the committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee. • In the case of urgency for an application, the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Committee.
Environmental & Public Health	
Power to utilise well, spring or stream to provide facilities for water supply, Public Health Act 1936, S125 and power to deal with ponds & ditches, Public Health 1936, S260.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management
To consult with the relevant authorities in cases of public health/ environmental nuisance, drainage matters, pollution, or animal welfare issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions to Committee • Town Clerk in other cases
To consult with the relevant authorities in cases of public health/ environmental nuisance, drainage matters, pollution, or animal welfare issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Town Clerk in consultation with Chairman in cases of urgency
Annual Estimates	
Assemble and submit annual estimates to the Finance & Governance Committee (including recommendations for charges)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee

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Terms of Reference: Finance & Governance Committee

10 Members of the Council	Quorum = 4
Meetings are held every second month in the meeting cycle.	
All non-committee members may attend meetings of the Committee except for confidential items and speak on ward issues at the Chairman's discretion but are unable to vote.	
The Finance & Governance Committee is responsible for the management and oversight of all matters relating to the council's finances, policies and governance. It determines the Council's spending priorities and recommends the annual budget to Council.	
It has delegated powers to respond to planning matters which fall outside the timetable of the Planning and Environment Committee meeting schedule.	
Function of the Committee	Delegation of Function
Resources	
To oversee and direct the use of financial and technological resources of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational management to Town Clerk and RFO in accordance with financial regulations and standing orders.
Governance	
To advise Council on Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and any Standing Orders for Contracts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Town Clerk to advise and implement
To advise Council on the Constitution, Corporate Strategy and other policy documents not specifically allocated to other standing committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Town Clerk to advise and implement
To ensure that there is a rolling programme of policy and governance reviews in accordance with agreed "review" dates,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Clerk
Civic Functions	
To administer the office of the Chairman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee for management overview within policy and budget. Town Clerk for Operational Management
Finance	
Under the direction of Council to be responsible for the overall management and control of the finances of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council to approve banking arrangements Committee for managerial overview RFO/Town Clerk in accordance with Financial Regulations and for operational management
To monitor the Council's capital and revenue budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee/ RFO in accordance with Financial Regulations.
Approval of variation, overspend, and virement in accordance with financial regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee, Town Clerk & RFO as set out in Financial Regulations
To authorise payments in accordance with financial regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee, Town Clerk & RFO as set out in Financial Regulations
Approval of Orders for work, goods or services & acceptance of tenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council/ Committee/ RFO/Town Clerk in accordance with Financial Regulations & Standing Orders for Contracts. Town Clerk to approve or vary lists of approved contractors subject to Financial Regulations or Standing Orders
To make recommendations to the Council on Budget & Precept requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee RFO/Town Clerk to prepare draft Budget & Budget Report with accountancy support as necessary.
To advise on the financial implications of proposed new policies or services including potential costs and sources of revenue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee
To advise Council on borrowing policy, investment & treasury management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee
To regularly monitor the performance of all funds invested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee, Town Clerk, RFO
To supervise the Council's insurance arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Clerk/RFO for renewal & operational matters. Committee for overview, tendering & changes of cover.
To supervise the Council's banking arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFO/Town Clerk • Authorised signatories to authorise Mandate & payments in accordance with Financial Regulations
To be responsible for all matters related to the full range of financial and accountancy functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee for management overview RFO/Town Clerk for operational management
Approval of all fees and charges annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee to recommend with ratification from full Council.
To consider reports on outstanding debts due to the Council and to undertake recovery or write off.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee for aged debt in accordance with financial regulations. RFO for routine actions to recover
Authorisation of investments and debt repayment in accordance with the Council's Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee
To authorise all leasing arrangements for the acquisition of vehicles, plant and equipment within approved budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee/Town Clerk in accordance with Financial Regulations

To approve all security of the Council in respect of information technology and finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee/Town Clerk/ RFO in accordance with Financial Regulations
Procurement	
To co-ordinate and oversee the Council's corporate procurement and advise it on policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk and RFO for operational management in accordance with financial regulations, & any standing orders for contracts & procurement policy
Information Technology Services	
To oversee the use of information and other technology in support of the Council's business and service commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee & to let contracts within approved budget & policy. • Town Clerk for operational management
Procurement of website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for new websites & contracts within budget.
To approve all security arrangements of the Council in respect of computers and financial issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee/Town Clerk/RFO in accordance with financial regulations
Performance Management	
To be responsible for monitoring the overall performance of the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for management overview • Town Clerk for operational management.
Approval of Corporate Business/Delivery Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk to determine underlying action & project plans
Approval of operating procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee for initial financial procedures • Town Clerk for other procedures and updating financial procedures
Asset Management	
To have oversight of assets and the transfers of assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
Maintenance of the Asset Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFO to update at least annually • Chairman to verify • Committee to monitor
Corporate property owner management, repair & maintenance, leasing & licensing of Council land & buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council for acquisition and disposal • Management overview to Committee within budget & policy • Town Clerk for operational management
Provision and management of office accommodation, other corporate property, land and relevant fixtures and fitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
Responsibility for energy conservation and disabled access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
Power to provide & encourage the use of conference facilities, Local Government Act 1972, S144 Power to provide public buildings & halls. Local Government Act 1972, S215 Power to provide and equip community buildings, Local Government Act 1972, s 133 Power to provide & equip community centres for use of clubs having athletic, social or recreational objectives, Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 S19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
Audit	
To receive, and formulate a response to interim internal audit reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • RFO and Town Clerk to support.

To make recommendations to Council in respect of the appointment of the Council's internal auditor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • RFO and Town Clerk to support with operating procedures
To agree any matters to be referred to internal audit for inclusion in the annual internal audit plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To prepare the Council's annual business risk assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk • Committee to approve it and monitor recommended actions are implemented.
To agree an annual programme of Member audit checks on financial procedures, other governance and operational procedures, to undertake these audits (and to establish subcommittees for this purpose if necessary) and to receive reports on those audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee • Town Clerk for operational management Council to approve creation of any sub-committees
Final Internal and External Audit Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to receive external audit report and final internal audit report. • Committee to advise Council on response as necessary • Town Clerk/ and RFO to manage in accordance with Financial Regulations and to undertake all statutory actions to facilitate audits and returns.
Information and Data Protection	
Policy on Data Protection, Access to Information, Freedom of Information & Human Rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice to Council
Decisions on issues relating to Data Protection & Human Rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managerial overview and monitoring to Committee as well as decisions concerning vexatious requests • Town Clerk to renew Data Protection Registration, make amendments as necessary, respond to routine requests for information and matters raised by the Information Commissioner or Data Protection Compliance Officer. • Town Clerk to update Privacy notices of all categories
Decisions on issues relating to Access to Information, & Freedom of Information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managerial overview and monitoring to Committee as well as decisions concerning vexatious requests • Town Clerk to ensure Publication Scheme and Information Guide up to date, all requests for information are dealt with according to legislation & policy and respond to matters raised by the Information Commissioner.
Ethical Framework	
To monitor and control the Council's ethical framework, Member Code of Conduct and related protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview & monitoring to Committee. (For officer delegation see Council TOR)
Communications/Public Relation and Marketing	
To co-ordinate and promote access to Council services and public information and to advise Council on a Communications & Marketing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
. To promote customer care and equality in service delivery and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
To promote the public face of the Council through the management of public and media relations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
To promote implementation of the Council's policies in respect of corporate marketing and communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management overview to Committee • Town Clerk for operational management
To advise Council on adoption of a Publicity Code, Transparency Code and Protocol on communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
Planning and Development Control	
To make observations on all Milton Keynes Council's Planning applications; Listed Building applications; Conservation Area consents; Certificates of Existing or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee if planning cycle does not permit consideration at Environment & Planning Committee

Proposed Lawful Use or Development; Display of Advertisement Regulations; and development involving telecommunications, including prior notification determinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk may respond on behalf of the Council to the following types of applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - certificates of existing or proposed lawful use or development, display of advertisements, development applications restricted to telecommunications, discharge of conditions of approved applications and prior notification determinations provided that all Members of the committee are notified in advance and can ask for the matter to be referred to a committee with delegated planning powers • Committee may decide that a major or particularly controversial application be referred to full Council and may make recommendations for Council's consideration
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Terms of Reference: Appeals Committee

5 Members of the Council who are not members of the Employment Policy Committee	Quorum = 3
Meetings are held only as required. Non-committee members may not attend meetings of the Committee.	
The Committee is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering and deciding whether individual appeals have established grounds for appeal, according to the Council's policies and Procedures. • To gather further evidence at appeal committee hearings and to decide based on that information, whether an appeal should be upheld or rejected. 	
Function of the Committee	Delegation of Function
Appeals	
To determine whether any appeal made by a member of staff under any of the Council's Human Resources policies are valid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee
To hold appeal hearings under the disciplinary, grievance, competence, redundancy and redeployment policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to determine the appeal under the appropriate procedure. (NB. Any Councillor who has previously been involved in the Procedure prior to the appeal may not sit on the Appeal hearing.) • Only Council may uphold a decision to dismiss the Town Clerk
To determine any appeals under the Council's Complaint Procedure which is delegated to it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to determine the appeal under the Procedure. (NB. Any Councillor who has previously been involved in the Procedure prior to the appeal may not sit on the Appeal hearing.) • Committee to make redress up to the value of £500. • Town Clerk to make redress up to value of £250

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Detailed Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers of Sub-committees of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Terms of Reference: Clerk Performance Appraisal Sub-Committee	
3 Members of Council (The Chair of Council, the Chair of Employment Policy Committee and one other Member selected by the Employment Policy Committee).	Quorum = 3
Meetings are held 2-3 times per year or as required. Due to the nature of business non-committee members may not attend meetings of the sub-committee which makes reports to the Employment Policy Committee	
The Sub-committee is responsible for undertaking the annual performance appraisals of the Town Clerk and any other matters concerning the Town Clerk which may be delegated to it for consideration by the Employment Policy Committee	

Terms of reference for working groups

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Terms of Reference: Climate Group	
The purpose of the working is to ensure that Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council fully recognises the current climate emergency and implements its resolved commitments to respond to this through scrutinizing the Council's activities and supporting the Council to achieve its cleaner and greener goals as set out in its delivery plan. Co-opted members shall be representatives of organisations and individuals who in the opinion of the Environment and Planning Committee shall enhance the effectiveness and representation of the working group.	
Function of the working group	Delegation of function
Climate Change	
To work to make the civil parish of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford carbon neutral by 2030	Working group to make recommendations direct to the Environment and Planning Committee and to all other committees of the council if relevant to assist in achievement of this goal
To work to make the Town Council as carbon neutral as practical by 2030	Working group to make recommendations direct to the Environment and Planning Committee and to all other committees of the council if relevant to assist in achievement of this goal
To work with Milton Keynes Council towards assisting that Council in realising the aspirations of making Milton Keynes the World's Greenest City (making Milton Keynes carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050)	Working group to make recommendations direct to the Environment and Planning Committee and to all other committees of the council if relevant to assist in achievement of this goal

	Town Clerk for operational management
To support the Environment and Planning Committee to make action plans to achieve the council's climate and biodiversity goals	Working group to prepare recommendations for the Environment and Planning Committee

Terms of Reference: Community Events Working Group

Meetings are held as required.
 .The working group reports to the Community Committee. It has no delegated decision-making powers and acts as an advisory group.

Function of the working group	Delegation of function
Community Events	
To assist officers and the community committee to deliver and oversee specific community events from the Town Council's agreed community event programme which have been delegated to it by the Community Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group to advise officers and make recommendations to the community committee

Delegations to Officers of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Function	Delegation of Function
Proper Officer and conduct the functions of the Proper Officer as provided by the Local Government Act 1972.	Town Clerk
Manage all employees (not including any variation of employment contracts and not any matters relating to grievances lodged against him/her) of the council and has the authority to take disciplinary action excluding termination of employment under agreed procedures.	Town Clerk
In the first instance, handle and acknowledge all complaints regarding the council (except where the complaint relates to the clerk).	Town Clerk
Arrange and call meetings of the council, its committees and subcommittees in consultation with the relevant Chair.	Town Clerk
Monitor and be responsible for all incoming and outgoing council correspondence including items of publicity, news releases, newsletters etc.	Town Clerk
The Clerk shall, in the first instance, be responsible for conducting and implementing any council, committee or sub-committee decision.	Town Clerk
The Clerk shall, in the first instance, manage all requests for information under Freedom of Information Act 2000.	Town Clerk
Operational management responsibility for all the activities of the Council as laid out in the scheme of delegations above.	Town Clerk
Respond to development control planning applications on behalf of the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk may respond on behalf of the Council to the following types of applications: - certificates of existing or proposed lawful use or development, display of advertisements, development applications restricted to telecommunications, discharge of conditions of approved applications and prior notification determinations provided that all Members of the committee are notified in advance and can ask for the matter to be referred to a committee with delegated planning powers

Respond to consultations	Town Clerk may respond on behalf of the Council to consultation documents as specified above
In the event of a major incident preventing the Council from holding meetings, the Town Clerk shall have delegated authority to take all necessary decisions to keep the Council functions running and shall have authority to delegate decisions and responses to Council staff as required. The Clerk shall keep the Chair/Committee Chairs/Vice chair informed and shall take advice from these Members as required.	Town Clerk
Approval and issuing of news releases on behalf of the Town Council.	Town Clerk
Function as the Responsible Financial Officer to the Council and shall be responsible for the Town Council's accounting procedures in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.	Finance Manager
The Responsible Financial Officer shall have delegated financial authority to authorise spend of up to £5000 ex VAT on emergency repairs in consultation with the Clerk and the Chair of Council, and up to £3000 ex VAT on any one invoice on normal running functions of the Council, subject to budget availability and approval from the Clerk	Finance Manager
The Finance Manager shall have responsibility for any debit card issued to the Council which must be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,500 unless a larger amount is authorised by the Council or Finance committee in writing before order is placed. On-line purchases for software that are in excess of £1,500, delegated officer powers should be used (RFO or Proper Officer) in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Finance and Governance whose approval would be sought in advance.	Finance Manager
The Finance Manager shall have de minimis capital expenditure authority to spend up to £2,000 ex VAT or to sell off assets to the same value with the agreement of the Clerk.	Finance Manager
On instruction from the Clerk the Finance Manager shall arrange to pay salaries and wages to all employees of the council (subject to the council's financial regulations).	Finance Manager
The Finance Manager shall have authority to make virements of up to £2,000 within the approved budget with the agreement of the Clerk.	Finance Manager

NB. Any financial, operational or managerial action delegated to the Town Clerk may in their absence be undertaken by the Deputy Town Clerk (Support Services Manager) if the matter cannot wait until the Town Clerk returns.

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BLETCHLEY & FENNY STRATFORD TOWN COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS 2023

Adopted: 23 May 2023

Review date: 28 May 2024

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INTRODUCTION

These standing are based upon the National Association of Local Council (NALC) Model Standing Orders 2018 (England) updated on April 2022.

HOW TO USE STANDING ORDERS

Standing orders are the written rules of a local council. Standing orders are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. A council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of a council are not the same as the policies of a council but standing orders may refer to them.

Local councils operate within a wide statutory framework. Standing orders incorporate and reference many statutory requirements to which councils are subject. It is not possible for the standing orders to contain or reference all the statutory or legal requirements which apply to local councils. For example, it is not practical for model standing orders to document all obligations under data protection legislation. The statutory requirements to which a council is subject apply whether or not they are incorporated in a council's standing orders.

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council's standing orders do not include all its financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures. The financial regulations a opposed to the standing orders of the council include most of the requirements relevant to the council's Responsible Financial Officer. These are available in a separate document which should be read in conjunction with these Standing Orders.

NOTES

Standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements. **It is recommended that councils adopt them without changing them or their meaning.** Standing orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but they do not contain statutory requirements.

For convenience, the word "councillor" is used in these standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights.

1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS
 - a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair 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 chair 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 An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
 - h A councillor may move an amendment to their 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.
 - i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
 - j Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
 - k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
 - l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
 - m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
 - n 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 on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
 - o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:

- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate on 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 they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair 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 their right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed (3) minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.
2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS
- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chair of the

meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chair 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.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

Full Council meetings ●
Committee meetings ●
Sub-committee meetings ●

- a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice**
- d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e 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.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.

- i A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak.
 - j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.
 - k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
 - l **Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
 - m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
 - n **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.**
 - o **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**
 - p **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
 - q **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
 - r **The chair 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 they gave an original vote.**
- See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.*
- s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question 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 present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.**

- t The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
- i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - vi. if there was a public participation session; and
 - vii. the resolutions made.

- u **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 their
right to participate and vote on that matter.
- v **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of**
the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case
shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

See standing order 4d(viii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

- w **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted**
and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting
shall be adjourned to another meeting.

- x A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours.

4. COMMITTEES AND 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 may include non-councillors unless it is a**
committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.
- c **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory**
committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-
councillors.

- d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
- i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer (5) days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chair of the standing committee and the vice-chair of the standing committee;
 - vii. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair at the first meeting of the committee;
 - viii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;
 - ix. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
 - x. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;
 - xi. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
 - xii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council**

shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.

- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chair of the Council, unless they have resigned or become disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- g **The Vice-Chair of the Council, if there is one, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- i **In an election year, if the current Chair of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
 - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair 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 Chair of the Council of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
 - iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
 - iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
 - v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;

- vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
- viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
- ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
- xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
- xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
- xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
- xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);
- xviii. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
- xix. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
- xx. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.
- xxi. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**
- b **If the Chair of the Council does not 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 shall be signed by the two councillors.

- c The chair 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 chair of a committee or a sub-committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days of having been requested to do so by two members of the committee or the sub-committee, any two members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or a sub-committee.

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least two councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.
- c It is noted that in the event of new/alternative information being received it is right and proper for a previous decision to be revisited and/or rescinded. In these circumstances, a resolution may be reversed according to the following process:
 - i A majority agreement to first discuss and review this resolution
 - ii A majority agreement to then change the decision already reached

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a 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 chair of the meeting.

9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall 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.

- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least ten clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least seven clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

10. MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;

- ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
- x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
- xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii. to close the meeting.

11. **MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION**

See also standing order 20.

- a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- b **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. **DRAFT MINUTES**

- Full Council meetings ●
- Committee meetings ●

Sub-committee meetings ●

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i).
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- ● ● e **If the Council’s gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless they have been 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 Unless they have been 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 another interest if so required by the Council’s code of

conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.

- 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 decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Proper Officer
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request 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
- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**
 - i. **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;**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. **CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

- a Upon notification by the Unitary 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 Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to the Council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of Council of this fact, and the Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined

and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14(d).

- c The Council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- d **Upon notification by the District or Unitary 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.**

15. **PROPER OFFICER**

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
 - See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;*
 - ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least four days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;
 - iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chair of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in this office;**
 - iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**

- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(see also *standing order 23*);
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. respond to or refer a planning application received by the Council to the appropriate committee as laid out in the Town Council's committee structure and scheme of delegations and if necessary facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme;

16. **RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- a The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

17. **ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS**

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each councillor as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December in each year a statement to summarise:
 - i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the quarter being reported and which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
 - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to all councillors at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. **FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT**

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£25,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18(f) is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).
- d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in an appropriate manner;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer or by pdf document to a specified email address;
 - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;

- vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a. A matter personal to a member of staff that is being considered by a meeting of the Employment Policy committee or the Clerk Performance Management Sub-committee is subject to standing order 11.
- b. The Chair of the Clerk Performance Management Sub-committee shall make arrangements for the review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Town Clerk A summary of the review and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution by the Employment Policy Committee
- c. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior member of staff shall contact the chair of the Employment Policy committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter, and this matter shall be reported back to the Employment Policy Committee.
- d. Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, if an informal or formal grievance matter raised by any employee relates to the chair of the Employment Policy committee this shall be communicated to another member of the Employment Policy committee which shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the Employment Policy committee.
- e. Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- f. In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).

20. **RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION**

See also standing order 21.

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b **The Council, shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

21. **RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

(Below is not an exclusive list).

See also standing order 11.

- a **The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.**
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning their personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

22. **RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA**

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

23. **EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS**

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii).

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

24. **COMMUNICATING WITH UNITARY COUNCILLORS**

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillors of the Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.

25. **RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES**

- a Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. **STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY**

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least two councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

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BLETCHLEY & FENNY STRATFORD TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2023

Adopted

23 May 2023

Review date: Annual Meeting of Council May 2024

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1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders¹ and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - for the timely production of accounts;
 - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
 - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Finance Manager has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the council;
 - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;

¹ Standing Orders for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council 2023 are contained in a separate document available on our website

- determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
 - wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
 - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,

shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference. In other words salaries of employees may be delegated to a nominated committee.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England A Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices to be applied to the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Finance Committee.
- 2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
 - be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or

- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent those such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors unless this correspondence is purely an administrative matter (eg confirms receipt of information).

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1. Each committee (if any) shall review its three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the finance committee not later than the end of November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.
- 3.2. The RFO must each year, by no later than January, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the relevant committees and the council.
- 3.3. The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.4. The council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.5. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:
- the council for all items over £20,000;
 - a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £3,000; or
 - the Clerk, for any items below £3,000 for routine expenditure (and £5,000 for emergency expenditure see below).

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

- 4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement'). The Clerk is authorised to vire monies within budgets to a maximum of £2,000.
- 4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in December for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.
- 4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5,000. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

- 4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose “material” shall be in excess of 15% of the budget.
- 4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to the finance committee. The finance committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the committee. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- 5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Finance Committee meeting.
- 5.5. The Clerk shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
 - a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the Clerk /RFO certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the finance committee;

- b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council [or finance committee]; or
 - c) fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £50,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the finance committee.
- 5.6. For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council ,or a duly authorised committee, may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Finance Committee.
- 5.7. A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.
- 5.8. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by council.
- 5.9. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.10. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.
- 5.11. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

- 6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk /RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be effected by internet bank transfer or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of council or a duly delegated committee. Evidence should be retained showing which members approved the payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of

family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.

- 6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to council or committee shall be signed by two member[s] of council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil if relevant.
- 6.6. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.7. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.8. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.9. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.10. The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.11. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

- 6.12. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.13. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by the Clerk and a Member. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.
- 6.14. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk [and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed. On-line purchases for software that are in excess of £1,500, delegated officer powers should be used (RFO or Proper Officer) in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Finance and Governance whose approval would be sought in advance.
- 6.15. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and any authorised employee and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.
- 6.16. The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement.
- a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £500 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.
 - b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
 - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.2 above.

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 7.1. As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and

on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.

- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the relevant committee. Changes to monthly payments following payment of authorised overtime and the like are to be authorised by the Clerk.
- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
 - a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b) by the internal auditor;
 - c) by the external auditor; or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.
- 7.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council and/or the relevant committee acting under delegated powers.
- 7.8. Before employing interim staff the council must consider a full business case. This may then be considered and approved by either a Committee or the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair or Vice-chair of the Council.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be

subject to approval by the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

- 8.3. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
- 8.4. The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 8.5. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.7. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. INCOME

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person

is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.
- 10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 10.5. The Clerk shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order.

11. CONTRACTS

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
 - a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;

- v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
 - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds specified by the Office of Government Commerce is subject to the “light touch” arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement)².
 - c. Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Governments Commerce , the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
 - d. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
 - e. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
 - f. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders 18d, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
 - g. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £100 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

² Thresholds currently applicable are:

Public supply and public service contracts £213,477 (inclusive of VAT)

Public works contracts £5,336,937 (inclusive of VAT)

- h. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- i. Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

14. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.
- 14.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15. INSURANCE

- 15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 15.2. The Clerk and other employees shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

- 15.3. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4. The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 15.5. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council, or duly delegated committee.

16. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 16.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 16.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

17. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 17.1. It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 17.2. The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council.

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Code of Conduct

Filename and version	Status	Date adopted	Review date
Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council Code of Conduct September 2022 V1	Adopted	27 September 2022 Reviewed 23 May 2023 no changes.	28 May 2024

This code applies to elected and co-opted councillors and to non-councillors who may be co-opted to serve as members of committees or sub-committees of the council. Officers are subject to a separate code of conduct.

Joint statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Introduction

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct shall be reviewed at the annual meeting of the Council and in response to any review undertaken by the National Association of Local Councils or the Local Government Association.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The Local Government Association and the National Association of Local Councils encourage the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings

- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

The general conduct guidance follows below:

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and inform the local authority, the relevant social media provider and/or, if appropriate, make a report to the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at

least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

- **4.1 I do not disclose information:**
 - **a. given to me in confidence by anyone**

- **b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - **i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - **ii. I am required by law to do so;**
 - **iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
 - **iv. the disclosure is:**
 - **1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - **2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - **3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other

councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- **a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- **b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

9. Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority .

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.

10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.

2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.

3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You

may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

9. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

10. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 7 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the **Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012**.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
<p>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</p>	<p>Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.</p>
<p>Sponsorship</p>	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
<p>Contracts</p>	<p>Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor 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>

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Land and property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	<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 councillor’s knowledge)—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor 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.
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
	capital of that body; or (ii) 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 councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* '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.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interest

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest :

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or

(iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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Councillor-Officer Protocol



IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

Filename and version	Status	Date adopted	Review date
Councillor-Officer Protocol	Adopted	January 2023 Reviewed 23 May 2023	28 May 2024

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INTRODUCTION

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

A strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between councillors and officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the council.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The roles are very different but need to work in a complementary way.

It is important for both sides to respect these differences and ensure that they work in harmony. Getting that relationship right is an important skill. That is why the code requires councillors to respect an officer's impartiality and professional expertise. In turn officers should respect a councillor's democratic mandate as the people accountable to the public

for the work of the local authority. It is also important for a local authority to have a councillor-officer protocol which sets out how this relationship works and what both councillors and officers can expect in terms of mutual respect and good working relationships.”

This Protocol covers:

- The respective roles and responsibilities of the councillors and the officer;
- Relationships between councillors and officers;
- Where/who a councillor or an officer should go to if they have concerns;
- Who is responsible for making decisions.

BACKGROUND

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

The reputation and integrity of the council is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of councillors and the officer working together to support each other’s roles.

The aim is effective and professional working relationships characterised by mutual trust, respect and courtesy. Overly close personal familiarity between councillors and officers is not recommended as it has the potential to damage this relationship

ROLES OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

The respective roles of councillors and officers can be summarised as follows:

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

Councillors

Councillors have four main areas of responsibility:

- To determine council policy and provide community leadership;
- To monitor and review council performance in implementing policies and delivering services;
- To represent the council externally;

and

- To act as advocates for their constituents.

All councillors have the same rights and obligations in their relationship with the officer, regardless of their status and should be treated equally.

Councillors should not involve themselves in the day to day running of the council. This is the officer's responsibility, and the officer will be acting on instructions from the council or its committees, within an agreed job description.

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

Officers can expect councillors:

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

- to respect the impartiality of officers and do not undermine their role in carrying out their duties
- not to ask officers to undertake work, or act in a way, which seeks to support or benefit a particular political party or gives rise to an officer being criticised for operating in a party-political manner
- not to ask officers to exceed their authority where that authority is given.

Chairs and vice-chairs of council and committees

Chairs and vice-chairs have additional responsibilities as delegated by the council. These responsibilities mean that they may have to have a closer working relationship with employees than other councillors do. However, they must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work or anything else which would prejudice their impartiality.

Officers

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

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

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

Officers must:

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

- be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for councillors, the media or other sections of the public.
- act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times
- provide support and learning and development opportunities for councillors to help them in performing their various roles in line with the council's training and development policy
- not seek to use their relationship with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly
- comply, at all times, with the Officers' Code of Conduct, and such other policies or procedures approved by the council

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

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

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

The Relationship: General

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Potential breaches of this Protocol are considered below.

Expectations

All councillors can expect:

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

Officers can expect from councillors:

- A working partnership;

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

Some general principles

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

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

COUNCILLORS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TO COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

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

The legal rights of councillors to inspect council documents are covered partly by statute and partly by the common law.

The common law right of councillors is based on the principle that any member has prima facie right to inspect council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the member properly to perform their duties as a member of the council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.

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

In some circumstances (e.g. a committee member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that committee) a councillor's "need to know" will normally be presumed. In other circumstances (e.g. a councillor wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties) a councillor will normally be expected to justify the request in specific terms. Any council information provided to a councillor must only be used by the councillor for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the councillor's duties as a member of the council.

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

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence between an individual councillor and an officer should not normally be copied (by the officer) to any other councillor. Where exceptionally it is necessary to copy the correspondence to another councillor, this should be made clear to the original councillor. In other words, a system of "silent copies" should not be employed.

Acknowledging that the "BCC" system of e-mailing is used, it should be made clear at the foot of any e-mails if another councillor has received an e-mail by adding "CC councillor X."

Official letters or emails on behalf of the council should normally be sent out under the name of the officer, rather than under the name of a councillor. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government Minister) for a letter or email to appear over the name of the chair, but this should be the exception rather than the norm. Letters or emails which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the council should never be sent out in the name of a councillor.

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

PRESS AND MEDIA

Councils are accountable to their electorate. Accountability requires local understanding. This will be promoted by the council, explaining its objectives and policies to the electors and customers. Councils use publicity to keep the public informed and to encourage public participation. The council needs to tell the public about the services it provides. Good effective publicity should aim to improve public awareness of the council's activities. Publicity is a sensitive matter in any political environment because of the impact it can have. Expenditure on publicity can be significant. It is essential to ensure that decisions on publicity are properly made in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and the council's Media Protocol.

The officer may respond to press enquiries but should confine any comments to the facts of the subject matter and the professional aspects of the function concerned. On no account must an officer expressly or impliedly make any political opinion, comment or statement.

Any press release that may be necessary to clarify the council's position in relation to disputes, major planning developments, court issues or individuals' complaints should be approved by the officer.

The chair (or chair of a committee) may act as spokespersons for the council in responding to the press and media and making public statements on behalf of the council but should liaise with the officer on all forms of contact with the press and media. The council may also appoint individual councillors as spokespeople where there is an area of particular expertise but this should only be done with the agreement of the council.

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

The LGA has produced useful guidance on the Publicity Code -

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/short-guide-publicity-during-pre-election-period>

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

IF THINGS GO WRONG

Procedure for officers:

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

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

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

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

Procedure for councillors:

If a councillor is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of the officer or another employee, the matter should be reported to the chair and then raised with the

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



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN ST FRIDESWIDES CHURCH AND BLETCHLEY AND FENNY STRATFORD TOWN COUNCIL APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2025

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 The 'Council' shall mean **Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council**
- 1.2 'STFC' shall mean the **St Frideswides Church**.
- 1.3 The 'Services' shall mean those services specified in this agreement (**'the Agreement'**).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The **St Frideswides Church** (STFC) partners with SOFEA to run a Community Larder membership model which people join for a small weekly fee. The model works by SOFEA coordinating surplus food including, ambient, fruit and veg and chilled items from supermarkets and distributing it to local people through the larder. This model reduces food waste, helps people save money and provides sustainable access to healthy food. Membership is open to everyone. In addition, there is discretionary funding available which pays for the membership of individuals and families who need extra short-term support.
- 2.2 **Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council** (BFSTC) has previously contributed to discretionary funding for larder members and provided BFSTC office staff to assist on the days of the Larder as well as assisting with the marketing and promotion.

3. PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2025

3.1 Objects

3.1.1 To provide funding towards a part-time 'Larder Manager' to be employed by **STFC** to run and oversee the Larder operation, co-ordinate volunteers and work towards financial sustainability of the project.

3.1.2 To provide funding towards discretionary memberships that will support individuals and families in the local area

3.2 Funding

Both parties agree to work for three years to secure additional resources for this project. This will include:

- A direct funding contribution from Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council per annum for each of the years 2022-2023, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.
- Funding from **STFC** to the sum of £6,140 for each of the years 2022-2023, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

3.3 Schedule of Payments from BFSTC

Year 1 - 2022-2023 - £13,000 - 1 April 2022

Year 2 - 2023-2024 - £6,500 – 1 April 2023

Year 3 - 2024-2025 - £6,500 – 1 April 2024

In years 2 and 3 the Town Council will consider increasing the funding of £6,500 subject to regular evidence demonstrating how the funding is being used to meet needs of residents in the area. Evidence should include reports on the annual accounts of **STFC**, membership figures including growth and churn rates and discretionary fund usage.

For and on behalf of St Frideswides Church:

Date:

Signed:

For and on behalf of Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council:

Date:

Signed:

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN BEDFORD AND MILTON KEYNES
WATERWAY TRUST AND BLETCHLEY AND FENNY STRATFORD TOWN
COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 2021 – 31 MARCH 2024

Background

The [Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust](#) (BMKWT) has launched an all-electric, fully accessible 12-passenger community trip boat (MKCB) into the Grand Union Canal during 2021, based at Campbell Wharf Marina and will provide cruises for the benefit of Milton Keynes and its communities throughout MK's canalside. This will help raise awareness and funds to support the Trust's Object to promote the development of the BMK Waterway Park.

[Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council](#) (BFSTC) has contributed to the set-up costs for the project and wishes to support development of the cruising and activity programme where it can benefit Bletchley and Fenny Stratford's communities. Both parties here commit to an ongoing collaboration to achieve shared objectives around the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford canalside.

Proposed Partnership Agreement

Objects

- 1 To promote and facilitate projects to enable the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford communities and individuals to benefit from and contribute to the MKCB.
- 2 To seek to influence the future development of the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford canalside by connecting it with its local communities, preserving and enhancing its biodiversity and celebrating the industrial heritage of the canal

Focus

- To develop canalside facilities where they will enable safe and convenient access to the MKCB and to other activity on the canal;
- To develop and support community projects where they can make beneficial use of cruising and other activities on the MKCB;
- To promote the boat and its associated programmes (including volunteering) across Bletchley and Fenny Stratford where that can support local benefit;
- To encourage and promote canal-based celebrations where these can increase participation in activities beside and on the water, including community cruising;
- To support growth of local economic activity associated with the MKCB and with the canal
- To contribute to preservation and enhancement of the canalside environment and heritage

Approach

- To develop a joint vision for future use of the canal and canalside to promote wellbeing in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford

- To identify deliverable projects, based both on the canal and within communities, for each year of the initial three year partnership;
- To work for at least three years to secure resources for these projects. This will include a direct funding contribution from Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council comprising £5,000 per annum for each of the years 2021-22, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. The allocation of spending of the funding provided by the Town Council will be approved by resolution of full Council.
- To ensure projects involving the MKCB generate revenue needed to maintain its viability as a sustainable social enterprise;
- Annually to review progress and suggest future opportunities, reporting back to BFSTC and to the Trust's MKCB Stakeholder Forum.

Rights and Obligations:

- The BMKWT will identify facilities required to enable and maximise benefits of the boat in BFS
- The BMKWT will commit to a minimum number of cruises serving Bletchley and Fenny Stratford commensurate with the funding provided by BFSTC
- Both parties will allocate time and where possible resource to promoting the local partnership and agreed projects
- Both parties will actively promote and support volunteering from the communities of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford
- The BMKWT will support review and joint progress reporting to BFSTC
- BFSTC will support review and joint progress reporting to the Trusts' s MKCB Stakeholder Forum
- Either party can, after three years, withdraw from the arrangements at three months' notice if a review suggests projects are no longer delivering benefits to BFS and/or to the M

Additional Information

The success of the partnership will be assessed using the following and other measures

- Number of cruises starting or finishing in Bletchley or Fenny Stratford
- Number of individuals from BFS postcodes benefiting from a cruise
- Number of individuals from BFS postcodes involved in a waterway-related project
- Number of volunteers from BFS postcodes involved in delivering canal-based activity, including Draft for the MKCB
- Number of BFS business and groups involved in funding or taking part in canal-based activity

2022-2023 representatives

Organisation	BFSTC Representatives
Milton Keynes Council Parishes Forum	Cllr Stephens Town Clerk
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils	Cllr Kelly-Wilson Cllr Segebrecht
Lakes Estate Renewal Forum	Cllr Browne
Salden Chase Sub-Committee	Cllr Imran Cllr Hume
Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal	Town Clerk
Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	Cllrs Bedford, Graham, Hume, Kelly-Wilson and Hussein

Representatives of the Town Council on external bodies are required to put forward the agreed policy positions of the Town Council rather than personal viewpoints.

Representatives are expected to report back to the Town Council either in writing (ideally) or via an oral report at a council or committee meeting following attendance at external meetings.

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SUMMARY OF ASSETS BY LOCATION

<u>Location</u>	<u>Original Cost</u>	<u>Current Value</u>	<u>Insurance Value</u>
Albert Street Toilets	2,733.99	2,733.99	3,191.91
Bletchley Library Garage	35,995.00	35,995.00	35,995.00
Bletchley and Fenny Stratford	69,724.65	69,724.65	74,532.55
Community Allotments	1.00	1.00	0.00
Community Orchard	1,732.60	1,732.60	2,033.78
Elizabeth Square	29,172.00	28,119.00	35,133.12
Fenny Chapel	13,448.06	13,448.06	123,945.05
Fenny Stratford Community Centre	11,075.42	11,075.42	393,573.02
Larch Grove Allotments	89.35	89.35	106.02
Manor Fields Allotments	1.00	1.00	0.00
Newton Leys Pavilion	54,367.93	54,366.93	4,612,279.19
Orchardside Allotments	947.59	947.59	946.59
Spotlight	10,639.01	10,639.01	12,574.13
Stanier Square	34,927.98	34,927.98	43,553.02
Sycamore Hall	9,672.49	9,672.49	1,544,340.30
Sycamore House	433,246.54	433,017.54	595,539.76
TOTAL	<u>707,774.61</u>	<u>706,491.61</u>	<u>7,477,743.44</u>

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Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council
 Sycamore House
 Drayton Road
 Bletchley
 Milton Keynes
 Buckinghamshire
 MK2 3RR

**Zurich Town, Parish and
 Community Council Team**
PO Box 726
Chichester
PO19 9PS

Invoice

Invoice Date: 17th May 2023

Invoice No: 523866585

Client ref: 3699791

Policy	Policy Term	(£) Premium
YLL-2720430313	01/06/2023-31/05/2024	7,581.48
Inspection Contract (If Applicable)		0.00
Sub total		7,581.48
Inspection Contract VAT @ prevailing rate		0.00
Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) @ prevailing rate		909.77
TOTAL		£8,491.25

Payment is due before your cover starts, or immediately if your cover is already in place.

PREVIOUS YEAR 7668.07

Please make cheques payable to **Zurich Municipal** and send to **Zurich Town, Parish and Community Council Team, PO Box 726, Chichester, PO19 9PS**

If paying by BACS, please note our new bank details and amend your records accordingly.

Acc Name: Zurich Town & Parish, Insurer Trust Account Acc Number: 23110249
 Sort Code: 20 – 65 - 82 Bank: Barclays Bank PLC

Please quote your Client Reference on all BACS transactions

Invoice Queries

Phone: 0800 917 9426

Email: accounts.team@uk.zurich.com

Our VAT registration number is: 107 8316 77

Zurich Municipal is a trading name of Zurich Insurance Company Ltd. A public limited company incorporated in Switzerland. Registered in the Canton of Zurich, No. CHE-105.833.114, registered offices at Mythenquai 2, 8002 Zurich. UK Branch registered in England and Wales no BR000105. UK Branch Head Office: The Zurich Centre, 3000 Parkway, Whiteley, Fareham, Hampshire PO15 7JZ.

Zurich Insurance Company Ltd is authorised and regulated in Switzerland by the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority FINMA. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Details about the extent of our regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority are available from us on request. Our firm reference number is 959113.

Communications may be monitored or recorded to improve our service and for security and regulatory purposes.

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	£
i Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (BMKALC) including NALC contribution	2,947.90
ii Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (MKALC)	-
iii Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)	501.00
iv The National Allotment Association	55.00
v National Association of British Markets (NABMA)	384.00

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Draft Freedom of information policy statement and procedures

Filename and version	Status	Date adopted	Review date
FOI.V1	Draft	23 May 2023	May 2026

Policy Statement

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council is committed to complying with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and related legislation. The Freedom of Information Act provides public access to information held by all public authorities.

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council provides this public access in two ways by:

- 1 publishing certain information proactively under the it publication scheme
- 2 responding to requests for information from members of the public or organisations.

The Freedom of Information Act covers any recorded information that is held by the town council. Recorded information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings.

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council is also committed to complying with the Data Protection Act 2018 which regulates the handling of information about people. It includes the right for people to access their personal data. To comply with both the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection legislation the town council may sometimes use the exemptions specified within the Freedom of Information Act but we maintain a commitment to openness, transparency and scrutiny.

The Town Council's Data Protection policy please is available on our website and as is our general privacy notice.

Requests for information

The town council offers advice and assistance to anybody who wishes to make a formal or informal request for information and is committed to dealing with requests within the statutory timescales. (All requests for information made in writing will be treated as Freedom of Information requests even if the legislation is not cited.)

The right to ask for information only relates to information held by the town council at the time the request is made. A request under the Freedom of Information Act gives a right to 'information' rather than specific records or documents.

The council publishes a wide range of information on its website. the first instance individuals or organisations seeking information are encouraged to look at our [publication scheme](#) which is on our website www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk. Our accounts,

minutes and many other documents are readily available on the website but officers will assist those who need help to find specific information.

Email: info@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk or telephone 01908 649469.

Refusal of requests

In certain circumstances the town council may refuse a request for information.

Vexatious and repeated requests and/or applications made with the aim of frustrating the operations of the council may be refused.

The town council may refuse to meet a request where the council estimates that the time to comply with the request would be more than 16 hours in such cases a fees notice will be issued requiring a fee to be paid to complete the request.

The town council may also refuse to accede to a request for information where the information is considered to be exempted under the Freedom of Information Act.

Similarly some parts of a request response may be redacted where the release would breach the Data Protection Act.

All requests will be considered on their merits and with the aim that information should be made available unless it is clearly not in public interest to do so.

A written explanation for any refusal of a request for information will always be given.

Making a request for information

Under the Freedom of Information Act requests for information must be made in writing (ideally by email or by letter using the contact details at the end of this policy). As much information as possible should be given to enable the town council to identify and locate the information being requested.

The request will be dealt with by the Town Clerk or the Support Services Manager in accordance with this policy and the guidance set by the Information Commissioners Office for dealing with requests.

Charges

In certain circumstances the council may charge a fee for any retrieval and provision of information. Full details of any charges will be notified to the requester in writing before the request is processed.

The Council's Publication Scheme has full details of charges for the provision of hard copies of documents.

Appeals

If the requester is dissatisfied with the outcome of their request for information; usually where a request has been refused or they do not feel that the request has been properly handled, they should first attempt to resolve this by submitting an appeal to the town council following the instructions provided in the decision notice sent with the outcome of the request for information.

If it is still not possible to achieve satisfaction an appeal should be submitted to the Information Commissioner. The contact details for the Information Commissioner Office can be found online at <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

Town Council contact details:

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council
Sycamore House
Drayton Road
Bletchley
MK2 3RR

01908 649469

info@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Draft Data Protection Policy

Filename and version	Status	Date adopted	Review date
Dataprotectionv3	Draft	23 May 2023	28 May 2024

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council is committed to processing personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulations 2018 & Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2020.

We will ensure that our staff and those acting on our behalf obtain, use and disclose personal information lawfully and correctly. In particular we will ensure that personal information is:

- processed fairly and lawfully
- processed only for specified and lawful purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate and up to date.
- not kept longer than is necessary
- processed in accordance with the rights of the owners of the information
- kept secure.
- transferred outside the European Economic Area only with the town council's consent and if there is adequate protection.

To further explain why we may hold and how we use your personal data, please refer to our general [Privacy Notice](#) published on our website **www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk**

Responsibility for Data Management

The Data Controller

Under the current legislation the Data Controller is Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council. This means the town council will be responsible for ensuring that data is collected where deemed necessary, stored efficiently and securely and for how long. As data controller the town council ultimately determines for what purposes personal information is held and what it will be used for. It is also responsible for notifying the Information Commissioner of the data it holds or is likely to hold, and the general purposes that this data will be used for. The Town Clerk will carry out the active duties of the town council for data control and staff will handle various aspects of data management and data processing.

Data Protection Officer

Under the current legislation the Town Council is not required to appoint a Data Protection Officer and has not done so.

The Support Services Manager has been designated as the officer responsible for data queries, investigations around misuse of data, and will act with the Data Controller in ensuring the council is compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Staff of the Council

Staff of the council will be responsible for data processing and data management, and will act under the guidance of their line managers.

Members/Councillors

Data held by councillors on personal electronic devices or paper records in their home, unless generated by the town council, is not considered data held by the town council. Such data is to be managed individually by councillors who may wish to register with the ICO as data controllers.

Data held by councillors on their council provided tablets and within their council provided email accounts is considered data held by the town council. When using these devices and accounts councillors should delete all emails/records containing personal data when no longer required and should not forward any personal data outside the council except with the consent, The Support Services Manager should be notified within 24 hours of any suspected data breach.

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Data Protection and Privacy Policy

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council is registered with the ICO

Registration Number: ZA088495

Data Controller: Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Version No: V 2

Date adopted: 5 November 2019

Reviewed: 13 May 2021

Review due:
November 2022

Your personal data – what is it?

“Personal data” is any information about a living individual which allows them to be identified from that data (for example a name, photographs, videos, email address, or address). Identification can be by the personal data alone or in conjunction with any other personal data. The processing of personal data is governed by legislation relating to personal data which applies in the United Kingdom including the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (the “GDPR”) and other local legislation relating to personal data and rights such as the Human Rights Act.

Council information

This Privacy Policy is provided to you by Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council which is the data controller for your data. Our website is at www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk and our main address is Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council, Bletchley Library, Westfield Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2RA.

Other data controllers

We also work with other data controllers such as

- Milton Keynes Council and other local authorities
- Community groups
- Charities
- Other not for profit entities
- Contractors
- Credit reference agencies

The Council will process some or all of the following personal data where necessary to perform its tasks

- Names, titles, and aliases, photographs;
- Contact details such as telephone numbers, addresses, and email addresses;
- Where they are relevant to the services provided by a council, or where you provide them to us, we may process demographic information such as gender, age, marital status, nationality, education/work histories, academic/professional qualifications, hobbies, family composition, and dependants;
- Where you pay for activities such as use of a council hall, financial identifiers such as bank account numbers, payment card numbers, payment/transaction identifiers, policy numbers, and claim numbers;
- The data we process may include sensitive personal data or other special categories of data such as racial or ethnic origin, mental and physical health, details of injuries, medication/treatment received, political beliefs, trade union affiliation, genetic data, biometric data, data concerning sex life or sexual orientation.
- With our website provider we collect and use data from our website for example using cookies and the way we do this is described in our Website Privacy Statement which is attached to this policy at Appendix I.
- Personal data in the form of images recorded by CCTV cameras from security systems at Town Council premises¹

The council will comply with data protection law. This says that the personal data we hold about you must be:

- Used lawfully, fairly and in a transparent way.

¹ A separate CCTV policy provides more detailed information about the use of CCTV cameras and can be found on the Town Council’s website

- Collected only for valid purposes that we have clearly explained to you and not used in any way that is incompatible with those purposes.
- Relevant to the purposes we have told you about and limited only to those purposes.
- Accurate and kept up to date.
- Kept only as long as necessary for the purposes we have told you about.
- Kept and destroyed securely including ensuring that appropriate technical and security measures are in place to protect your personal data from loss, misuse, unauthorised access and disclosure.

We use your personal data for some or all of the following purposes:

- To deliver public services including to understand your needs to provide the services that you request and to understand what we can do for you and inform you of other relevant services;
- To confirm your identity to provide some services;
- To contact you by post, email, telephone or using social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter);
- To help us to build up a picture of how we are performing;
- To prevent and detect fraud and corruption in the use of public funds and where necessary for law enforcement functions;
- To enable us to meet all legal and statutory obligations and powers including any delegated functions;
- To carry out comprehensive safeguarding procedures (including due diligence and complaints handling) in accordance with best safeguarding practice from time to time with the aim of ensuring that all children and adults-at-risk are provided with safe environments and generally as necessary to protect individuals from harm or injury;
- To promote the interests of the council;
- To maintain our own accounts and records;
- To seek your views, opinions or comments;
- To notify you of changes to our facilities, services, events and staff, councillors and role holders;
- To send you communications which you have requested and that may be of interest to you. These may include information about campaigns, appeals, other new projects or initiatives;
- To process relevant financial transactions including grants and payments for goods and services supplied to the council including hire of premises
- To allow the statistical analysis of data so we can plan the provision of services.

Our processing may also include the use of CCTV systems for the prevention and prosecution of crime.

What is the legal basis for processing your personal data?

The council is a public authority and has certain powers and duties. Most of your personal data is processed for compliance with a legal obligation which includes the discharge of the council's statutory functions and powers. Sometimes when exercising these powers or duties it is necessary to process personal data of residents or people using the council's services. We will always take into account your interests and rights. This Privacy Policy sets out your rights and the council's obligations to you in detail.

We may also process personal data if it is necessary for the performance of a contract with you, or to take steps to enter into a contract. An example of this would be processing your data in connection with the hire of our premises, or the acceptance of an allotment garden tenancy. Sometimes the use of your personal data requires your consent. We will first obtain your consent to that use.

Sharing your personal data

The council will implement appropriate security measures to protect your personal data. This section of the Privacy Policy provides information about the third parties with whom the council will share your personal data. These third parties also have an obligation to put in place appropriate security measures and will be responsible to you directly for the manner in which they process and protect your personal data. It is likely that we will need to share your data with some or all of the following (but only where necessary):

- Our agents, suppliers and contractors. For example, we may ask a commercial provider to publish or distribute newsletters on our behalf, or to maintain our database software;
- On occasion, other local authorities or not for profit bodies with which we are carrying out joint ventures eg in relation to facilities or events for the community.

How long do we keep your personal data?

We will keep some records permanently if we are legally required to do so. We may keep some other records for an extended period of time. For example, it is current best practice to keep financial records for a minimum period of 8 years to support HMRC audits or provide tax information. We may have legal obligations to retain some data in connection with our statutory obligations as a public authority. The council is permitted to retain data in order to defend or pursue claims. In some cases, the law imposes a time limit for such claims (for example 3 years for personal injury claims or 6 years for contract claims). We will retain some personal data for this purpose as long as we believe it is necessary to be able to defend or pursue a claim. In general, we will endeavour to keep data only for as long as we need it. This means that we will delete it when it is no longer needed. The council has a detailed document retention policy which is available on request.

Your rights and your personal data

You have the following rights with respect to your personal data:

When exercising any of the rights listed below, in order to process your request, we may need to verify your identity for your security. In such cases we will need you to respond with proof of your identity before you can exercise these rights.

- (i) The right to access personal data we hold on you*
- (ii) The right to correct and update the personal data we hold on you*
- (iii) The right to have your personal data erased*
- (iv) The right to object to processing of your personal data or to restrict it to certain purposes only*
- (v) The right to data portability*
- (vi) The right to withdraw your consent to the processing at any time for any processing of data to which consent was obtained*
- (vii) The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office.* You can contact the Information Commissioners Office on 0303 123 1113 or via email <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/> or at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Transfer of Data Abroad

Any personal data transferred to countries or territories outside the European Economic Area ("EEA") will only be placed on systems complying with measures giving equivalent protection of personal rights either through international agreements or contracts approved by the European Union. Our website is also accessible from overseas so on occasion some personal data (for example in a newsletter) may be accessed from overseas.

Further processing

If we wish to use your personal data for a new purpose, not covered by this Privacy Policy, then we will provide you with a Privacy Notice explaining this new use prior to commencing the processing

and setting out the relevant purposes and processing conditions. Where and whenever necessary, we will seek your prior consent to the new processing.

Changes to this policy

We keep this Privacy Policy under regular review and we will place any updates on this page of our website

https://www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk/Policies_and_Governance_8286.aspx This policy was last updated in November 2019

Responsibility for implementing this policy

The Town Council as a corporate body has ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Data Protection legislation. The Council has delegated the day to day implementation of the policy to the Town Clerk.

Contact Details

Please contact us if you have any questions about this Privacy Policy or the personal data we hold about you or to exercise all relevant rights, queries or complaints.

- Email: clerk@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk
- Phone: 01908 649469
- Correspondence: The Town Clerk, Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council, Bletchley Library, Westfield Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2RA

Adopted by Council: 5 November 2019 (Minute reference: FC19/20 - 195)
Review Date: Annual Meeting May 2020

VISION ICT Website Privacy Statement

Last updated: March 2019

This page informs you of our policies regarding the collection, use and disclosure of Personal Information we receive from users of the Site. We use your Personal Information only for providing and improving the Site. By using the Site, you consent and agree to the collection and use of information in accordance with this policy.

Information Collection and Use

While using our Site, we may ask you to provide us with certain personally identifiable information that can be used to contact or identify you. Personally, identifiable information may include, but is not limited to your name (“Personal Information”). We may also run surveys from time to-time, using third party websites such as Survey Monkey. We strive to anonymise the data we collect, and only use it for the improvement of the services we offer.

Log Data

Like many site operators, we collect information that your browser sends whenever you visit our Site (“Log Data”). This Log Data may include information such as your computer’s Internet Protocol (“IP”) address, browser type, browser version, the pages of our Site that you visit, the time and date of your visit, the time spent on those pages and other statistics. In addition, we may use third party services such as Google Analytics that collect, monitor and analyse this data. This data is completely anonymised and does not include personal information such as name or email address.

How long will we keep your data?

We hold the data securely in line with our document retention and management procedure. We keep all data for as long as

- a) the project its collected for is in operation
- b) on an ongoing basis but normally deleted after 10 years if our association with you is not active.

Communications

We may use your Personal Information to contact you with newsletters, should you opt into receive them.

Cookies

Cookies are files with small amount of data, which may include an anonymous unique identifier. Cookies are sent to your browser from a web site and stored on your computer’s hard drive. Like many sites, we use “cookies” to collect information. You can instruct your browser to refuse all cookies or to indicate when a cookie is being sent. However, if you do not accept cookies, you may not be able to use some portions of our Site. Please see our Cookie Statement for more information.

Security

The security of your Personal Information is important to us but remember that no method of transmission over the Internet, or method of electronic storage, is 100% secure. While we strive to use commercially acceptable means to protect your Personal Information, we cannot guarantee its absolute security.

Changes to this Privacy Policy

This Privacy Policy is effective as of March 2018 and will remain in effect except with respect to any changes in its provisions in the future, which will be in effect immediately after being posted on this page.

We reserve the right to update or change our Privacy Policy at any time and you should check this Privacy Policy periodically. Your continued use of the Service after we post any modifications to the Privacy Policy

on this page will constitute your acknowledgement of the modifications and your consent to abide and be bound by the modified Privacy Policy. We reserve the right to update or change our Privacy Policy at any time and you should check this Privacy Policy periodically. Your continued use of the Service after we post any modifications to the Privacy Policy on this page will constitute your acknowledgement of the modifications and your consent to abide and be bound by the modified Privacy Policy.

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Press and **social** media policy

Filename and version	Status	Date adopted	Review date
Gov_2023-24PressandmediapolicyV2	Adopted	23 May 2025	28 May 2024

Introduction

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council welcomes enquiries from the press and media and recognises that its relationship with the press helps communication with residents. The town council seeks to be as transparent as possible, always cooperating with the press and using the opportunities of the media to publicise events being organised. Members of the press are permitted to attend all meetings of the council and its committees, unless excluded under the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960. They are not, however, invited to attend any working group meetings which are informal fact-finding sessions only and are not official council meetings.

Purpose

The aim of the policy is to ensure that Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council is seen to communicate in a professional and objective manner and reflect the corporate view of the council. The council wishes to respond to the growth of social media channels and recognises that posts and comments made by members of the council could reflect directly on the organisation. This policy sets out the required protocol for councillors who communicate their thoughts and views through social media channels.

Scope

The press and media policy includes:

- official council news releases
- individual councillor comments to the press
- freedom of information requests
- press protocol
- social media

1 Official council news releases

Responsibility for preparation and release of all official council news statements rests with the town clerk in consultation with the chair and/or other councillors as required. The town clerk will act as the council's senior press officer. Any official contact with the media concerning the council's policies, the decisions it makes and services it provides are to be initiated through the town clerk. Councillors who identify a media opportunity should discuss this with the town clerk who will, in consultation with other councillors as appropriate, decide

how this will be followed up. If a councillor or an employee receives an approach or enquiry from the media about any matter relating to the town council, it should be referred to the town clerk.

2 Councillors' press and media comments

Individual councillors may make their own statements relating to local issues and this policy is not designed to prevent any councillor expressing a personal opinion through the media. Councillors must make it clear however, that any view expressed which differs from council policy is their own personal view and should be recorded as such. Councillor comments which may or may not be political, should bear no reference whatsoever to the council or any officer and must not use the council logo. Neither the council address, telephone number or website should be included as a point of contact. If a journalist wishes to confirm what was said by an individual councillor during a council meeting, they will be referred to the town clerk.

3 Freedom of information requests

All requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act are to be referred to the town clerk who, in routine cases will arrange for the information request to be satisfied in accordance with the legislation.

4 Press protocol

The town clerk is responsible for issuing official press releases on behalf of the town council. Official press releases will not identify the political party or group affiliation of any councillor(s) quoted in the release. When the media seeks information on an issue that is, or is likely to be, subject to legal proceedings then legal advice should be obtained before any response is made.

During election year, from the issue of the notice of election until the day following the election the town council will not normally issue press releases **unless necessary**.

All press releases and other materials are copied and filed for reference by the town clerk.

5 Social media

5.1 Engaging with the council on social media

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council encourages members of the public, local organisations and community groups, members of the press, local councillors and others in our wider community to follow and engage with the council through social media accounts.

We also encourage everyone in our community to share content from our corporate social media accounts with their own social media networks. This is especially important during emergency situations or where sharing timely information is essential.

Councillors may choose to engage with the community on their own 'councillor' social media accounts.

Individuals and organisations are responsible for the content that they choose to post to their social media accounts. This includes content created by others that individuals or organisations choose to report, retweet or share.

5.2 Conduct on social media

The Town Council will treat everyone with courtesy and respect on its social media channels, and we therefore ask for the same in return from those who choose to engage with us.

We ask that council staff and councillors are treated courteously. Council staff and councillors should never be subjected to bullying or other forms of abuse or harassment

Council staff and councillors have the right to carry out their civic duties and work without fear of being attacked and abused. Any behaviour whether that be verbal, physical or in writing, which causes either councillors or staff to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed or threatened is unacceptable.*

5.3 Reporting a civility and respect-related issue

Council staff and others operating the council's social media accounts will always be mindful of the council's relevant policies, procedures and processes, including the codes of conduct for councillors and officers.

The council will record and report abuse directed at the council. The council may for example create screenshots of comments and keep a record of abusive or threatening communications and may take further action as appropriate.

Council staff and councillors should not have to put up with abusive or threatening behaviour. When subjected to such behaviour the council reserves the right to enact its relevant social media policies and may for example, delete content, block individuals or report individuals to social media platforms when appropriate to do so.

The council reserves the right to report criminal matters it notices on social media to the police. For instance, hat crime/speech or threats of violence.

Please get in touch with the council if you feel that a councillor, member of staff or user of our social media has failed to act in a civil and respectful way on our social media.

You can contact:

John Fairclough

Support Services Manager, Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

John.fairclough@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

01908 649469

6 Social media protocol for councillors*

Councillors should be aware of the council's adopted code of conduct, the council's member/officer protocol and any legal implications if they are posting comments or views on social media about individual councillors or employees of council or sharing information about the council. Social media should not be used as a platform to discuss council policy and councillors who wish to challenge the council's procedures must refer their concerns to the town clerk in the first instance.

Councillors are not permitted to share the outcomes of closed working groups or fact-finding sessions on social media.

Defamation is the act of making a statement about a person or a company that is considered to harm reputation. If the defamatory statement is written (in print or online) it is known as libel. Defamatory statements are most likely to constitute a breach of the adopted code of conduct and the council may refer members to the Standards Committee of Milton Keynes City Council **via the Monitoring Officer** if it becomes aware of any defamatory statements made by members in their capacity as councillors.

*NB Social media protocol for employees is dealt with in the employee handbook **and through in house training.**

7 Civility and Respect

In January 2023 Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council pledged to support the Civility and Respect project run by the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks and One Voice Wales.

The town council has adopted the Social Media Civility and Respect Guide produced by Breakthrough Communications for and on behalf of the Civility and Respect project. This guide is adopted for use by all councillors and employees in support of the council's commitment to promoting civility and respect..

*Potential alternative wording: **threatened is unacceptable.**

Actively addressing the issues of Civility and Respect on Social Media

A Social Media Civility and Respect Guide and Policy Supplement
produced by Breakthrough Communications,
for and on behalf of the Civility and Respect Project.



IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS



BREAKTHROUGH
COMMUNICATIONS
SPECIALISTS IN CONNECTING COUNCILS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES

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Notice

Social Media Civility & Respect Guide and Policy Supplement has been designed and developed by Breakthrough Communications. This document is hereby licensed by Breakthrough Communications & Strategies Limited for use by parish and town councils to help them proactively tackle social media civility and respect issues. This document may be used and deployed by local councils as required to suit their individual needs.

Disclaimer: this guide has been designed as a useful general guide for local councils, however please note that it does not constitute legal advice. Whilst we've done our best to make sure that the information contained within the guide is as accurate as possible at the time of production, we cannot accept any liability for error or omission whatsoever. If your council requires advice relating to your specific situation or circumstances, please contact us and we'll do our best to assist you.

Introduction

Thank you for downloading this document, which forms part of the templates and resources made available by the Civility & Respect project.

This advice and guidance provided in this document are focused on civility and respect issues as they relate to the use of social media by local councils and councillors.

This document is intended to provide a framework that empowers local councils to take a proactive approach to social media. It is designed to act as a supplement to a council's overarching social media policies and procedures. It also seeks to offer guidance to individual parish and town councillors. The guidance can be used by any size of parish or town council.

It is primarily designed to be an internal council document. However, it does contain elements that could be used in the public domain. General introduction to the issue of civility and respect from NALC and SLCC:

- [Civility and Respect \(NALC\)](#)
- [Civility and Respect \(SLCC\)](#)

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Advice for the council

Evidence suggests that local councils experiencing poor conduct or vexatious demands or complaints often experience problems over a significant period of time. The longer an issue is permitted to continue, unaddressed, the more complex, time-consuming, and expensive the resolution becomes.

There are several reasons why parish and town councils should adopt a proactive approach. For instance:

- It demonstrates a committed approach by the council to social media and issues relating to civility and respect
- It sets out a clear corporate framework for the council
- It provides guidance to individual members of the council
- It complements your existing policies and procedures, in particular, those relating to civility and respect
- Helps to spread best practice across the sector

Suggested first steps

It is important that your council takes a proactive approach to civility and respect issues.

Here are some ways you can get off on the right foot with social media.

Raise internal awareness

The first step your council should take is formally adopting the civility and respect pledge. Your council can do this by visiting either the [NALC website](#) or the [SLCC website](#).

Regularly remind councillors and staff about civility and respect issues and the guidelines for respectful social media.

For example, once a quarter your council could send out a short email to all staff and councillors. This could be a wider, proactive message about civility and respect issues and include a link to the Supplement on your website.

You should also actively remind councillors and officers about the training that is available both in relation to social media and reinforcing positive behaviour

You could also direct councillors to the relevant section in this document.

The Council could also adopt some specific policies and procedures concerning social media. Please see the template Supplement at the end of this document.

Raise public awareness

Make the pledge wording available on your council's website, ideally in a prominent place. Try to place a link to this and other social media policies near any social media links if possible, as this will help raise public awareness.

Include a link on your council's social media accounts. This could be a link in a pinned post, for example. Your council could also have a link in the 'description section' of any social media accounts, or as part of its 'bio' if relevant.

You could also place the Bullying and Harassment zero tolerance notice on your website parts of this document, as appropriate.

Share best practice and highlight bad practices

It is always important to highlight good practice with colleagues. It is equally important to remind people why good conduct on social media is important. Your council could consider sharing resources such as videos and articles.

Proactively encourage two-way civility and respect through the council's social media channels

When there is a positive news story relating to your council or area, try to encourage positive engagement. This can be on any aspect of the work of the council, from its day-to-day services, its people and teams, the projects it carries out, and so much more. It can also relate to awards and recognition.

For example, if the council does well in an 'In Bloom' competition, your council could take the following easy steps to proactively boost two-way civility and respect on its social media channels:

1. Take a picture or video of the beautiful flowers, or the team collecting the award
2. Create a positive post
3. Ask councillors and other members of staff to positively comment, react and share
4. Repeat the next time there is some good news

You could also promote events such as [World Kindness Day](#). This event takes place worldwide every year on 13th November.

General social media advice for councillors

What is social media?

Social media is applications or websites that encourage and enable users to network. Such applications and websites allow users to easily generate, post and share content.

Put simply - there are a huge amount of social media platforms and there are more every day. Some might use the following:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- WhatsApp

Tip: Different platforms will allow you to speak to different 'audiences' or parts of your community. Instagram is popular with younger people. Twitter is popular with organisations. Think carefully about who you want or need to speak to.

Why use social media as a councillor?

Social media is a simple, quick and effective way of communicating. It's also cheap and allows a user to reach whole communities at the click of a button.

More than that, social media is built for community engagement. Councils and councillors can have 2-way conversations rather than simply broadcasting information.

Tip: Some people aren't on social media at all. Not everyone on social media will be on the platform that you are using. Remember both of these things when seeking feedback or opinions from your community.

New to social media as a councillor?

If you have never used social media as a councillor, start with small steps. Take advice, don't rush into things. Start off on one platform and master it before moving on to another.

Setting up a Facebook Page is a good place to start. It is easy to do and most people are familiar with it. Lots of people are still active Facebook users - despite it now being considered 'traditional' social media.

Once you have yourself set up, start with a simple 'Hello'. Try to post engaging content. Ask questions, take feedback and build a two-way conversation. Build a community by trying to grow the number of followers or subscribers you have.

Tip: Sharing content with local groups on social media is an easy way of growing the number of followers you have. But be careful not to share too much with groups and ensure the content is relevant to them.

How do I manage my social media security and safety?

It is really easy to share information about yourself. That is indeed the whole point of social media. So as a councillor you need to think carefully about what you put out there and how much of it.

Before you start posting it is worthwhile thinking about not only what is safe to post, but what you are comfortable with posting. As a general rule, don't share personal information, such as your personal phone number, date of birth, or home address.

Remember that you need to also consider the personal data of others around you. You might be comfortable living your life in the public glare, but you need to ask yourself: "Are my family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues?"

From a security point of view, think carefully before you post. Once something is on social media you lose nearly all control as to how it will be used.

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As with emails you will need to watch out for phishing scams, cons and malicious software.

Finally, there are trolls who post content that is designed to upset, elicit a response or to further their own goals.

A troll is often someone who posts just to get an emotional reaction or to manipulate others' perceptions. The posts can be offensive, off-topic, inflammatory, purposefully inaccurate or insincere. Trolls often do this for their own amusement or in aid of goals such as disrupting the democratic process.

It is important 'not to feed the trolls'. Stay focused on what's important and try not to respond to content that is purposefully offensive, off-topic, inflammatory, inaccurate or insincere

Tip: Every social media platform has a slightly different set of privacy options and controls. Do your research and set them correctly BEFORE you start to post content and not after.

What are my responsibilities as a councillor on social media?

Golden Rule - If you are unsure about posting something, stop and ask for advice first before doing anything else.

Social media almost always operates in the public domain. Once something is published it is often out there for everyone to see. Social media content can:

- Go 'viral' - meaning it can be seen by a large number of people
- Be altered or changed without your consent
- Be taken out of context
- Shared around the world

Using social media as the elected (or co-opted) member of a council is very different from using it as someone who isn't a councillor. Councillors have additional responsibilities because of the position they are in.

Councillors are personally responsible for the social media content they create, publish and share. Being a councillor will not prevent someone else from pursuing legal action following the publication of an untrue statement. In such a situation you will likely be held personally liable.

Councillors should be mindful of the difference between fact and opinion. You also play a central role in preventing the spread of disinformation. Think twice before you press 'share' or 'retweet'!

On social media, councillors should also keep in mind their responsibility in relation to confidential information, copyright, data protection, the pre-election period and exempt reports.

Councillors are still subject to the Code of Conduct on social media. If you refer to your role as a councillor it is likely that you may be considered to be acting in an "official capacity".

When posting to social media you should remember:

- You are an elected representative of the council
- What you post can affect the reputation of the council
- The council is a corporate decision-making body. You cannot independently make decisions for the council over social media
- Some issues and communications are best left to the council's official social media accounts, which is usually managed by officers
- Having a single voice or message can be critical in some situations - for instance in the event of major flooding
- You don't have to respond or comment to everything on social media - sometimes it's best not to

Tip: Think before you press ‘publish’! There is a simple test. If you would be reluctant to say something face-to-face to a group of strangers in the street, then you probably shouldn’t say it on social media.

Do I need to manage my social media profiles and pages?

You should consider having a separate social media page or profile for council use. This will help to avoid confusion, both for yourself and others. On Facebook, this can be done by setting up a Facebook Page.

Please keep in mind that even information posted to a private social media account can quickly find its way into the public domain. Regardless of the social media platform used, it can be useful to indicate the purpose of your profile or page. This will help to make clear that it is a public page or profile you are using in your capacity as a councillor.

It is your responsibility to manage whatever you set up on social media. It is likely over time that others will contribute and comment. There are some basic things you should consider, such as how you will handle abusive language or harassment.

Social media platforms provide administrators with lots of tools and settings to help with management and moderation. Make sure you know how they work and use them appropriately. This will save you time and stop problems from happening.

Civility and respect social media guide for councillors

When councillors use social media, the Code of Conduct may apply. Under the Localism Act 2011, the Code of Conduct will only likely apply when acting in the role of councillor and is unlikely to affect councillors using social media in a private capacity.

Councillors who wish to use social media in their capacity as a councillor should consider having separate social media accounts. This will help to avoid confusion, both for yourself and others. For example, on Facebook, this can be done by setting up a public Facebook Page where you use the ‘Councillor’ label before your name.

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Regardless of the platform councillors use, it can be useful to indicate what the purpose of your profile or page is. This will help to make clear that it is a public page or profile you are using in your capacity as a councillor.

It is the responsibility of councillors to manage their social media. Councillors should consider, for example, how you will handle the moderation of comments and messages.

The Council suggests that councillors consider the following guidance when using social media in their councillor role:

- Be as open, inclusive and professional as possible when using social media.
- Get and give support. Where you feel able, provide support to fellow councillors online, and reach out to colleagues and your council for support where needed.
- If you are unsure about posting something, stop and ask for advice from an appropriate source first, before doing anything else.
- Bear in mind that what you post can affect the reputation of the council
- The council is a corporate decision-making body. Councillors cannot independently make decisions for the council over social media.
- You should make clear you are expressing personal views and opinions, and not speaking on behalf of the council unless authorised by the council to do so.
- For some issues and communications, responses may need to come from the council's official social media, rather than individual councillors responding.
- Councillors should be mindful of the difference between fact and opinion.
- Elected members play a central role in preventing the spread of disinformation.
- Don't leave your social media to take care of itself. Social media doesn't stop - it keeps going all day every day.
- Don't dismiss or ignore advice and guidance, particularly legal advice.
- Don't assume that a disclaimer or excuses will prevent someone from taking legal action against you.

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- Make sure that your social media accounts are safe and protected with strong passwords and multiple-factor authentication where possible.
- Understand privacy settings. There is a range of settings to help you manage who can see or comment on your posts.
- Consider personal mental health and well-being. Taking a break from social media from time to time can be beneficial.

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**BREAKTHROUGH
COMMUNICATIONS**

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Suggested social media rules of engagement for individual councillors

Clear rules of engagement can help a councillor or council to set out what their aims are, how they will behave and how they expect users on their account to behave.

These rules of engagement have been created specifically with issues of civility and respect in mind. However, they are wider reaching.

These suggested rules of engagement could be used on either a councillor's social media account or a council's account. They could be posted to social media in the account description, a pinned post/tweet or a link to a page on a website.

Welcome!

Hello and welcome to my/our social media page. I/we want to create a safe space for everyone in our community to engage on (insert social media platform). These rules of engagement have been created to set out what you can expect from me/us. They also set out what I/we expect of you if you wish to join in the discussion.

Rule 1: Be responsible and respectful

- Be open and honest.
- Be civil and respectful.
- Do not post anonymously or use a false name.
- Debate is fine, so long as it is carried out in a civil and respectful way.

Rule 2: Engage in positive conversations

- Actively participate in positive discussions.
- Be open to different points of view and others opinions.

- Share good news and success from our area.
- Share posts or content from other local organisations, groups and individuals where it is appropriate to do so.

Rule 3: Address poor conduct

- Do not spread false information or unsubstantiated accusations.
- Posts must not contain abuse, harassment, intimidation or threats of any form.
- Posts must not contain any form of discrimination – including racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia or religious intolerance.
- No social media user should have to put up with abusive or threatening behaviour. I/we reserve the right to delete content, block individuals or report individuals to social media platforms when necessary.

Guide to tackling online abuse for both councillors and officers

A brief introduction

Social media offers many opportunities for councillors and councils to constructively engage with their communities. Most of the time this is a positive experience. Social media helps to build a profile, explain complex issues in plain English and to develop a two-way conversation.

Unfortunately, in a small number of cases councillors and councils can experience online abuse. Social media can become a place where individuals resort to abusive behaviour, such as aggressive language, threats, trolling and bullying.

Types of abusive behaviour to watch out for

Trolls

Unfortunately, online abuse is an issue on every social media platform. Sometimes it will be random or short-lived. On other occasions, it can be more sustained and led by users who are often described as 'trolls'.

A troll is often someone who posts just to get an emotional reaction or to manipulate others perceptions. The posts can be offensive, off-topic, inflammatory, purposefully inaccurate or insincere. Trolls often do this for their own amusement or in aid of goals such as disrupting the democratic process.

All too often trolls post things without thinking, without obvious logic and without a good reason. It is therefore important to remember that trolls often do not believe what they themselves are posting.

‘Why can’t they just...?!’

Many issues that councils deal with are complex. From inside the council, this is clear. From the outside, it can appear like ‘nothing is happening’. Sometimes it can be difficult to explain in plain English why a simple solution will not work.

Some people in the community will have their own ‘simple’ or ‘common sense’ solution to a problem. This can lead to people making the ‘Why can’t they just...?!’ social media posts.

Residents sometimes consider councillors and councils to be ignoring them when their simple solution is not considered or implemented. The problem is compounded by the fact that some ‘Why can’t they just...?!’ posts are picked up by the local media.

Problems can also emerge when people are pressed for detail on how the ‘simple solution’ would work. Providing information that shows a ‘simple solution’ will not work can cause some people to become aggressive, incoherent and defensive.

Legitimate challenge and scrutiny

Challenge and scrutiny are a key part of our democracy and the decision-making process. It can for example help us to see where a decision might be having an unintended or negative impact. This feedback is critical.

Challenge and scrutiny should be constructive. It should not lead to offensive language and abusive behaviour. There is an important line that should not be crossed between legitimate challenge and online abuse.

Councillors and councils should not seek to stifle debate or censure views. However, they should not be put in a position where they are subject to offensive language and abusive behaviour.

Politics

Politics is similar to challenge and scrutiny. It has an important role to play in debate and forms an important part of the democratic process.

Councillors and councils should not seek to suppress other people's political views. However, the political debate does not give people online a licence to abuse elected officials. Once again there is a clear line between healthy debate and online abuse.

Smear campaigns

A smear campaign is a deliberate attempt to negatively impact a person's or organisation's standing or damage their reputation. Smears are usually done through the spread of false information and discrediting tactics. They can be 'one-off' comments. Unfortunately, some are sustained and organised.

Smear campaigns can be one of the hardest forms of online abuse to deal with. In some cases it might require legal advice to be taken or for the Police to get involved. Remember to keep a record of the abuse and report the issue to the social media platform and authorities as appropriate.

Bullying and harassment

Online bullying and harassment has unfortunately become more common in recent years. Whilst it often appears in the press in relation to teenagers and young people it is something that can affect anybody.

Online bullying and harassment is when someone bullies or harasses someone else online. It includes a wide range of behaviours such as threats, sexual remarks and hate speech. In some situations, it can form a sustained pattern of behaviour.

Use positive language and tone to shape engagement

Your digital 'tone of voice'

Your tone of voice is as important on social media as it is in face-to-face conversation. On social media, with all its angry voices you can use your tone of voice to shape engagement. To create a more positive and constructive environment. Remain calm and positive to help defuse the situation and steer the conversation in a positive direction.

Using language to shape the conversation

The language that councillors use on social media is critical for building on the tone of voice that we use. When you are being attacked it can be hard to avoid using aggressive language yourself.

Even when it seems to you like it's the only option - using aggressive language never improves the situation.

Councillors and officers should try to stick to positive and inclusive language. This helps to control the nature of the interaction and keep things as constructive as possible.

Social media language is often 'chatty' and it is important to make the language you use as accessible as possible. Avoid acronyms and 'council speak'. It is common for councillors or officers to use acronyms for their own council or a committee (for example VFM rather than Value for Money Committee). Not many people in the community will understand what such acronyms mean.

Be kind!

People are generally much more rational if treated with kindness and compassion. It is important to be seen by those watching the discussion that you are putting your point of view across in a calm, patient and professional way.

Finding common ground

Try to find some common ground that allows you to calm the debate and show those that are in the discussion that you share similar priorities or come from the same background as them.

Usually, councillors (and often officers) will live in the community they represent so that can be a great place to start disarming those who are being aggressive by making common cause with your community.

Asking people ‘how’ rather than ‘why’

Asking people ‘how’ rather than ‘why’ is a good way of working through how things would work in practice. Talking about how this would play out rather than dwelling on why it is (or is not) a good idea helps to engage people constructively and can expose the complexity and flaws that make their simple-sounding suggestion difficult in reality. This forces them to reassess and prompts a more moderate attitude.

Techniques to handle online abuse

Engage with a variety of views

Building up your following on social media means that it is harder for a small number of angry voices to dominate. It also allows you as a councillor to hear from, and engage with, a wider variety of people from across your community.

It also ensures that more people will be able to see and share the arguments you are making in response to attacks. This builds further on your tone of voice and treating people with respect even if they are not affording you the same courtesy as a larger audience will see the way in which the debate is conducted.

Have a consistent narrative

Sharing a consistent story to fill gaps in people’s knowledge helps to dispel conspiracy theories and baseless rumours by presenting a clear and credible narrative.

Escalation of an issue

In some situations, you can escalate an issue. If there is a complaint about a council service it can be a legitimate course of action to ‘pass on’ the issue to a council officer. Depending on how the complaint was made you might need to consider data protection issues. Sometimes taking this course of action and being able to demonstrate that action is being taken can help to defuse the situation.

The wider audience - who is looking?

In some situations, you might feel there is a need to reply. To get the truth out there or to set the record straight. It is important before replying that you consider the likelihood that you will succeed. It is important to ask yourself, who is the wider audience?

Making a balanced and reasoned argument has value when there is a wider audience watching the discussion. Most of those seeing the exchange will not actively engage. In this situation 'winning' means ensuring that those looking on are reassured and given accurate information.

Conversely, if you think no one is looking, you need to ask yourself the question, is it worth responding to?

If you respond you should avoid getting sucked into a lengthy debate over social media. Not only is this very time-consuming you are also very unlikely to get the last word in the debate.

Keep a record

When you receive online abuse you should make a record of it. This is important in case the matter develops further. Particularly if the police or other bodies become involved. It is also useful in demonstrating a pattern of behaviour.

Managing trolls

Trolls can be difficult to deal with. The best way to deal with a troll is 'not to feed it'. By which we mean, don't respond to a post which is designed to upset, elicit a response or to further a troll's own goals.

Your best response is to either:

- Ignore what they have posted, or
- If it's on your own page or profile to delete or hide their comment. This will mean your other followers should not see it

If that doesn't work, consider your next step. This could include blocking them or reporting them to the social media platform or in some cases the Police.

Deleting and moderating comments

Most social media platforms give you the ability to delete comments. If someone has made an abusive comment you might want to delete it. You should remember to take a 'screen grab' picture first.

Some social media will give you the ability to automatically moderate content. Some have a 'profanity filter'. Where this facility exists you should consider using it. It will save you time and reduce the impact of abusive comments and behaviour.

Blocking abusive social media users

On almost all social media platforms you can block individuals who are persistently abusive. If individuals are consistently aggressive it can be both sensible and reasonable to block them from further engaging with you.

It is important to remember that as a councillor or officer you do not have to accept abusive behaviour. You have as much right as anyone to be treated with dignity and respect. You can include "rules of engagement" on your profile to make it clear to others that you will not tolerate such behaviour.

Blocking those who are abusive is important for both you and also for other people who follow you who may feel intimidated by aggressive behaviour. They also have a right to express their views.

Reporting online abuse and legal matters

Reporting an issue to the social media platform

Most social media platforms have 'rules' or 'terms of use' that prohibit abusive behaviour. Each has different wording, but most forbid behaviours that are abusive, bullying, harassing or intimidating behaviour.

If you feel someone has broken a social media platforms 'rules' you can report the user to the platform in question. It will then be up to the platform to take further action.

Reporting an issue to the Police

In certain circumstances, you might need to report a matter to the Police. Threats of violence, racist language, hate speech and pornographic material are the sort of things you might need to report. If you do report the matter you should follow the advice given to you by the Police and their requests for information.

Reporting a breach of the Code of Conduct

Should you receive online abuse from a councillor that might be a Code of Conduct issue. If you believe that there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct you should report it to the relevant monitoring officer.

Taking legal action

In some situations, you might feel that taking legal action is a legitimate course of action. In such a situation you should seek legal advice and carefully consider the risks as well as the likelihood of success. There is also often a financial cost involved with this approach.

Valuing your mental health and well-being - when is it time to get off social media?

If abuse is persistent and harming your mental health or severely damaging the reputation of the organisation it may well be time to leave social media. This can mean deleting accounts entirely or just taking a break from it for a while.

Some social media platforms allow users to temporarily 'unpublish' or 'deactivate' accounts. Some people find that trying a new platform can be useful. For instance, trying out Instagram instead of Facebook.

There are well-documented mental health benefits to coming off social media for either a fixed period of time or permanently.

Please find below a template Social Media Policy Supplement (Civility & Respect). It is intended to outline a council's rules of engagement with external parties and members of the public when engaging via social media. The supplement is designed to supplement any existing council social media policy and should be edited and adapted for your council's specific needs and requirements. We recommend that you then publish the finalised policy supplement on your website.

Appendix 1: Template Social Media Policy Supplement - Civility and Respect

1. Engaging with the council on social media

1.2 The council encourages members of the public, local organisations and community groups, members of the press, local councillors and others in our wider community to follow and engage with the council through social media accounts.

1.3 We also encourage everyone in our community to share content from our corporate social media accounts with their own social media networks. This is especially important, for example, during emergency situations or where sharing timely information is essential.

1.4 Councillors may choose to engage with the community on their own 'councillor' social media accounts.

1.4 Individuals and organisations are responsible for the content that they choose to post to their social media accounts. This includes content created by others that individuals or organisations choose to repost, retweet or share.

2. Conduct on social media

2.1 The Council will treat everyone with courtesy and respect on its social media channels, and we therefore ask for the same in return from those who choose to engage with us.

2.2 We ask that council staff and councillors are treated courteously. Council staff and councillors should never be subjected to bullying or other forms of abuse or harassment.

Social Media Civility and Respect Guide and Policy Supplement - Page 25



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2.3 Council staff and councillors have the right to carry out their civic duties and work without fear of being attacked or abused. Any behaviour whether that be verbal, physical or in writing, which causes either councillors or council staff to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or threatened, is unacceptable.

3. Reporting a civility and respect-related issue

3.1 Council staff and others operating the Council's social media accounts will at all times be mindful of the council's relevant policies, procedures and processes, including the Code of Conduct.

3.2 The council will record and report abuse directed at the Council. The Council may, for example, create screenshots of comments and keep a record of abusive or threatening communications, and may take further action as appropriate.

3.3 Council staff and councillors should not have to put up with abusive or threatening behaviour. When subjected to such behaviour. The council reserves the right to enact its relevant social media policies and may, for example, delete content, block individuals or report individuals to social media platforms when appropriate to do so.

3.4 The Council may need to report issues of poor conduct directly to social media platforms. For instance, if someone has created a 'fake account' or if someone is persistently abusive to the Council.

3.5 The Council reserves the right to report criminal matters it notices on social media to the Police. For instance, hate crime/speech or threats of violence.

3.6 Please get in touch with the Council if you feel that a councillor, member of staff or a user of our social media has failed to act in a civil and respectful way on our social media.

3.7 You can contact ((INSERT NAME)) the ((INSERT JOB TITLE)) in the following ways:

- ((ADDRESS))
- ((TELEPHONE))
- ((EMAIL))



Complaints Policy

Filename and version	Status	Date adopted	Review date
Gov_2022-23ComplaintsPolicyV1	Adopted	23 May 2023	28 May 2024

- 1 Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council is committed to providing a good standard of service to people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this complaints procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we will try to resolve your complaint.

- 2 We define a complaint as *“an expression of dissatisfaction about the council’s action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.”*

- 3 This complaints policy and procedure applies to complaints about **council administration and procedures** and may include complaints about how council employees and/or council contractors have dealt with your concerns.

- 4 The Complaints Procedure does **not** apply to:

Type of Complaint	Refer to
Complaints about alleged financial irregularity	<p>Local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council’s audit of accounts. Our auditors are:</p> <p>PKF Littlejohn LLP SBA Team, 1 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London E14 4HD sba@pkf-littlejohn.com</p> <p>020 7516 2200</p>

<p>Complaints about alleged criminal activity</p>	<p>The police.</p> <p>Thames Valley Police 302 North Row, Witan Gate East, Milton Keynes MK9 2DS</p> <p>http://thamesvalley.police.uk</p> <p><u>Tel: 101</u></p>
<p>Complaints about alleged misconduct by councillors</p>	<p>Standards of conduct expected of town councillors are covered by the code of conduct adopted by the town council and alleged breaches of the code will be referred to the Standards Committee of Milton Keynes City Council.</p> <p>Complaints should ordinarily be made direct to the Monitoring Officer at Milton Keynes Council. (If the town council receives a complaint it will be referred to the Standards Committee.)</p> <p>Information about the process for making a complaint against a councillor can be obtained from:</p> <p>The Standards Committee c/o The Monitoring Officer The Civic Offices Milton Keynes City Council Civic Offices 1 Saxon Gate East Central Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ</p> <p>www.milton-keynes.gov.uk</p>

Complaints by one council employee about another or between a council employee and the Council	This type of complaint is dealt with under the Council's staff disciplinary and grievance procedures and the detail of such proceedings remain confidential.
Complaints about decisions of the Town Council	The complaints procedure is not designed to deal with objections to policy and other decisions which have been properly made by the Town Council within council meetings with no failures of administration or procedures. Disagreement with decisions of council should be made known by letter or discussion with council members and will be considered but will not be subject to this complaints procedure.

- 5 The appropriate time for influencing council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of council meetings. If you are unhappy with a council decision, you may raise your concerns with the council, but our standing orders prevent the council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary.

- 6 You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the clerk. You may do this by writing or emailing the clerk. The address is set out below. To assist the council to deal with your complaint as efficiently as possible a standard form is available on our website.

- 7 Wherever possible, the clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.
- 8 If you do not wish to report your complaint to the town clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the chair of the council who will report your complaint to the appropriate officer or committee within the council according to the nature of the complaint
- 9 The town clerk will also report all formal complaints and their outcome to the town council.
- 10 Complaints will be investigated by the clerk to the council or by the chair of the employment policy committee on behalf of the clerk performance management sub-committee if the complaint is about the town clerk. The council may seek to obtain further information as necessary from you and/or from contractors, staff or members of the Council.
- 11 The clerk or chair of council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint explaining what action (if any) the council proposes to take because of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working day timescale may be extended; if so you will be kept informed.)
- 12 If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may apply in writing for your complaint to be referred to the appeals committee or to full council. The letter notifying you of the outcome will explain how to make your appeal. If the complaint is to be referred for appeal it will be dealt with as soon as possible. You will be notified of the outcome of the review of your original complaint in writing as soon as possible and no later than 8 weeks after you first asked for the matter to be reviewed.
- 13 To ensure compliance with our obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 the town council will not disclose the identity, contact details or other personal data about an individual complainant unless he/she consents to this or disclosure is otherwise fair

and lawful under the 2018 act. The identity of the complainant will be made known only to those in the council who are considering the complaint.

Contacts:

Chair of Council/Clerk to the Council
c/o Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council
Sycamore House
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK2 3RR

clerk@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

info@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

01908 649469

www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



COMPLAINT REPORT FORM

Full name of person complaining:			
Postal address and/or email and telephone number:			
Date of Complaint:		Date of event(s) resulting in complaint:	
Description of the complaint (Please include relevant events, names of councillors, staff or contractors involved and as much information as possible to help us to investigate your complaint and continue on separate sheets if necessary):			

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Employee Handbook

AUGUST 2022

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council.

We look forward to a long and successful working relationship with you and sincerely hope that your time with us is enjoyable and rewarding.

This handbook

This handbook is designed to explain the way in which we work and to set out the key procedures, rules and policies designed to ensure an efficient workplace and a safe and supportive environment for all employees. We hope that all staff will enjoy working with us and feel able to raise any concerns or suggest improvements in the workplace to the Council.

The policies and rules set out in this handbook are expressed in formal language for the sake of clarity. We do expect you to comply with the requirements set out in this handbook and failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action; in appropriate cases, up to and including dismissal. But we also expect that it should rarely be necessary to invoke these procedures. We aim to work in partnership with staff to address any problems as soon as they arise and before they become difficult to resolve.

The Council recognises the 'Green Book' which includes enhancements above the statutory minimum to certain employee benefits. These additional benefits are mainly detailed within your contract of employment, however if detailed within this handbook, they will be clearly identifiable.

You are required to act in accordance with all of our policies and procedures and comply with local rules that are in place in your area of work.

These include

- BFSTC Financial Regulations
- BFSTC Procurement Rules
- BFSTC IT Policies ie computer misuse policy, internet policy, email policy, mobile device policy
- BFSTC Health and safety policy and procedures laid out in the Health and Safety Handbook – including the Drug Alcohol and Substance Misuse policy
- Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Fraud Policy

The contents of this handbook do not form part of the terms of your contract of employment. We may need to alter or amend any policy or procedure contained in this handbook to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with the needs of the business. Any such change will be notified to all employees and an up-to-date copy of this handbook can be obtained from the Town Clerk or from your line manager.

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SECTION 1 – KEY PRINCIPLES

This section sets out some of the key commitments made by the Council to its employees – and the key commitments expected from employees in return.

1.1 Health and safety

The primary duty owed to you by the Council is to ensure that you are safe while you are at work. Similarly all employees are obliged to carry out their duties in a safe and responsible manner that does not risk harm to either themselves, their colleagues or any other person.

A detailed health and safety policy/handbook identifying the roles and responsibilities of key staff members for ensuring that the Council meets its commitment to health and safety is available in the main office at Sycamore House or on the Company Server.

Detailed risk assessments have been carried out on all aspects of the Council's activities and steps have been taken to ensure that all work can be done safely. Any employee who is concerned that any aspect of the Council's activities poses a risk to health and safety should report this to the nearest available manager immediately. Genuine concerns about health and safety will always be treated with the utmost seriousness and be thoroughly investigated.

Employees are required to comply with all instructions rules and procedures concerning matters of health and safety. Failure to do so may amount to gross misconduct. In particular, where employees are required to wear personal protective equipment such as hard hats, protective footwear or high visibility clothing then failure to do so will be treated as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

1.2 Ethical conduct

The Council aims for the highest possible standards of ethical conduct in all of its activities and expects the conduct of individual employees to reflect this. Dishonesty of any kind will be treated as a serious matter, which may amount to gross misconduct and therefore to dismissal without notice.

Gifts and hospitality

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality from members of the public, developers, suppliers and potential suppliers must not give the appearance that employees or the Council may be unduly influenced in the decisions that they make or in any other aspect of their work.

All gifts and hospitality given or received, of whatever value, must be entered in the Register kept by the Town Clerk.

No personal gifts of a value in excess of £20 should be accepted from members of the public, developers, suppliers and potential suppliers without express permission from the Town Clerk or your manager. Acceptance of hospitality, such as lunch or drinks receptions, should be kept within common sense limits and should always be authorised by the Town Clerk. Offers of hospitality to others must always be authorised by the Town Clerk or your manager.

You may also be instructed to return any gifts which the Town Clerk or your manager considers to be inappropriate, or to refuse to accept hospitality from a particular supplier or potential supplier. Failing to obey such an instruction will be treated as misconduct.

Allowing gifts or hospitality to influence any purchasing or other decisions that you may make on behalf of the Council or to otherwise influence the way in which you perform your duties is an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

It is also an act of gross misconduct to seek to influence any other person to behave in an improper way or to confer an advantage on you or the Council through the giving of any gift or hospitality.

We expect you to communicate openly and honestly with your line manager about your work.

We expect you to submit accurate claims for expenses and allowances. If you receive any payment in error, for example an overpayment of salary or expenses, you must notify your manager as soon as possible.

You must keep accurate records of your working time where this is required.

You must not order goods for your own personal use through a Council account.

You are not permitted to use your position to obtain a discount for goods or services unless this is part of a recognised employee discount scheme.

1.3 Declaring relevant interests

You are required to declare any private interests that you have and any work that you undertake elsewhere. The table below provides examples, if you have any doubts please contact your manager

Situation	Action Required
------------------	------------------------

<p>Potential conflicts of interest For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement with clubs or societies that we work with or fund • Involvement with organisations that provide similar services to the Council • Relationships with elected members (Councillors) 	<p>Declare any interests that you have outside of work and discuss with your manager and agree how any conflicts can be avoided.</p> <p>You must also declare if your partner or a close relative had a potential interest (eg if you partner is involved with an organisation that is tendering for work with the Council).</p> <p>Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential. Close personal familiarity however can damage the relationship. It can also be embarrassing to other employees. Such familiarity should therefore be avoided.</p>
<p>Undertaking private work (paid or unpaid) or secondary employment. or consultancy work</p>	<p>Members of the Management Team must obtain written permission from the Council to undertake any other jobs. They will also be required to discuss with their line manager the potential impact of additional work on their role with the Town Council. All employees undertaking additional employment must ensure that work does not conflict with the interest of the Town Council, or impact on their ability to perform their Town Council duties.</p>

1.4 Whistleblowing

The Council encourages employees to raise any concerns that they may have about any wrongdoing at any level within the organisation. Wrongdoing in this context means any breach of a legal obligation, risk to health and safety or damage to the environment.

Any initial concern should be raised with the Town Clerk or your manager. However, if this is not appropriate then you should contact the Chair of the Council who will ensure that your concern is properly addressed.

Employees who raise a concern under this policy are entitled not to be subjected to any detriment as a result. Even if your concern proves to be unfounded you will be protected against any reprisals from your manager, colleagues or any other employee of the organisation. Making

a deliberately false allegation, however, against the Council, a fellow employee or any other person will be treated as an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

If you are the subject of an allegation of wrongdoing then you will be informed of the allegation and given every opportunity to explain the situation and put your side of the story. Disciplinary action will only be taken following a full investigation in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

1.5 Good faith and loyalty

The employment relationship is one built on trust and we all have a mutual interest in making the relationship a success. The Council has a duty to provide reasonable support to employees and employees have a duty of good faith towards the Council.

In practice this means not doing anything that undermines the Council's position by acting against its interests or undermining the Council's standing with the people of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford, other authorities and fellow employees.

SECTION 2 – HOW WE DO THINGS

This section deals with some important administrative requirements to do with your employment and sets out the standards the Council expects of employees in various situations.

2.1 Proof of identity

The Council is legally obliged to ensure that all employees are permitted to work in the UK. It is a condition of your employment that you comply with all reasonable requests to provide details of your identity, right to work in the UK and place of residence. This will include allowing the Council to take copies of your passport or other appropriate documents and to check their authenticity. Copies of any such documents will be kept in your personnel file indefinitely.

The Council may dismiss any employee who cannot demonstrate that they are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom.

2.2 Data Protection

We will process personal data and sensitive personal data (also known as 'special categories' of personal data') relating to you in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Data Protection Privacy Notice (provided to you separately), as well as in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

We may monitor staff in accordance with our policies relating to email, internet, CCTV and communications systems and monitoring at work, as detailed in this Employee Handbook and in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

You will comply with your obligations under our data protection policy and relevant policies as directed.

2.3 Dress code

All employees should dress in a manner appropriate to the work that they do. Key factors include whether or not the employee meets members of the public and whether the requirements of health and safety require particular clothing. This is largely a matter of common sense. If your manager feels that you are dressing in an inappropriate way they may ask you to dress differently the next time you come into work. A persistent refusal to comply with a reasonable standard set by a manager will amount to misconduct.

Where an employee dresses in a completely inappropriate way, for example by wearing clothing with offensive images or slogans, then they

may be sent home to change. Any time taken to go home and change will be unpaid.

2.4 Timekeeping

Good timekeeping is essential in any team. A late arrival at work can put unfair pressure on colleagues and affect the smooth running of the organisation. The Council therefore requires all employees to take responsibility for attending work promptly in accordance with their contract of employment or work roster. You should arrive in time to begin working at your appointed start time.

Where you depend on public transport to come to work you should allow adequate time, including likely delays, for your journey so that you can arrive on time. Similarly, employees who drive to work should make themselves familiar with the level of traffic to be expected and make adequate allowance for rush hour congestion.

Where it is clear that you are going to be late for work you must contact the Town Clerk or your manager as soon as possible to explain the situation and give an estimate of your arrival time. You must make every effort to talk to the Town Clerk or your manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

If personal or domestic circumstances make it difficult for you to attend work on time then you should discuss this with the Town Clerk or your manager. In some cases, the Council may be able to accommodate a reasonable need for flexibility, but this will be subject to the needs of the organisation and the need to avoid placing an unfair burden on your colleagues (see Section 5).

The Council may ask you to record your arrival and departure times and may keep such records of your working time as it thinks appropriate.

Persistent lateness without proper excuse will be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

2.5 Severe weather and traffic disruption

The Council's primary duty is to provide a safe place of work. If severe weather means that this cannot be achieved and the workplace needs to close then all employees will be sent home or told not to come in. In these circumstances employees will be paid in full for any working time that they have lost. However, if the need to close the workplace persists, the Council may invoke the lay-off clause in employees' contracts (where applicable).

If the workplace remains open, it is the responsibility of employees to attend work if they possibly can. While the Council understands that this

is not always possible, additional paid leave will not be provided for employees who are unable, for whatever reason, to travel into work.

Where it is clear that you are not going to be able to get to work you must contact the Town Clerk or your manager as soon as possible to explain the situation. You must make every effort to talk to the Town Clerk or your manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

If you are unable to attend work due to severe weather or other travel difficulties then you will be required to take time from your annual leave allowance to cover any absence, or to take unpaid time off by agreement with the Town Clerk or your manager. There may be circumstances in which employees are able to work at home, but this will be entirely at the discretion of the Council.

2.6 Rest breaks

The Council encourages all employees to take full advantage of scheduled rest breaks. These are provided not only for comfort, but also to protect the health of employees and prevent excessive fatigue from causing accidents.

A rest break should be taken away from your workstation wherever possible. If you leave the premises you should bear in mind the time that it will take you to return from the break so that you can ensure that you begin work again on time.

Different areas of the organisation may have different arrangements for ad hoc breaks such as to make a cup of tea or coffee. These arrangements are in place to ensure the smooth running of the organisation and to prevent putting unfair pressure on colleagues. You are required to comply with any requirements relating to such breaks as may be in place from time to time.

2.7 Smoking

The Council operates a smoke-free workplace. Smoking (which includes the use of e-cigarettes and personal vaporisers) is only permitted in clearly designated outside areas. Smoking in any undesignated place is an act of gross misconduct that will usually result in dismissal.

Smoking is only permitted during designated break times. Smoking at any other time is an act of gross misconduct that will usually result in dismissal.

2.8 Computer use

It is very important that the Council is able to keep its data secure. To assist with this, all employees are required to comply with instructions that may be issued from time to time regarding the use of Council-owned computers or systems.

In particular, you must lock your terminal or log off whenever you leave it for more than a moment; you must not attach any device to Council IT equipment without authorisation from your manager and you must not open attachments or click on links unless you know you can trust the source.

Council portable IT devices must be kept secure and password protected at all times.

Your computer password is an important piece of confidential information and you should treat it that way. Do not share it with others, and make sure that it is not written down anywhere where an unauthorised person can find it.

Unauthorised access to any of the Council's systems will amount to gross misconduct.

Email

All email correspondence should be dealt with in the same professional and diligent manner as any other form of correspondence.

If you have a Council email account you should be mindful of the fact that any email that you send will be identifiable as coming from the Council. You should therefore take care not to send anything via email that may reflect badly on the Council. In particular, you must not send content of a sexual or racist nature, junk mail, chain letters, cartoons or jokes from your work email address.

Using a work email address to send inappropriate material, including content of a sexual or racist nature, is strictly prohibited and may amount to gross misconduct. Should you receive any offensive or inappropriate content via email you should inform your manager of this as soon as possible so that they can ensure that it is removed from the system.

You should also take care that emails will be seen only by the person intended. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential information that the email has been correctly addressed, marked 'private' and not copied in to those not authorised to see the information. Sending confidential information via email without proper authorisation or without taking sufficient care to ensure that it is properly protected will be treated as misconduct.

While a reasonable amount of personal use of email is perfectly acceptable, your email remains the property of the Council and you should not use your Council email to send or receive any information that you regard as private. The Council may, in the course of its operation, read emails that you have sent or received - although in the absence of evidence of wrongdoing the Council will try to avoid reading personal emails if possible.

Internet use

Employees with access to the internet on Council-owned devices should use that access responsibly. Excessive personal use during working hours will be treated as misconduct. From time to time the Council may block access to sites which it considers inappropriate but whether or not a specific site has been blocked, employees must not use the internet to view or download offensive or sexually explicit material. Any attempt to do so may, depending on the circumstances, amount to gross misconduct leading to dismissal.

Employees must not download any software, plug-ins or extensions on to Council-owned devices unless this is first cleared by the IT Support Officer. Nor must employees use Council-owned devices to download music, video or any other entertainment content.

Firewalls and anti-virus software may be used to protect the Council's systems. These must not be disabled or switched off.

Social media

An employee's behaviour on any social networking or other internet site must be consistent with the behaviour required of employees generally. Where it is possible for users of a social media site to ascertain who you work for, then you should take particular care not to behave in a way which reflects badly on the Council. Inappropriate or disparaging comments about the Council, colleagues or the town will be treated as misconduct. Because social media interactions can be copied and widely disseminated in a way that you may not be able to control, the Council will take a particularly serious view of any misconduct that occurs through the use of social media.

You must not operate a social media account or profile that purports to be operated on or on behalf of the Council without express permission to do so from your manager.

2.9 Councillors

You are expected to work in a professional manner with all Councillors regardless of their political affiliation. If you have or enter into a close personal relationship with a Councillor (sometimes referred to as an Elected Member) you need to disclose this.

2.10 Driving

Where driving is required as part of your job, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are legally qualified to drive. The Council may require you at any time to allow a copy of your full driving licence to be made and kept in its records. If you receive any points on your licence you must inform the Council of this immediately.

If you use your own vehicle to drive on Council business, it is your responsibility to arrange to be insured for that business use. The Council may require you at any time to allow a copy of your insurance and any MOT test certificate to be made and kept in its records.

You are responsible for any driving offences committed while driving as part of your duties, including any parking fines. Dangerous, careless, inconsiderate or aggressive driving as well as causing a risk to others can be damaging to the Council's reputation and can amount to gross misconduct. If you are banned from driving for any reason, the Council is not obliged to find alternative work for you and may choose to dismiss you if the ban renders you incapable of performing your duties as required.

Employees should never use their mobile phone while driving on Council business unless they do so on a properly installed hands-free system and traffic conditions mean that it is safe to do so. In most cases, it would be preferable to make any calls when the vehicle is stationary.

Any journey carried out on Council business must be scheduled in such a way as to allow adequate rest breaks – usually one break of 15 minutes for two hours of driving. Where possible, driving on Council business should be avoided either late at night or very early in the morning.

Safety is the Council's prime responsibility and you should not be required to compromise safety in any way when driving on Council business. If you are concerned about any driving requirements you may have, then you should discuss these with the Town Clerk or your manager and appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure that any work-related journey can be completed safely.

Council vehicles

If a Council vehicle is provided to you as part of your contract of employment or you are required to drive a Council vehicle as part of your job, it is your responsibility to take care of the vehicle, keeping it in a clean and roadworthy condition. You should report any damage or fault immediately. The Council will arrange for appropriate maintenance or servicing to be carried out. If you incur any reasonable expenses in connection with the vehicle then these will be reimbursed, but you must check with the Town Clerk or your manager and comply fully with our expenses policy. The Council will not be obliged to reimburse any expenses incurred without authorisation.

Express permission is required for any personal use of a Council vehicle.

The Council understands that accidents and collisions may happen from time to time. However, the Council cannot tolerate high levels of incidents and as such unacceptable accident/collision levels will be dealt with through the Company Disciplinary Procedure.

If you have possession of a Council vehicle overnight or at the weekend then you must ensure that it is securely parked in an appropriate location. In general, Council equipment should not be left in a vehicle overnight. Where this is unavoidable then you must ensure that the vehicle is parked in a locked garage. If this is not possible then you should discuss appropriate parking and security arrangements with the Town Clerk or your manager.

2.11 Alcohol and drugs

The Council's approach to the consumption of alcohol and drugs is based on the need to ensure a safe and productive working environment. Because of the serious nature of the risks posed by the abuse of alcohol and drugs in the workplace, any breach of the rules in this area will be treated as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

An employee will be regarded as 'under the influence' of alcohol or drugs if their behaviour, speech, ability to concentrate or otherwise perform their duties is in any way affected. An employee will also be regarded as under the influence if they fail a drug or alcohol test.

Dependency

Employees who have a dependency on alcohol or drugs may be offered support and encouraged to seek appropriate counselling or medical help. Absence arising from treatment or counselling related to drug and alcohol abuse will be treated as sickness absence under the Council's absence management policy. However, while the Council will always try to be supportive toward employees with a drug or alcohol problem, this will not prevent disciplinary action being taken when employees act in breach of the rules laid out in this policy.

Wherever an employee informs the Council that they have a drug or alcohol problem this will, as far as possible, be treated in the utmost confidence. However the Council may need to disclose particular circumstances to managers, regulatory authorities or others should this be necessary to ensure safety or compliance with legal requirements.

Drugs

The consumption, storage, distribution or sale of illegal drugs or any other behaviour-altering substance on Council premises or during

working time is strictly prohibited. The Council will report any illegal activities to the police or other relevant authorities.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of illegal drugs or any other substance taken for non-medical purposes.

Medicines and Prescription drugs

If you are taking prescription drugs or any other medicine that may affect your performance at work or your ability to carry out any of your duties, then you must inform the Town Clerk or your manager of this so that steps can be taken to ensure that the work can be done safely. It is your responsibility, when beginning any course of medication, to check whether it may adversely affect your ability to work.

Alcohol

Consumption of even a small amount of alcohol may be sufficient to adversely affect the work of an employee and could pose a risk to health and safety. Remember that alcohol remains in the bloodstream for up to 24 hours following consumption and that the consumption of a significant amount of alcohol in the evening may leave you unfit to work in the morning.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of alcohol.

You must not consume any alcohol during working time, lunchtime or during any break unless this has been specifically authorised by the Town Clerk or your manager.

Employees who need to drive or operate any machinery during the working day must not consume any alcohol during working time, lunchtime or during any break.

Where alcohol is available at Council organised events or occasions when you are representing the Council – even outside working hours - it is important to behave responsibly and not drink to excess. Behaviour that reflects badly on the Council will be a disciplinary matter and in serious cases may amount to gross misconduct.

Drug and alcohol testing

The Council may require you to submit to drug or alcohol testing where there is reason to believe that you may have acted in breach of this policy.

This may include a standard breathalyser test administered by the Town Clerk or your manager. Arrangements for blood or urine testing may vary from time to time, but such tests will always be carried out by suitably qualified, independent professionals.

An employee will be treated as having failed a drug or alcohol test if the test shows the presence of illegal drugs or a level of alcohol in excess of

the UK drink driving limit (80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood, 35 mcg per 100 ml of breath or 107 mg per 100 ml of urine).

Refusal, without proper excuse, to undergo a test will be treated as gross misconduct.

Whether a test needs to be conducted is a matter for the Council to decide. In cases where an employee is clearly under the influence of alcohol or drugs or there is other clear evidence of a breach of this policy then disciplinary action may still be taken even if no test is carried out.

2.12 Contact with the media

You must not make statements to the media on behalf of the Council unless it is your job to do so. All media enquiries should be referred to the Town Clerk.

SECTION 3 – CODE OF CONDUCT

The behaviour of employees is central to the continued success of the Council. This section sets out what is expected of all employees in terms of their personal conduct when at work and their behaviour towards colleagues.

3.1 Misconduct

Behaviour which is disruptive, disrespectful to colleagues, councillors or members of the public or which falls short of the requirements set out in this handbook will be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure. While employees will not usually be dismissed for a first offence unless in their first two years of employment, a failure to remedy the behaviour or to adhere to required standards may ultimately lead to dismissal once appropriate warnings have been given.

3.2 Gross misconduct

Gross misconduct is behaviour which is fundamentally at odds with an employee's duty to the Council and their colleagues. In accordance with the disciplinary procedure, gross misconduct will usually result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu even in cases of a first offence.

It is not possible to list every example of gross misconduct which may arise, but the following provides an illustration of the sort of conduct that will fall into this category – some of which are then explained in more detail below:

- Theft
- Dishonesty
- Deliberate acts of discrimination or harassment
- Refusal to carry out reasonable instructions
- Violent or intimidating behaviour
- Wilful damage to property
- Reckless behaviour posing a risk to health and safety
- Any illegal act during working time or on Council premises
- Any act described as gross misconduct elsewhere in this handbook

Dishonesty

It is important to stress that any form of dishonesty, however minor, will be regarded as gross misconduct. This includes theft of property, whether belonging to the Council, colleagues or any third party. However it also includes an employee seeking to gain any advantage through deception - such as making a false claim for expenses or overtime,

falsely claiming to be sick or falsely claiming to have completed a particular task.

It does not matter if any amount of money at issue is small. The Council regards any dishonesty by employees as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

Refusal to carry out instructions

The Council expects employees to work in a spirit of cooperation with their colleagues and manager for the good of the organisation as a whole. Employees are required to carry out their manager's instructions and a deliberate and wilful refusal to do so will be gross misconduct.

If you believe that you have been instructed to do something that does not fall within your duties or which is in some other way unreasonable then the appropriate way of dealing with this is to raise a grievance under the grievance procedure set out in Section 6. However doing so will not prevent a refusal to carry out an instruction from amounting to gross misconduct if it is found to have been a reasonable one in all the circumstances.

Breach of a requirement set out in this handbook

This handbook sets out a number of requirements aimed at ensuring the smooth running of the Council and the fair treatment of all employees. A number of these are so important that any breach of them will amount to gross misconduct and these are clearly identified throughout the handbook. Your attention is drawn in particular to the following:

- The rules on gifts and hospitality (Section 1.4)
- The policies on smoking (Section 2.7) and alcohol and drugs (Section 2.10)
- The rules on the use of computers, the internet, email and social media (Section 2.8)
- The policies on driving and the use of Council vehicles (Section 2.9)

3.3 Allegations of misconduct and gross misconduct

The Council is committed to treating all employees fairly and allegations of misconduct and gross misconduct will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedure set out in Section 6.4.

3.4 Conduct outside of working hours

Normally the Council has no jurisdiction over employee activity outside working hours. Behaviour outside working hours will only become an issue if the activities adversely affect the Council.

Adverse publicity, bringing the Council name into disrepute, or actions that result in loss of faith in the Council, resulting in loss of business, or

loss of faith in the integrity of the individual, will result in the disciplinary procedure being instigated.

The detriment suffered by the Council will determine the level of misconduct and it will also determine which disciplinary stage is most appropriate to suit the circumstances.

If the actions cause extreme embarrassment or serious damage to the Council's reputation or image, a decision may be taken to terminate the employment.

The Council's procedures covering disciplinary hearings and appeals still apply.

SECTION 4 – ABSENCE

This section sets out the approach the Council takes when you are unable to attend work, are taking annual leave or need time off.

4.1 Unauthorised absence

The obligation on an employee to attend work at the times agreed is a fundamental part of the contract of employment. Employees who deliberately fail to attend work without proper excuse or in breach of management instructions will be committing gross misconduct which could result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu.

4.2 Medical appointments

In general, appointments to see a GP, dentist or optician should be made for outside working hours. Paid leave will not normally be granted for non-emergency visits.

The Council appreciates that it is not always possible to avoid appointments during the working day and will judge each case individually in deciding whether any paid time off should be granted. In most cases, employees will be required either to use part of their annual holiday entitlement or to make up any lost time.

Employees who have a medical condition which will require regular appointments during the working day should discuss their situation with their manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

You may be required to provide evidence of any appointment for which time off is needed.

Necessary paid time off will be granted for cancer screening.

4.3 Ante-natal care

Employees who are pregnant are entitled to paid-time off to attend ante-natal appointments provided that attendance is based on medical advice. For second and subsequent appointments you may be required to produce an appointment card or similar evidence of the date and time of the appointment.

While there is no limit on the number of appointments that an employee can attend, the Council does have the right to refuse time off where it is reasonable to do so. Employees are therefore expected to take reasonable steps to arrange antenatal appointments at a time that will require the minimum amount of time off. Part-time workers should attempt to arrange appointments for days when they are not required to

work and all employees should try to avoid appointments in the middle of the working day in order to minimise disruption.

If your partner is pregnant, you are entitled to unpaid time off for up to two antenatal appointments. If you wish to exercise this right you should notify your manager of the date and time of the appointment. You may be asked to provide written evidence that an appropriate appointment has in fact been made.

4.4 Sickness absence

Regular and reliable attendance at work is an important commitment that the Council asks all employees to make. Unjustified or excessive absence can put unfair pressure on colleagues and seriously damage the Council's operation, to everybody's detriment.

Nevertheless the Council will always try to be supportive when an employee is genuinely too ill to attend work. This policy sets out the Council's approach and the steps that you need to take if you are off sick.

Reporting sickness absence

If you are too ill to come into work you should personally inform the Town Clerk or your manager of this fact as soon as possible and in any event by no later than 10.00am. When you phone in sick you must make every effort to speak to the Town Clerk or your manager directly. Do not simply leave a message with a colleague or send an email or text. If you need to leave a message for the Town Clerk or your manager then they may contact you during the day to discuss your absence with you.

It is important that you keep in touch with the Town Clerk or your manager about the likely length of your absence so that appropriate arrangements can be made for cover and you should phone in sick on every day of your absence unless either you have previously informed the Town Clerk or your manager that you will be off sick for a particular period of time or your absence is certified by a GP (Form Med 3)..

Falsely claiming to be sick is an act of gross misconduct that will normally result in dismissal. It is also misconduct to put yourself in a position where it is likely that you will be unfit to attend work. Hangovers are not regarded as legitimate reasons to take sickness absence and you may be required to take a day's unpaid leave to cover any such absence. Repeated absence by reason of hangovers will be regarded as a disciplinary offence which may result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu. You should also be aware of the rules governing the consumption of alcohol set out in the Alcohol and Drugs Policy.

The Council requires any absence of more than a week to be certified by Forms Med 3 or Med 10 issued by your GP or hospital doctor. Uncertified absence may be treated as misconduct and will not be paid.

Where any period of sickness absence occurs immediately before or immediately after a period of annual leave then the Council may require such absence to be certified by a GP at your own expense.

Where you are absent for an extended period of time (three weeks or more) the Council may refer you to an occupational health professional or seek a medical report from your GP. The purpose of this will be to ascertain when you are likely to be able to return to work and to identify any measures that can be taken to help you return as soon as possible.

Employees who are off sick should not undertake any activities likely to be detrimental to their recovery and should cooperate with the appropriate medical professionals in taking steps to ensure that their recovery is as swift as possible.

The Council will maintain regular contact with employees who are off sick for an extended period.

Annual leave and sickness absence

Employees may request annual leave during any period of sickness absence in the normal way. If you intend to spend any time away from home during your sickness absence you should inform the Town Clerk or your manager of this fact in advance and provide contact details. The Council does not expect employees to take holidays while off sick. In exceptional cases only, where this may assist in an employee's recovery, the Council may agree to holidays being taken during sick leave. It is essential however that any such holidays are agreed in advance with the Council following the normal holiday request procedure.

Phased return to work

As an employee recovers from illness or injury it may be possible for them to undertake a limited range of duties as a preparation for returning to normal work. The Council will try whenever appropriate in light of medical advice to allow for a phased return to work from any long-term illness. This may involve reducing the employee's hours, or the scope of their duties or both. The purpose of a phased return, however, is to provide a bridge between sickness absence and normal working and so any such arrangements will be time-limited and will not normally extend over more than three months.

Alternative work

The Council may consider agreeing changes to an employee's duties or other working arrangements when it becomes clear that due to sickness or injury they will not be able to return to normal working. Any such changes will be subject to the needs of the organisation and there is no guarantee that permanent arrangements of this sort will be possible.

Where duties or working hours are varied in this way then the job being done by the employee will need to be reassessed to determine the appropriate level of remuneration. This will then need to be agreed with the employee. If an agreement is not reached then the Council may proceed to dismiss the employee in accordance with the procedure for long-term sickness absence.

Disability and reasonable adjustments

The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments to an employee's duties or working arrangements where they would otherwise suffer a disadvantage arising from any disability.

In order to make appropriate adjustments the Council needs to know about any disability the employee may have. Employees who feel that they may require an adjustment should discuss their situation with the Town Clerk or their manager. Any such discussions will be in the strictest confidence although when an adjustment is made it may be necessary to inform other employees of the reason for this. The extent to which details of any disability will be discussed with other employees will be agreed as part of the process of making the adjustment itself.

The purpose of any adjustment will be to ensure that the employee can work effectively in an appropriate role and on appropriate terms and conditions. The Council is not obliged to maintain an employee's level of pay if hours are reduced or the employee is moved to a less senior role as a result of any adjustment. Nor will the Council agree to an adjustment which will not result in a practicable working arrangement.

Council sick pay

In addition to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) the Council also offers an enhanced Sick pay scheme in line with the Green book provisions. An employee's entitlement under this scheme is linked to their length of service, and will be as follows:

During 1st year of service: 1 month's full pay, which after having completed 4 months continuous service, also increases by 2 months' half pay;

During 2nd year of continuous service: 2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay;

During 3rd year of continuous service, 4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay;

During 4th and 5th years of continuous service, 5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay; and

After 5 years' continuous service, an employee would be entitled to 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay.

NB: 'Full Pay' period = Sick Pay shall include SSP and any Incapacity Benefit

'Half Pay' period = Half pay plus SSP and Incapacity Benefit, so long as this total does not exceed an employee's normal pay.

Statutory Sick Pay

If you are sick the Council will pay you Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), if you are eligible. Further details of this are contained within your contract of employment.

The payment of Council sick pay is dependent on you keeping the Council informed in relation to your absence and complying with the requirements of this policy. You will not be entitled to Council sick pay if you refuse to cooperate with referrals to occupational health or other measures aimed at helping you to return to work. The fact that an employee has not exhausted Council sick pay will not prevent the Council from proceeding to dismissal under the procedure for dealing with long-term absence described in Section 6.2.

If your sickness absence is the result of reckless behaviour on your own part – such as participation in a high-risk sport or arising from disorderly conduct - then any payment of Council sick pay will be entirely at the Council's discretion.

Where your sickness or injury is caused by any unlawful act (such as negligence) on the part of a third party, then any Council sick pay paid to you will be by way of a loan refundable to the Council and must be recovered from that third party in any claim made by you against them.

Any such loan will only be repayable in the event of damages being successfully recovered and will be limited to the amount of damages recovered.

4.5 Time off

There are a number of circumstances in which employees have a right to time off from work either with or without pay. These include jury service and certain public duties such as serving as a local councillor, magistrate or school governor. Where a need for such time off arises you should discuss the matter with the Town Clerk or your manager who will consider what arrangements should be put in place.

While the Council will do its best to accommodate time off in these circumstances, the requirements of an employee's role may mean that the amount of time off granted may be limited. Where serving on a jury would lead to a level of absence that would be detrimental to the organisation, the Council may require you to seek a deferment.

4.6 Compassionate leave and domestic emergencies

If you suffer bereavement or face some other personal emergency you should talk to the Town Clerk or your manager who will discuss what arrangements can be made to grant you compassionate leave. These arrangements will always be at the discretion of the Council and will depend on the circumstances of the case and the impact that any absence on your part may have on the organisation. However, the Council will be sympathetic to your need for time off (which may be paid or unpaid at our discretion) to deal with the situation and make any arrangements that may be necessary.

Once you have discussed the matter with the Town Clerk or your manager, the arrangements will be confirmed to you in writing. If paid time off has been granted, then the amount of time that will be paid will be clearly set out. While on compassionate leave you should wherever possible inform the Town Clerk or your manager of any developments that will affect your needs.

If an emergency occurs and it is not possible for you to inform the Town Clerk or your manager in advance of any absence you should contact the Town Clerk or your manager as soon as possible to inform them of the situation. Appropriate arrangements may then be put in place.

4.7 Parental Bereavement Leave

Employees are entitled to statutory parental bereavement leave (SPBL) if a child for whom they have or were due to have parental responsibility has died or been stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, on or after 6 April 2020.

Leave can be taken as one week, two consecutive weeks, or two separate weeks, at any time within the first 56 weeks after the child's death.

Notification

During the first eight weeks after a child has died, you, or someone on your behalf as necessary, need only give notice to the Council to take SPBL before you are due to start work on the first day of leave. If you have already started work, then officially your SPBL period will start on the following day. If you want to cancel it at any time during the first seven weeks you can do so as long as it has not started.

After eight weeks, you need to give at least a week's notice to the Council to take SPBL. You can cancel it with a week's notice, or re-book it by giving a week's notice.

When giving notice to take SPBL, you must tell the Council: the date of the child's death; when you want your leave to begin; and whether you want to take 1 or 2 weeks leave). You can give notice by telephone or by email or by letter.

Parental Bereavement Pay

To qualify for statutory parental bereavement pay (SPBP) during such leave you must have at least six months' continuous employment and normal weekly earnings of at least the lower earnings limit. It is paid at the same rate as other statutory family leave pay, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with your line manager.

To claim SPBP, you must confirm the following information in writing within 28 days of starting any period of SPBL: your name; your entitlement to SPBP; the dates of SPBL you want to claim the pay for; the date of the child's death; and your relationship to the child. You can provide this information at the same time as giving notice to take SPBL, as set out above, so long as it is in writing.

Other leave entitlements

In addition to parental bereavement leave, if you qualified for: maternity or paternity leave and pay and your child has died or been stillborn, you are still entitled to such leave and pay. adoption leave and pay, then the adoption leave entitlement runs for another eight weeks from the end of the week in which the child died (unless it would already have ended sooner).

If your planned period of SPBL coincides with another statutory family leave right, your SPBL will end at the start of that other leave. If you wish to take SPBL at the end of the other statutory family leave period, then a fresh notice to take the leave will be required, as per the above notice requirements.

Compassionate or Dependants leave may be available under our Compassionate or Dependants Leave Policy at our discretion. Please speak to your manager if you require time off in addition to parental bereavement leave.

4.8 Annual leave

Your individual holiday entitlement, including the calculation of any holiday pay, is set out in your contract of employment. This section of the handbook outlines the general approach taken by the Council to requests for annual leave.

All annual leave must be agreed in advance with your the Town Clerk or your manager. You should not make firm travel plans or commitments until a request for leave has been granted and the Council will not take such plans into account when dealing with conflicting holiday requests.

All requests for leave should be made at least 7 days in advance. The means of requesting leave may change from time to time and you should comply with whatever procedure is in place at the time of the request.

The Council may refuse any request for leave if it would result in the workplace being understaffed or otherwise prejudice the organisation. Leave is likely to be refused if it is requested for a particularly busy period or a time when other employees have already had leave approved.

Certain times of year are particularly popular times for requesting holiday. Generally, subject to the needs of the organisation, leave will be granted on a first come first served basis, but exceptions may be made in the interests of ensuring that holiday is spread through the year on a fair and equitable basis.

All employees are encouraged to take their full holiday entitlement during the holiday year which runs from 1st April to 31st March. However it is your responsibility to schedule your holiday so that it can be taken at an appropriate time. Employees may be permitted to carry over up to five days of their holiday entitlement into the following holiday year.

Employees who leave their employment during the course of a holiday year will be entitled to a pro-rata payment reflecting leave accrued but not taken. Where an employee has, at the time their employment ends, taken a larger proportion of their leave entitlement than the proportion of the holiday year that has expired, then a deduction will be made from the final payment of salary to reflect the holiday which has been taken but not accrued.

The Council may insist on annual leave being taken at particular times depending on the needs of the organisation and you will be given reasonable notice of any such requirement (the length of the notice given will be at least twice the duration of the leave the Council requires the employee to take). The Council may require annual leave to be taken during the notice period of any employee who has resigned or been dismissed.

4.9 Reserve forces

The Council supports employees who are also member of the reserve forces. Such employees have specific entitlements relating to time off including arrangements for them returning to work after a period of deployment. Employees who are members of the reserve forces or who are considering joining should discuss the implications with the Town Clerk or your manager.

SECTION 5 – FLEXIBLE WORKING AND FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

The Council understands the particular issues faced by employees trying to balance their work and family life. This section sets out the Council's policies in this area and the specific rights given to new parents.

5.1 Flexible working

The Council will try, subject to the needs of the organisation, to accommodate requests from employees who wish to make changes to their working hours or place of work.

Requests for a change in working arrangements can be made by any employee with at least 26 weeks' continuous service with the Council at the time the request is made.

The request should be made in writing and set out the change requested. The request should also describe the impact that the change will have on the operation of the organisation and how any difficulties caused by the change may be addressed.

When a request is received, the employee will be invited to a meeting to discuss the potential change. The meeting will normally be conducted by the Town Clerk or your manager.

The Council will refuse a request if doing so would adversely affect the organisation or create a burden on other employees. In refusing any request the Council will explain the reasons for the refusal in writing and may make an offer of an alternative arrangement. Discussions may then take place to try to agree a way forward. If no agreement is reached then the employee's terms and conditions will remain unchanged, subject to the right of employees to appeal the decision

Any meetings should take place in a spirit of cooperation with both sides seeking to reach agreement on an appropriate way forward.

Any change in working arrangements which results from this process will be confirmed to you in writing.

This policy will not prevent the Town Clerk or your manager agreeing to ad hoc arrangements from time to time. However, any such arrangement will not amount to a variation in your terms and conditions of employment unless specifically agreed to the contrary and confirmed in writing. The Council may terminate any such ad hoc agreement at any time and require you to revert to your agreed working arrangements.

As there will inevitably be a limit to the amount of flexibility the Council can tolerate without detriment to its interests, employees must accept

that the fact that a particular working arrangement has been granted to one employee does not oblige the Council to grant it to another.

5.2 Maternity leave

All employees who give birth are entitled to take maternity leave which lasts for a maximum of 52 weeks. Employees with at least six months' service will also be entitled to be paid Statutory Maternity pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks of their absence. Because this is a statutory payment there are a number of procedural requirements that must be met in order to make sure that an employee qualifies. The most important requirements are set out below, but If you have any doubts about the rules that apply you should speak to the Town Clerk or your manager who will make sure that you have all the appropriate information.

Notification

To qualify for maternity leave you must notify the Council that you are pregnant, giving the date of the week your baby is due (your expected week of childbirth or EWC) and indicating when you intend your maternity leave to start (this date can be changed later – see below).

You should give the Council this information no later than the end of the 15th week before your EWC (when you are approximately 6 months pregnant). If this is not possible then you should give the information as soon as is practicable.

You must also give the Council the Maternity Certificate (MATB1) that will be issued to you by your doctor or midwife some time after the 20th week before your EWC. In some circumstances the Council may be able to accept other medical evidence of when your baby is due, so if there is any difficulty in providing the MATB1 certificate you should discuss this with your manager.

If you intend to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave, you should inform the Council of this fact at the same time as you notify the intended start date of your leave.

Start of maternity leave

Generally it is up to you to decide when to start your maternity leave. However, your leave cannot begin any earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before your EWC.

Where it is safe to do so, you may choose to continue working right up to your child's birth. However, your maternity leave will begin automatically if you are off sick for a pregnancy-related reason at any stage in the four weeks immediately before your EWC.

If your baby is born before the date that you have notified as the start date for your maternity leave, then your maternity leave will begin on the day following the birth.

You may change the date on which you intend to start your maternity leave, but you must notify the Council of your new start date at least 28 days before the original date given (or the new date, if that is sooner). If there is a reason why you cannot give this notice then you should explain the situation to the Town Clerk or your manager and the Council will attempt to accommodate your changed circumstances. However, the Council may need to insist on delaying the start of your leave until at least 28 days have passed since your notification of a changed date.

When your baby is born you should inform the Council of this fact as soon as is reasonable practicable.

Duration of maternity leave

The standard length of maternity leave is 52 weeks. Once you indicate the intended start date of your leave, the Council will send you a written notification of your expected date of return.

Unless you give due notice to the Council of an earlier date of return, it will be assumed that you intend to take your full 52-week entitlement and you will not be expected back at work before your leave ends. You do not then have to give any notice of your return although it would be sensible to contact your manager some time in advance to discuss any arrangements that may need to be made.

At the end of your maternity leave you are generally entitled to return to the same job as you had before your leave began. If you are away for more than 26 weeks, however, there may be circumstances in which that is not reasonably practicable. In that case, the Council will provide you with a suitable and appropriate role at the same level of seniority and on no-less favourable terms and conditions.

Dismissal or resignation

While on maternity leave you remain employed by the Council and bound by your contract of employment. If you decide that you want to leave your employment you will need to submit your resignation in the normal way.

The Council will not dismiss you for any reason related to your pregnancy or your exercise of any right which arises from it. However, if separate circumstances require your dismissal (for instance, because of redundancy) then that will bring your maternity leave to an end.

If your position becomes redundant during your maternity leave then you will be offered any suitable alternative work that is available.

Maternity pay

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid to employees who have at least 26 weeks' service immediately before the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and whose pay is above the Lower Earnings Limit for

paying National Insurance Contributions (this changes each year). Employees who earn below that amount may be entitled to a state benefit called Maternity Allowance (MA). The Council will provide you with an appropriate form to help you claim this, where appropriate. However, if you have more than one year's continuous local government service immediately before the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth, additional rights apply, see below.

To pay SMP, the Council needs to be given at least 28 days' notice that you intend to claim it. This will normally be given when you inform the Council of your intended start date for maternity leave. If it is not possible to give 28 days' notice, you should give as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

SMP is paid for a maximum total of 39 weeks. The first 6 weeks are paid at 90 per cent of your normal weekly earnings¹ and the remaining 33 weeks are paid at a flat rate specified in legislation. This changes from year to year. Where you have more than one year's continuous local government service as referred to above, you will be eligible to be paid by the Council 90 per cent of your normal weekly pay² for the first six weeks (offset against any MA payable) even if you are not eligible to be paid SMP.

Where you have more than one year's continuous local government service as referred to above, and you declare in writing to the Council an intention to return to work after your maternity leave for at least three months, then, after the first six weeks of maternity leave, you will be paid for the next 12 weeks half a week's pay per week in addition to SMP or MA, subject to a maximum payment per week of your normal weekly earnings. In the event that you do not return to work for three months following your leave period, you will be required to repay the Council any payments made to you in the 12-week period in excess of SMP or MA, or such part thereof as the Council may decide.

Your entitlement to SMP will be affected if you undertake any paid work (other than Keeping in Touch days, described below) or are taken into legal custody at any time during your period of SMP entitlement. You should inform the Council immediately of any such change in your circumstances.

Returning to work early

Not every employee will want to take the full 52 weeks of maternity leave. Some may simply want to return to work early and others may wish (with their partner) to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave (see below).

¹ This is based on an average of your total earnings in the eight weeks immediately preceding the 14th week before your expected week of childbirth

²For these purposes, a week's pay is as stated in the contract of employment for normal working hours or, where there are no normal working hours, the average over the last 12 working weeks.

In order to make arrangements to accommodate an early return the Council is entitled to ask for 8 weeks' notice of the new date, and if that is not given may delay your return until 8 weeks have passed since your notification.

In any event the law requires that you must not be permitted to return to work during the two weeks immediately following the birth.

Returning to work late

Following your maternity leave, you are required to return to work on the date notified to you as your expected date of return. If you are unwell on that date then you should follow the sickness absence procedure set out in Section 6.2 of this handbook.

If you are entitled to begin some other period of leave (such as annual leave or parental leave) then you should ensure that you have followed the appropriate procedure for taking such leave as set out in this handbook.

Maternity suspension (health and safety reasons)

Depending on the nature of your job, there may be circumstances in which it is unsafe for you to continue working while you are pregnant. In some circumstances the law requires a pregnant employee to be suspended on full pay or transferred to alternative duties. Jobs which may come under this category are identified in the risk assessments that the Council has carried out under its health and safety policy. If you are affected by any health and safety issues connected with your pregnancy then the Council will discuss any detailed arrangements that need to be made until it is safe for you to return to your original duties.

5.3 Adoption leave

Employees who are matched with a child for adoption may be entitled to take up to 52 weeks' adoption leave. Where two parents are adopting a child, only one of them may take adoption leave, and the other (whether a man or woman) is entitled to take paternity leave. If both adoptive parents qualify, they may each take shared parental leave.

The arrangements for taking adoption leave are similar to the arrangements for taking maternity leave, but there are several important differences. The key ones are set out below, but if you believe you are entitled to adoption leave you should discuss the situation with your manager who will ensure that you have all the necessary information.

If you intend to take adoption leave you should notify the Council of this within seven days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption (or as soon as is reasonably practicable).

Your notification should set out the date when the child is expected to be placed with you and the date when you want to start your adoption

leave. You can change your mind about the start date provided the Council is given at least 28 days – or as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

The Council is entitled to require proof of the adoption which usually takes the form of a matching certificate provided by the agency placing the child.

Adoption leave will last for 52 weeks unless you choose to return early or take advantage of shared parental leave. You may choose to start the leave from the date when the child is placed with you or at any time in the preceding two weeks.

If, for any reason, the placement is brought to an end – for example because the match turns out to be unsuitable – then adoption leave will continue for 8 weeks beyond the end of the placement. After that period you will be expected to return to work as normal.

The arrangements for statutory adoption pay are the same as those for SMP.

Your return to work at the end of your adoption leave is on the same basis as for the end of maternity leave (set out above).

5.4 Paternity leave

Employees with six months' service will be entitled to take paternity leave if they expect to have parental responsibility for a child and they are either the mother's partner or one of the adoptive parents. The purpose of the leave must be either to care for the child or to provide support for the child's mother or adoptive parent.

There are a number of administrative requirements that must be met in relation to taking paternity leave and employees should discuss their plans with their line manager at as early a stage as possible. The following paragraphs set out the basic requirements, but there are additional requirements that must be met when adopting a child from overseas and employees in this position should talk to their manager who will make sure that full information is provided.

Employees entitled to take paternity leave are entitled to take either one or two weeks of leave. If two weeks are taken they must be consecutive and no individual days can be taken except with the agreement of the Council.

Paternity leave cannot start before a child is born and must be taken at some stage within the first eight weeks following birth (except when the child is born prematurely in which case the leave must be taken within the eight weeks following the expected week of childbirth).

Most new parents choose to begin paternity leave on the date their child is born, but you may if you wish begin the leave at any time you choose provided that the whole of the leave is taken by the end of those eight weeks.

In order to qualify for paternity leave you must notify the Council at least 15 weeks before the expected week of your child's birth or within 7 days of having been notified that a child will be placed for adoption. Your notification should specify how much leave you intend to take and when you intend the leave to begin. Should your plans change, you will need to give the Council 28 days' notice of any revision.

Paternity leave is payable at the statutory rate, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with the Town Clerk or your manager.

Where an expectant mother nominates a Council employee to assist in the care of her child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of birth, the Council may grant the employee paid Maternity Support Leave. The employee may take up to 5 days paid time off at or around the time of childbirth, as agreed with the Town Clerk or their manager. There is no requirement to have a specific period of service to be eligible for this leave.

5.5 Parental leave

Parental leave is a flexible form of unpaid leave designed to help employees spend time caring for children. It can be taken in instalments over the first eighteen years of a child's life and is available to employees who have at least one year's service and who have formal parental responsibility for a child.

The basic entitlement is to 18 weeks of unpaid leave in respect of each child. It must be taken before each child's eighteenth birthday.

Parental leave must usually be taken in blocks of one week or more and no more than four weeks' leave will be granted in a single year. However, more flexibility is available in respect of disabled children and you should discuss your requirements with the Town Clerk or your manager if this applies to you.

A request to take parental leave should be submitted 21 days in advance. While the Council will always try to accommodate requests for parental leave, it has the right to postpone any leave for up to six months in order to accommodate the needs of the organisation.

No postponement will be required if you choose to take your first instalment of leave immediately after the birth or adoption of your child. In such circumstances you need only inform the Council of your intention

21 days before the expected date of birth or placement. The leave will then begin automatically when your child is born or placed with you.

Parental leave is an entitlement that can be transferred from one employment to another. You may therefore join the Council with some outstanding parental leave attaching to a particular child. In such circumstances you should be aware that the qualifying period for taking parental leave still applies and you will need to have been employed for at least one year before you can resume taking parental leave.

5.6 Shared parental leave

Shared parental leave is a flexible form of leave available to both parents designed to encourage shared parenting in the first year of a child's life. It allows a more flexible pattern of leave than the traditional arrangement under which the mother takes extensive maternity leave and the father takes a short period of paternity leave.

Employees who give birth or adopt remain entitled to take the full 52 weeks of leave if they choose to do so and the arrangements described above for maternity and adoption leave continue to apply. However, an employee may choose to share part of that leave with their partner provided that certain qualifying conditions are met. When leave is shared in this way, there is no need for the 'primary' leave taker to have returned to work. Both parents can be on leave at the same time, provided that the combined amount of leave taken by the parents does not exceed 52 weeks and provided that all of the leave is taken before the end of 52 weeks following the birth of the child or its placement for adoption.

Generally, parents will qualify for shared parental leave provided that both are working and that each has at least 26 weeks' service with their respective employers. To exercise the right, both parents must inform their employer that they intend to take shared parental leave – usually at the same time as the employer is notified that an employee is pregnant or plans to adopt. They must also give an indication of the pattern of leave that they propose to take.

A parent proposing to take a period of shared parental leave must give the Council 8 weeks' notice of any such leave. Depending on the circumstances, it may be possible for the Shared Parental Leave to be taken in intermittent blocks, with one parent returning to work for a time before taking another period of shared parental leave. Such an arrangement can only be made with the agreement of the Council. While every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of individual employees, the Council may insist on shared parental leave being taken in a single instalment. Any decision as to whether to permit intermittent periods of leave is entirely at the Council's discretion.

An employee absent on shared parental leave will be entitled to a weekly payment equivalent to the lower fixed rate of SMP. The number of weeks

for which payment will be made will vary depending on the amount of SMP paid to the mother while on maternity leave. Essentially, if the mother ends (or proposes to end) her leave with 10 weeks of SMP entitlement remaining, the parent taking shared parental leave will be entitled to be paid for the first 10 weeks of leave.

Because of the number of options available, shared parental leave can be quite a complicated entitlement. If you want to take advantage of shared parental leave you should discuss this with the Town Clerk or your manager who will check that you qualify and help guide you through the procedure.

5.7 Keeping in touch days

We may agree, during your period of maternity or shared parental leave, that you will come into work to catch up on the latest developments, undergo training or some other development activity or to take part in important meetings. These 'keeping in touch days' are entirely voluntary and employees will not be required to take part. Nor is the Council under any obligation to arrange for keeping in touch days. Any payment for attending work on such days will be agreed between the Council and the employee at the time the keeping in touch day is arranged.

5.8 During maternity or shared parental leave

The Council is keen to keep in touch with employees who are on extended periods of leave, to inform them of any news and consult them over any changes which may take place in the organisation. However, we appreciate that many employees would prefer to be left alone at this very important time in their lives. In order to get the balance right, the Town Clerk or your manager may, before your leave begins, discuss with you how best we can keep in touch while you are away.

Please be aware, however, that if an important issue arises on which you need to be consulted, the Council may have a legal obligation to discuss the issue with you and keep you informed.

5.9 Time off to care for dependants

All staff will be entitled to take a reasonable period of time off work to deal with emergencies and to make any necessary longer term arrangements, in the emergency circumstances outlined below:

For these purposes, an emergency is an unexpected situation that arises where someone who depends on you:

- is ill and needs your help
- is involved in an accident or assaulted

- needs you to arrange their longer term care
- needs you to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care, such as a childminder or nurse failing to turn up
- goes into labour

For this purpose a dependant is defined as: the partner, child or parent of the member of staff, or someone who lives with you as part of your family. For example, this could be an elderly aunt or grandparent who lives in the household. It does not include tenants or borders living in the family home, or someone who lives in the household as you, e.g. a live-in housekeeper.

In these situations you are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time-off – which is unpaid. In most cases the amount of leave will be one or two days at the most, but this will depend on individual circumstances. For example, if a child falls ill, the leave should be enough to you cope with the initial crisis: to deal with the immediate care of the child, visiting the doctor if necessary, and to make longer term care arrangements. It does not mean that you may take two weeks unpaid leave to look after a sick child.

You should apply to your line manager for leave, giving the reason for absence and how long you expect to be away from work. This should be done as soon as possible, preferably before leaving work and exceptionally immediately upon return to work.

These provisions are intended to cover unforeseen matters. If you know in advance that you are going to need time off, you may be able to arrange to take this time as annual leave, or if the reason you need leave relates to your child you may be entitled to take parental leave.

SECTION 6 – HOW WE RESOLVE ISSUES

When problems arise in the employment relationship it is important that they are dealt with fairly and promptly. This section sets out the procedures that the Council will follow in such cases.

6.1 Performance improvement procedure

It is in everybody's interests for employees to perform well at their jobs and the Council aims to ensure that all employees are given the support needed to ensure that they do so. Where there are issues with performance then the employee should receive feedback from their manager setting out any concerns. Discussions should take place about how that performance can be improved. This procedure is designed to be used when such informal discussions do not lead to the employee's performance improving to an acceptable level.

Where an employee's poor performance is believed to be the result of misconduct the disciplinary procedure will apply.

The right to be accompanied

Employees are entitled to be accompanied at any meeting held this procedure by a fellow employee or trade union official of their choice. The Council will provide any chosen companions with appropriate paid time off to allow them to attend the meeting. It is, however, up to the employee in question to arrange for a companion to attend the meeting.

If your chosen companion cannot attend on the day scheduled for the meeting then the Council will agree a new date. This will usually be within 5 working days of the date originally scheduled. If your companion is not available within that timescale then you may need to find someone else to take their place.

The Companion's role is to advise you during the meeting and make representations on your behalf. However, both you and your companion are required to cooperate in ensuring a fair and efficient meeting.

Stage one

The Town Clerk or line manager will inform the employee of the nature of the problem and confirm this in writing. The employee will be invited to a meeting to discuss the issues raised by the Town Clerk or manager's concerns. The meeting will be conducted by the Town Clerk or line manager and will consider any representations the employee may make about their performance, whether it needs to be improved, and if so what steps can be taken to help the employee reach the appropriate level.

Following discussion of the problem, the Town Clerk or line manager may choose to take no further action; to refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure or to issue a formal Performance Improvement Plan.

Performance Improvement Plan

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a series of measures designed to help improve the employee's performance. Each measure will ideally be agreed with the employee, though the Council reserves the right to insist on any aspect of the PIP in the absence of such agreement.

Each PIP will be tailored to the particular situation, but will contain the following elements:

Timescale: the overall timescale in which the necessary improvement must be achieved will be set out, together with the timescale for reaching individual milestones where appropriate.

Targets: The PIP will specify the particular areas in which improvement is needed and set out how and on what criteria the employee's performance will be assessed. Where appropriate, specific targets will be set which will need to be achieved either by the end of the plan or at identifiable stages within it.

Measures: The PIP will specify what measures will be taken by the Council to support the employee in improving their performance. Such measures may include training, additional supervision, the reallocation of other duties, or the provision of additional support from colleagues.

Feedback: As part of the PIP the employee will be given regular feedback from the Town Clerk or their line manager indicating the extent to which the employee is on track to deliver the improvements set out in the plan

If at any stage the Council feels that the PIP is not progressing in a satisfactory way, a further meeting may be held with the employee to discuss the issue. As a result of such a meeting the employer may amend or extend any part of the plan.

Review

At the end of the PIP the employee's performance will be reviewed. If satisfactory progress has been made the employee will be notified of this fact in writing. If the Town Clerk or line manager feels that progress has been insufficient then they may decide to extend and /or amend the PIP to such extent as seems appropriate. Alternatively the Town Clerk or line manager may refer the matter to a meeting under Stage two of this procedure.

Following the successful completion of a PIP the employee's performance will continue to be monitored. If at any stage in the following 12 months, the employee's performance again starts to fall short of an

acceptable standard, the Town Clerk or their line manager may decide to institute stage two of this procedure.

Stage two

If a PIP has not led to sufficient improvement in the employee's performance, the employee will be invited to attend a formal performance management hearing. The invitation will set out the respects in which the line manager believes that the employee's performance still falls short of an acceptable standard.

At the hearing, the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to any criticism of their performance and to make representations about any aspect of the way in which the process has been managed.

If the hearing concludes that reasonable steps have been taken which should have allowed the employee to perform to an acceptable standard but that these measures have not worked then a **formal warning** may be issued. The warning will explain the nature of the improvement which is required in the employee's performance and state that the improvement must be immediate and sustained. It will also explain that if this improvement does not take place then the employee may be dismissed. Where it is appropriate, the warning may be accompanied by an extended or revised PIP.

The warning will remain current for a period of 12 months, after which time it will cease to have effect.

Stage three

If an employee has been issued with a warning under stage two which remains current, and the Town Clerk or line manager believes that the employee's performance is still not acceptable then the matter may be referred to a further performance management hearing.

The employee will be informed in writing of the grounds of which the hearing is being convened and in particular will be told of the respects in which their performance continues to fall below an acceptable standard.

At the meeting the employee will be able to respond to any criticisms made of their performance and make representations about how the situation should be treated.

The person conducting the meeting may take such action as is judged appropriate up to and including a decision to dismiss the employee.

Any dismissal under this procedure will be with notice or payment in lieu of notice and the decision to dismiss together with the reasons for dismissal will be set out in writing and sent to the employee.

Appeals

An employee may appeal against any decision taken under this procedure. The appeal should be submitted in writing within one week of the action complained of. An appeal hearing will then be convened to consider the matter. Any PIP that is in force, together with any measures or objectives included within it, will continue in place during the appeal process.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed to the employee in writing explaining the grounds of which the decision was reached. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Redeployment

There may be circumstances in which it becomes clear that an employee would be better suited to a different role within the Council. However, any offer to redeploy the employee will be entirely at the Council's discretion and will only be made when the Council is confident that the employee will be able to perform well in the redeployed role and where there is a suitable available vacancy.

Redeployment may be offered as an alternative to dismissal where the Council is satisfied that the employee should no longer be allowed to continue to work in their current role. While the employee is free to refuse any offer of redeployment, the only alternative available in these circumstances will usually be dismissal.

6.2 Sickness absence procedure

The Council may need to dismiss an employee whose attendance does not meet an acceptable standard either because of a long-term absence or because of a series of short-term absences. Such dismissals do not depend on any wrongdoing on the employee's part and do not mean that the Council does not accept that their absences are genuinely due to illness or injury. Rather, dismissal is recognition that unfortunately the employee is no longer able to perform their role, or attend work on a sufficiently regular basis to make their continued employment a viable option.

Short-term absence

An employee who is deemed to have an excessive amount of sickness absence will be invited to a meeting to discuss their attendance. The meeting will usually be conducted by the Town Clerk or employee's line manager and the employee will have a right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official on the same basis as set out in the performance management procedure.

At the meeting the employee will be asked to explain the level of their absence. Where there is any indication that the absences are caused by an underlying medical condition then the matter may be dealt with under the procedure for long-term absence set out below. The Council may also, with the employee's consent seek medical evidence from either the

employee's doctor or an occupational health specialist in which case the meeting will be adjourned for a report to be obtained

Subject to any medical evidence, the person conducting this first-stage meeting may decide to issue a warning to the employee setting out the Council's expectations regarding attendance and indicating the level of improvement needed. A review period will normally be set which may range from one month to 12 months depending on the circumstances.

If the employee's attendance does not improve to the extent required they may at any stage in the review period be invited to attend a second-stage meeting to discuss the matter. The meeting will again be conducted by the Town Clerk or employee's line manager and the employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official. This meeting may result in an extension of the review period or the issuing of a final written warning requiring the employee's attendance to improve and setting out the level of improvement required over a specified period of up to one year.

If the employee does not meet this standard and there is no underlying condition where reasonable adjustments would assist the employee to attend then they may be dismissed. A final meeting will be convened and will consider any representations made by or on behalf of the employee who will once again have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official.

Any dismissal arising out of this meeting will be with notice.

There is a right of appeal against a decision to dismiss which must be exercised within five working days of the decision being communicated.

Long-term sickness absence

Where an employee is absent for an extended period – or it is clear that their absence is likely to continue for some time – then the Council will want to investigate the prospects for their return and consider what actions can be taken to facilitate this. The extent to which the Council can continue to accommodate an employee's absence will depend on a range of factors, including the role of the employee and the prevailing circumstances of the organisation.

The Council will, with the employee's agreement, seek medical advice as to the employee's condition either from the appropriate professionals caring for the employee or from a specialist occupational health practitioner. The focus will be on ascertaining when the employee will be able to return to work and what steps the Council can take to facilitate this.

An employee is not obliged to consent to any medical reports or records being shared with the Council as part of this process. However, in the absence of medical evidence the Council will have to work on the basis

of what information is available in reaching its decision. The Council will meet the full cost of any medical reports it requires under the sickness absence procedure.

One or more meetings will be arranged with the employee to discuss their condition, the prospects for any return to work, and whether anything more can be done by the Council to help. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow employee or trade union official.

Every effort will be made to make suitable arrangements for the meeting to allow the employee to attend. Where the employee is simply too ill to take part in the process, however, the Council may proceed to dismissal in the absence of a meeting taking into account any representations made on the employees behalf.

Where it appears that the employee will be unable to return to work within a reasonable time frame then the Council may need to consider dismissal. Any dismissal will be with notice.

There is a right of appeal against a decision to dismiss which must be exercised within five working days of the decision being communicated.

6.3 Disciplinary procedure

The Council always tries to deal with disciplinary issues fairly and promptly. This procedure sets out the framework under which allegations of misconduct will be investigated and considered. While the procedure set out in this policy will be appropriate in most cases, there may be situations in which it is not practicable to comply with a particular requirement of it. When this happens the Council will do its best to deal with the matter fairly and will pay particular attention to the need to give the employee every opportunity to explain their version of events.

Informal action

Most minor acts of misconduct can be dealt with informally through discussions between an employee and the Town Clerk or their line manager. This may consist of management guidance or an informal warning given orally or in writing. These steps are an everyday part of the management process and no formal procedure needs to be followed in respect of them.

Where informal action of this kind fails to resolve an issue, or where the misconduct alleged is considered too serious, then the matter will be dealt with formally under this procedure.

Investigation

If it is alleged that you have committed misconduct, an appropriate investigation will be carried out aimed at gathering all of the relevant

evidence. You may be interviewed as part of this investigation and will have the opportunity to point the investigator towards any evidence that you feel is relevant.

Suspension

If an allegation of misconduct is made against you, then you may be suspended from your duties on full pay while the matter is being dealt with. The Council will make every effort to ensure that any period of suspension is kept as short as possible. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction but its purpose is either to allow an investigation to take place, or to protect the interests of the Council and its employees. During any period of suspension you may be instructed not to contact other members of staff except for the purposes of preparing for any disciplinary hearing, where specific arrangements will be made with you.

Hearing

Once the investigation has been carried out, the investigating officer will make a decision about whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a disciplinary hearing. If there is you will be informed of this and an appropriate date for the hearing will be arranged. This will take place within normal working hours wherever possible.

To ensure that you have adequate time to prepare for the hearing, the Council will provide you in advance with a copy of all of the written evidence that will be considered at the hearing. In exceptional cases the Council may need to redact information and/or withhold the identities of certain witnesses or the sources of its evidence. This will only be done where it is considered necessary to protect individuals or the essential interests of the Council and every effort will be made to ensure that you are given as much information as possible so that a fair hearing can be conducted.

You will be given sufficient notice of any hearing to allow you to prepare for it. While this will vary from case to case, the Council will generally try to give at least two days' notice of any hearing (if there are difficulties in preparing or arranging for the employee to be accompanied at short notice a further five days' notice will be given). In complicated cases a longer period of notice may be given.

The purpose of the hearing will be to consider the evidence gathered during the investigation and to consider any representations made by you or on your behalf. The hearing will be conducted by an appropriate manager (or panel) who, wherever possible, has not previously been involved in the case and who was not responsible for carrying out the investigation.

The right to be accompanied

Employees are entitled to be accompanied at any disciplinary hearing by a fellow employee or trade union official of their choice. The Council will provide any chosen companion with appropriate paid time off to allow

them to prepare for and attend the hearing. It is, however, up to the employee in question to arrange for a companion to attend the hearing.

If your chosen companion cannot attend on the day scheduled for the hearing then the Council will agree a new date. This will usually be within 5 working days of the date originally scheduled. If your companion is not available within that timescale then you may need to find someone else to take their place.

The companion's role is to advise you during the hearing and make representations on your behalf; it is not to answer questions for you. However, both you and your companion are required to cooperate in ensuring a fair and efficient hearing.

Evidence

The hearing will consider any evidence you choose to present. Evidence from all parties will normally be provided in advance in written form, new evidence should not normally be presented at the hearing by either party. However if it is necessary the hearing will adjourn to consider any new evidence. Should witnesses be prepared to appear on your behalf they will be permitted to do so provided that their evidence is relevant to the issues that need to be decided. The Council will not compel or require any employee to appear as a witness on your behalf. You will be entitled to challenge any of the evidence presented but will not be entitled to cross-examine witnesses.

Disciplinary action

After considering all of the evidence, including any submissions made by you or on your behalf, the person conducting the hearing will decide on the outcome. If misconduct is found to have taken place then the usual outcome will be a **written warning** which will be placed on your personnel file.

A warning will stay active for a period of one year, after which it will not be taken into account in any future disciplinary action.

If however a further instance of misconduct is found to have occurred (in accordance with this procedure) during the currency of a warning – or if any misconduct is considered to be serious enough to warrant it – then, subject to the formal process above being followed, you will be issued with a **final written warning**.

A final written warning will usually remain active for one year, but a longer period may be specified if the manager conducting the hearing feels that the circumstances warrant it.

An employee who is found to have committed further misconduct during a period covered by a final written warning will, following a hearing conducted in accordance with this procedure, generally be dismissed.

Dismissal

An employee will not normally be dismissed under this procedure for a single instance of misconduct unless a final written warning is already in place. However, where gross misconduct is found to have occurred then dismissal without notice or payment in lieu will be the usual outcome.

Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it fundamentally undermines the relationship between employer and employee. If you are accused of gross misconduct this will be made clear in writing when you are invited to a disciplinary hearing. A wide range of behaviours can amount to gross misconduct but the most common involve dishonesty, violent or aggressive behaviour, the wilful destruction of Council property or a deliberate refusal to obey a reasonable instruction. Further details of what constitutes gross misconduct are found in the Code of Conduct (Section 3).

Notification of outcome

Employees will be notified in writing of the outcome of a disciplinary hearing, normally within 5 working days. If notification cannot be issued within 5 working days the employee will be advised at that time and the notification will be provided within 10 working days of the outcome of the hearing. This notification will set out the reasons for the decision and – in cases of dismissal – the date of dismissal. It will also set out the right to appeal and the deadline for doing so.

Appeal

An employee may appeal against the outcome of a disciplinary hearing by doing so in writing within one week of being notified of the outcome. The person to whom an appeal should be directed will be detailed in the disciplinary outcome letter. An appeal hearing will be convened and conducted by the nominated appeals panel.

The appeal will be heard by someone not previously involved in the case where possible and will consider any grounds the employee chooses to put forward and they will have the same right to be accompanied as at a disciplinary hearing. The result of the appeal hearing will be final.

Employee absence

It is important that disciplinary issues are dealt with promptly. The Council may therefore need to proceed with a disciplinary hearing even if the employee is absent due to ill health or simply does not attend.

If the employee is absent due to ill health before hearing the matter in an employee's absence, the Council will attempt to arrange the hearing in such a way that the employee will be able to attend or to submit written representations to the hearing and/or to arrange for an appropriate representative to attend the hearing on their behalf. The Council, with the employee's consent, may seek medical advice as to the employee's

condition either from the appropriate professionals caring for the employee or from a specialist occupational health practitioner.

6.4 Grievance Procedure

The Council aims to be responsive to concerns raised by employees and if you are unhappy with something affecting you at work you are encouraged to raise this with the Town Clerk or your manager. If that is not possible then you should speak to the Chair of the HR Committee who will try to assist you in resolving any issue you may have. The following procedure is designed to be used when these informal attempts to resolve any dispute have not been successful.

Raising a grievance

If you feel that the matter needs to be raised formally you should raise a grievance by making a written complaint, stating that it is being made under this procedure. You should give as much information about your grievance, including any relevant dates and times, as you can, so as to allow for any investigation into your concerns to take place.

A grievance will normally be dealt with by the Town Clerk or your manager and should be addressed to them directly. Where the grievance is directly concerned with the Town Clerk or line manager's behaviour (or, if the grievance is raised by the Town Clerk), however, you should submit your grievance to the Chair of the HR Committee who will arrange for somebody who is not directly involved in the issue to deal with it (or, a panel of Councillors) .

Status Quo

Until all stages in a dispute resolution procedure (e.g. a grievance procedure) have been resolved, the "status quo" will be maintained. This means that parties will continue to follow the management rules and practices that were in place prior to the dispute resolution procedure being invoked.

In exceptional cases the status quo will be temporarily deviated from if necessary, such as to provide a separation between two parties who are in conflict. In such cases all parties to the dispute resolution procedure will be able to comment on the temporary arrangements to be put in place whilst the dispute resolution procedure is followed. In these situations the temporary arrangement will remain in place until completion of the appeal, if one is lodged, after which the previous arrangements will resume unless agreed otherwise.

Grievance hearing

A grievance hearing will then be arranged so that you can explain the issue and suggest how it can be resolved. You will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official as described in Section 6.1, above. The person conducting the hearing will consider what you have said and may either deal with the matter immediately or

decide to carry out further investigations. In that case the hearing will be adjourned until the investigation has been completed.

Once the investigations are concluded the meeting will then be reconvened and you will have the opportunity to consider and respond to the findings of the investigation. Only then will a decision on the outcome of your grievance be made.

Allegations of misconduct

Where an employee is making allegations of misconduct on the part of other employees then the Council may need to carry out an investigation into the allegations and pursue the matter through the disciplinary procedure. Where this happens the grievance may be held over until the disciplinary process has been concluded.

Relationship with other procedures

Where your grievance relates to the conduct of other procedures such as the disciplinary or performance management procedures then the Council may hear the grievance before completing those other procedures. However in some circumstances it may be necessary to delay the consideration of the grievance until that procedure has been completed or to deal with the grievance in the course of that procedure or by way of appeal if that appears to be a fairer or more straightforward way of dealing with the issue.

Notification of outcome

Employees will be notified in writing of the outcome of a grievance hearing, normally within 5 working days. If notification cannot be issued within 5 working days the employee will be advised at that time and the notification will be provided within 10 working days of the outcome of the hearing. This notification will set out the reasons for the decision, the right to appeal and the deadline for doing so.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a grievance then you may appeal. You should submit your appeal in writing within one week of being informed of the outcome of your grievance. Your appeal should be directed to the Chair of the Council. An appeal hearing will then be convened and conducted by the nominated appeals panel. You will have the right to be accompanied at the appeal by a fellow employee or trade union official as described in Section 6.1.

The outcome of any appeal will be final.

SECTION 7: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

7.1 Equal Opportunities Statement

We are equal opportunity employer and are fully committed to a policy of treating all of our employees and job applicants equally in all aspects of employment including: recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal.

We will take all reasonable steps to employ, train and promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities and qualifications, without regard to race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership or disability. In this Policy these are known as the "Protected Characteristics".

We will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability alone. We will also take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment based upon any of the Protected Characteristics. We will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with us, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with us to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under our Disciplinary Procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

Employees must not harass, bully or intimidate other employees for reasons related to one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

You should draw to the attention of your line manager any suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment. You must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct. Employees

should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.
- Associative discrimination or discrimination by association – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- Discrimination by perception – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
- Indirect discrimination - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.
- Victimisation – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination or are suspected of doing so.
- Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified unfavourable treatment because of something arising in consequence of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Our Commitment

Recruitment

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant abilities and qualifications. We are committed to applying our equal opportunities policy statement at all stages of recruitment and selection.

Recruitment publicity will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified people when advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community.

Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular Protected Characteristics. However, where having regard to the nature and context of the work, having a particular Protected Characteristics is an occupational requirement and that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, we will apply that requirement to the job role and this may therefore be specified in the advertisement.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. We will ensure that this equal opportunities policy is available to all staff, and in particular is given to all staff with responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion.

The selection of new staff will be based on job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question. Person specification and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment, promotion or transfer will be assessed objectively against the requirements of the job.

With disabled job applicants, we will have regard to our duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria and practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

All applications will be processed consistently. The staff responsible for short listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application. All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job.

Training, transfer and promotion

We will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all line managers in order to familiarise them with our policy on equal opportunities, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible. The training will also enable line managers to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

We will also provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the equal opportunities and anti-harassment policies and what they can do to create a work environment that is free of bullying and harassment.

All persons responsible for selecting new employees, employees for training or employees for transfer or promotion to other jobs will be instructed not to discriminate because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The promotional system will be checked from time to time in order to assess how it is working in practice.

When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular Protected Characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, our systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of one or more of the Protected Characteristics.

Equal pay and equality of terms

We are committed to equal pay in employment. We believe our male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, we will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

7.2 Bullying and Harassment

We are committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat

others, with dignity and respect. This includes harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions.

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to a Protected Characteristic. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- (a) unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- (b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- (c) offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;
- (d) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct.

Bullying may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), by way of example:

- (a) physical or psychological threats;
- (b) overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- (c) inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

7.3 Procedure

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak

to your line manager who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally under our Grievance Procedure.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, we will inform you of our decision. If we consider you have been harassed or bullied by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned. Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

7.4 Monitoring equal opportunities and dignity at work

We will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel and pay practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity and dignity at work are being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices. If changes are required, we will implement them. We will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Breaches of this Policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Bullying & Harassment Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Related Policies

This policy is supported by the following other policies and procedures (in the Employee Handbook):

- (a) Grievance Procedure.
- (b) Disciplinary Procedure.
- (c) Flexible Working Procedure.
- (d) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave Policies.
- (e) Parental Leave Policy.
- (f) Time Off for Dependants Policy.
- (g) Data Protection Policy.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK RECEIPT

This Handbook has been drawn up by the Council to provide you with information on employment policies and procedures.

The policies and procedures contained within this handbook do not form part of your contract of employment; therefore the Council reserves the right to make amendments as necessary, for example reflecting changes to the law. Any change will be communicated to all staff. However, you are expected to read and comply with the policies and procedures contained within this handbook. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

If you have any questions or any part of the Handbook is unclear to you, please do not hesitate to raise any queries with a member of management.

I acknowledge I have read and understood the policies and procedures contained within this handbook

Received by (Employee)

Signed

Date

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Code of conduct for officers

Filename and version	Status	Date adopted	Review date
Officer code of conduct 2023	Adopted	23 May 2023	28 May 2024

Introduction

The code of conduct defines the standards of behaviour we expect of all our employees. If you do not understand it or how to comply with it, you must ask your line manager to explain it to you. The intention of the code of conduct is to helpfully set out the broad principles of how we should do things – it is not an exhaustive list of what you can and cannot do. (The code of conduct is enforced through our disciplinary procedure).

1 Behave professionally

We expect all staff to interact and work with the public and colleagues in an appropriate and professional way at all times. We expect you to engender public trust and confidence in the council and not to bring the organisation into disrepute. This includes action outside of work that is relevant to your job role or that may undermine public confidence in you to carry out your role. You must not knowingly publish or post anything, including on social media, which could damage the reputation of the council. We expect you to co-operate with your manager and comply with all lawful management instructions. You are expected to work in a professional manner with all councillors regardless of their political affiliation. If you have or enter into a close personal relationship with a councillor (sometimes referred to as an Elected Member) you need to disclose this (see Section 12).

2 Act with honesty and integrity

We expect you to communicate openly and honestly with your line manager about your work. We expect you to submit accurate claims for expenses and allowances – claiming only for payments which you are entitled to receive. If you receive any payment in error, for example an overpayment of salary or expenses, you must notify your manager as soon as possible. You must keep accurate records of your working time where this is required. You must not order goods for your own personal use through a council account. You are not

permitted to use your position to obtain a discount for goods or services unless this is part of a recognised employee discount scheme.

3 Act lawfully

You must comply with the law in all aspects of your work. You are required to immediately notify your manager in writing if you are arrested, cautioned, charged or convicted of any crime at any point during your employment. Your manager will assess whether this information has any impact on your job role. If you suspect that someone is breaking the law you must report this - speak to your line manager in the first instance. Alternatively you should raise your concerns using the Whistleblowing Policy which is in the employment handbook.

4 Respect equality and diversity

Respecting the equality and diversity of the public that we serve and your colleagues is very important. We expect you to promote our commitment to equality and diversity at all times. You must not discriminate against any individual on the basis of their protected characteristic(s) (ie because of their age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity leave or because of a person's marital or civil partnership status). You should appropriately challenge any discriminatory behaviour that you witness – and seek support from your line manager in the first instance.

5 Contact with the media

You must not make statements to the media on behalf of the council unless it is your job to do so. All media enquiries should be referred to the Town Clerk.

6 Fulfil your safeguarding responsibilities

We are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and it is essential that you fully comply with our safeguarding policies and procedures. This includes adhering to specific local rules and procedures that apply in your area of work. If you have any concerns about any aspects of safeguarding you must raise these with your line manager in the first instance. Alternatively, you should raise any safeguarding concerns using the Whistleblowing Procedure.

7 Handle information securely

We have specific rules on data security which are expressed in our data protection policies. You are required to comply with these rules when handling information. You must not access or use any information obtained in the course of your employment for personal gain. In particular, employees who have access to an IT system which holds information on service users, must only access cases which have been assigned to them. Inappropriate access to information for personal use will be subject to disciplinary action

8 Data Protection

Any data collected and processed as part of employing and managing employees is held securely. It is accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing that specific procedure; process or activity. Records are retained and destroyed in accordance with the organisation's retention schedule. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Data Protection Policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

9 Comply with all policies, rules and procedures

- You are required to act in accordance with all our policies and procedures and comply with local rules that are in place in your area of work. These include
- our Financial Regulations
- our Procurement Rules
- our IT Policies ie computer misuse policy, internet policy, email policy, mobile device policy (see employment handbook)
- our health and safety policy and procedures laid out in the Health and Safety Handbook – including the Drug Alcohol and Substance Misuse policy
- Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Fraud Policy
- All employment policies laid out in the employment handbook

10 Fulfil your management responsibilities

If you have line management responsibility you must make sure your employees are aware of the code of conduct and address any breaches as soon as these occur. We expect you to proactively manage any employment issues that arise in your team in accordance with our employment policies. You are responsible for proactively managing your team's

performance and promptly addressing any performance issues that arise. You must not be involved in making significant decisions that involve a relative, partner or friend. You are not permitted to line manage a partner or family member.

11 Declare relevant interests

You are required to declare any private interests that you have and any work that you undertake elsewhere. The table below provides examples, if you have any doubts please contact your manager

Situation	Action Required
<p>Potential conflicts of interest</p> <p>For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement with clubs or societies that we work with or fund • Involvement with organisations that provide similar services to the Council • Relationships with elected members (Councillors) 	<p>Declare any interests that you have outside of work and discuss with your manager and agree how any conflicts can be avoided.</p> <p>You must also declare if your partner or a close relative had a potential interest (eg if you partner is involved with an organisation that is tendering for work with the Council).</p> <p>Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential. Close personal familiarity however can damage the relationship. It can also be embarrassing to other employees. Such familiarity should therefore be avoided.</p>
<p>Undertaking private work (paid or unpaid) or secondary employment. or consultancy work</p>	<p>Members of the Management Team must obtain written permission from the Council to undertake any other jobs. They will also be required to discuss</p>

	with their line manager the potential impact of additional work on their role with the Town Council. All employees undertaking additional employment must ensure that work does not conflict with the interest of the Town Council, or impact on their ability to perform their Town Council duties.
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12 Declare gifts and hospitality

You must declare any gifts and hospitality that you are offered as described in the employment handbook. If you have any doubts about whether you should accept a gift or offer of hospitality you should speak to your line manager

13 Further information

Employees with questions about the code of conduct should speak to their line manager. Managers requiring further guidance should speak to the town clerk and/or the Employment Policy Committee.



Dignity at Work

Filename and version	Status	Date adopted	Review date
Dignity at workv1.2023	Adopted	January 2023	January 2024

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council believes that civility and respect are important in the working environment, and expect all councillors, officers and the public to be polite and courteous when working for, and with the council.

Purpose

The town council is committed to creating a working environment where all council employees, councillors, contractors and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. We aim to create a workplace where there is zero tolerance for harassment and bullying

In support of this objective, Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council has signed up to the Civility Pledge, as a commitment to civility and respect in our work, and politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Further information about the Civility and Respect Pledge is available from the websites of [NALC](#) & [SLCC](#)

We recognise that there is a continuum where unaddressed issues have the potential to escalate and become larger, more complex issues and this policy sets out how concerns will be managed however the emphasis of this policy is on resolution and mediation where appropriate, rather than an adversarial process.

This document:

- explains how we will respond to complaints of bullying or harassment;
- ensures that we respond sensitively and promptly; and,
- supports our employees in ensuring their behaviour does not amount to bullying and/or harassment by giving examples.

Scope

This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by clerks/chief officers and all employees engaged to work at Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council. Should agency staff, or contractors have a complaint connected to their engagement with the town council this should be raised to their nominated contact, manager, or the chair of the council, in the first instance. Should the complaint be about the chair of the council the complaint should be raised to the chair of the employment committee.

Agency staff, or contractors are equally expected to treat council colleagues, and other representatives and stakeholders with dignity and respect, and the council may terminate the contract, without notice, where there are suspicions of harassment or bullying.

Complaints about other employment matters will be managed under the council's grievance policy.

It is noted that the management of a situation may differ depending on who the allegations relate to (e.g. employees, contractor, councillor), however, the council will take appropriate action if any of its employees are bullied or harassed by employees, councillors, members of the public, suppliers or contractors.

The position on bullying and harassment

All staff and council representatives are entitled to dignity, respect and courtesy within the workplace and to not experience any form of discrimination. Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether harm is intended or not. Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. You should also be aware that, if you have bullied or harassed someone (e.g. physical violence, harassment), in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

We expect all representatives of the council to treat each other with respect and uphold the values of the code of conduct, civility and respect pledge, equality opportunities policy, and all other policies and procedures set by the council.

We expect you to demonstrate respect by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. See the grievance policy for further details regarding the process. Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. While we will assume that all complaints of bullying and harassment are made in good faith, in the event

that allegations are found to be malicious or vexatious the person raising the complaint may be subject to action under the council's disciplinary procedure.

Harassment

- Where a person is subject to uninvited conduct that violates their dignity, in connection with a protected characteristic
- Behaviour that creates a hostile, humiliating, degrading or similarly offensive environment in relation to a protected characteristic

Bullying

- Behaviour that leaves the victim feeling threatened, intimidated, humiliated, vulnerable or otherwise upset. It does not need to be connected to a protected characteristic.

What Type of Treatment amounts to Bullying or Harassment?

'Bullying' or 'harassment' are phrases that apply to treatment from one person (or a group of people) to another that is unwanted and that has the effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.

Examples of bullying and harassment include:

- Physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances e.g. promotion, access to training
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances
- Demeaning comments about a person's appearance
- Verbal abuse or offensive comments, including jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Unwanted nicknames, especially related to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations, work activities or social activities.

- Withholding information a person needs in order to do their job
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals
- Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property
- Display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work
- Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, whether directly and / or in front of others
- The use of obscene gestures
- Abusing a position of power

Bullying and harassment can occur through verbal and face to face interactions, but can also take place through sharing inappropriate or offensive content in writing or via email and other electronic communications and social media.

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable and behaviour could be harassment when the person had no intention to offend. We all have the right to determine what offends us. Some behaviour will be clear to any reasonable person that it is likely to offend – for example sexual touching. Other examples may be less clear, however, you should be aware that harassment will occur if behaviour continues after the recipient has advised you that the behaviour is unacceptable to them.

Harassment can also occur where the unwanted behaviour relates to a perceived characteristic (such as offensive jokes or comments based on the assumption someone is gay, even if they are not) or due to their association with someone else (such as harassment related to their partner having a disability for example). See the council's equality policy.

All employees must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity and should feel able to challenge behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

It is important to recognise that bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. Constructive and fair feedback about your behaviour or performance from your manager or colleagues/councillors is not bullying. It is part of normal employment and management routines, and should not be interpreted as anything different.

Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the council will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Reporting Concerns

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a member of the public or supplier (as opposed to a colleague)

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with your nominated manager in the first instance or, with the clerk/or a councillor. Any such report will be taken seriously, and we will decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a councillor: If you are being bullied or harassed by a councillor, please raise this with the clerk or the chair of the council in the first instance. They will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you. There are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. The Informal Resolution is described below. Formal concerns regarding potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct must be investigated by the Monitoring Officer.

The council will consider reasonable measures to protect your health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties or change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to harassment or bullying: If you witness such behaviour you should report the incident in confidence to the clerk or a councillor. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

What you should do if you are being bullied or harassed by another member of staff: If you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague or contractor, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. These are described below.

Informal resolution

If you are being bullied or harassed, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to the council's policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask the clerk, your nominated manager or a colleague to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by your own nominated manager, you should raise the issue with the chair of the council. (If your concern relates to the chair, you should raise it with the chair of the employment policy committee). The chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator, without prejudicing the matter, that:

- there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a member of the council staff
- such behaviour is contrary to our policy
- for employees, the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence

It may be possible for this conversation to take place with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. The person dealing with it will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as extremely serious allegation or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

Raising a formal complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about bullying and harassment through the council's grievance procedure. You should raise your complaint to the clerk or the chair of the council. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s) where they are employed.

The clerk or the chair of the council will appoint someone to investigate your complaint in line with the grievance policy. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided):

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- The nature of the harassment or bullying,
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred,
- The names of any witnesses and
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would normally need to be told your name and the details of your grievance in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to make temporary adjustments to working arrangements whilst the matter is being investigated.

Where your complaint relates to potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct, these will need to be investigated by the Monitoring Officer. The council will consider any adjustments to support you in your work and to manage the relationship with the councillor the allegations relate to, while the investigation proceeds.

Investigations will be carried out promptly (without unreasonable delay), sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. When carrying out any investigations, we will ensure that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with the data protection policy.

The council will consider how to protect your health and wellbeing whilst the investigation is taking place and discuss this with you. Depending on the nature of the allegations, the Investigator may want to meet with you to understand better your complaint (see the grievance policy for further information, and details of your right to be accompanied).

After the investigation, a panel will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation in accordance with the grievance procedure. At the meeting you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official.

Following the conclusion of the hearing the panel will write to you to inform you of the decision and to notify you of your right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the decision. Your appeal will be heard under the appeal process that is described in the grievance procedure.

The use of the Disciplinary Procedure

If at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will instigate our disciplinary procedure. We will keep you informed of the outcome.

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

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Calendar of Meetings for 2023-24

Tuesday	14 March 2023	22-23	Environment & Planning Committee		
Tuesday	21 March 2023				
Tuesday	28 March 2023	22-23	Full Council		
Tuesday	04 April 2023	23-24	Community Committee	07 April 2023	Good Friday
Tuesday	11 April 2023			10 April 2023	Easter Monday
Tuesday	18 April 2023	23-24	Finance & Governance Committee		
Tuesday	25 April 2023	23-24	Full Council		
Tuesday	02 May 2023			01 May 2023	Early May Bank Holiday
Tuesday	09 May 2023			08 May 2023	Coronation Bank Holiday
Thursday	11 May 2023	23-24	Annual Meeting of Electors		
Tuesday	16 May 2023	23-24	Environment & Planning Committee		
Tuesday	23 May 2023	23-24	Annual Meeting of Council		
Tuesday	30 May 2023			29 May 2023	Late Bank Holiday
Tuesday	06 June 2023	23-24	Community Committee		
Tuesday	13 June 2023				
Tuesday	20 June 2023	23-24	Finance & Governance Committee		
Tuesday	27 June 2023	23-24	Employment Policy Committee		
Tuesday	04 July 2023				
Tuesday	11 July 2023	23-24	Environment & Planning Committee		
Tuesday	18 July 2023				
Tuesday	25 July 2023	23-24	Full Council		
Tuesday	01 August 2023				
Tuesday	08 August 2023	23-24	Community Committee		
Tuesday	15 August 2023				
Tuesday	22 August 2023	23-24	Finance & Governance Committee		
Tuesday	29 August 2023			28 August 2023	August Bank Holiday
Tuesday	05 September 2023	23-24	Employment Policy Committee		
Tuesday	12 September 2023	23-24	Environment & Planning Committee		
Tuesday	19 September 2023				
Tuesday	26 September 2023	23-24	Full Council		
Tuesday	03 October 2023				
Tuesday	10 October 2023	23-24	Community Committee		
Tuesday	17 October 2023				

Tuesday	24 October 2023	23-24	Finance & Governance Committee		
Tuesday	31 October 2023				
Tuesday	07 November 2023	23-24	Employment Policy Committee		
Tuesday	14 November 2023	23-24	Environment & Planning Committee		
Tuesday	21 November 2023				
Tuesday	28 November 2023	23-24	Full Council		
Tuesday	05 December 2023				
Tuesday	12 December 2023	23-24	Community Committee		
Tuesday	19 December 2023				
Tuesday	26 December 2023			26 December 2023	Boxing Day
Tuesday	02 January 2024				
Tuesday	09 January 2024	23-24	Finance & Governance Committee		
Tuesday	16 January 2024	23-24	Environment & Planning Committee		
Tuesday	23 January 2024	23-24			
Tuesday	30 January 2024	23-24	Full Council (Precept)		
Tuesday	06 February 2024				
Tuesday	13 February 2024	23-24	Community Committee		
Tuesday	20 February 2024				
Tuesday	27 February 2024	23-24	Finance & Governance Committee		
Tuesday	05 March 2024				
Tuesday	12 March 2024				
Tuesday	19 March 2024	23-24	Environment & Planning Committee		
Tuesday	26 March 2024			29 March 2024	Good Friday
Tuesday	02 April 2024	24-25	Full Council	01 April 2024	Easter Monday
Tuesday	09 April 2024				
Tuesday	16 April 2024	24-25	Community Committee		
Tuesday	23 April 2024				
Tuesday	30 April 2024	24-25	Finance & Governance Committee		
Tuesday	07 May 2024			06 May 2024	May Bank Holiday
Tuesday	14 May 2024	24-25	Annual Meeting of Electors		

Tuesday	21 May 2024	24-25	Environment & Planning Committee		
Tuesday	28 May 2024	24-25	Annual Meeting of Council	27 May 2024	Late May Bank Holiday

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Reply to: Natalie Shafiroff
E-mail: natalie.shafiroff@milton-keynes.gov.uk
Our Ref: 23/00984/PRIOR

Bletchley And Fenny Stratford Town Council,
Sycamore House
Drayton Road
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK2 3RR

11th May 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015**

Application no: 23/00984/PRIOR

Proposal: Prior approval for the demolition of two storey retail unit

At: 27 The Concourse Brunel Centre Locke Road Bletchley Milton Keynes

I have received the above application which can be viewed via the Council's Public Access system using the link: <https://publicaccess2.milton-keynes.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=RTNU6YKWHN900>.

Please note that this is a notification letter only. Statutory or non-statutory consultation to parish councils, town councils and local councillors is not usually required for the application type described above, due to the nature of the submission and the timescales involved.

Yours faithfully,

**Natalie Shafiroff
Planning Officer**



Planning Service
 Civic Offices
 1 Saxon Gate East
 Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ
 01908 252358
 dcadmin@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Demolition of Buildings
 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B

Publication of applications on planning authority websites

Please note that the information provided on this application form and in supporting documents may be published on the Authority's website. If you require any further clarification, please contact the Authority's planning department.

Site Location

Disclaimer: We can only make recommendations based on the answers given in the questions.

If you cannot provide a postcode, the description of site location must be completed. Please provide the most accurate site description you can, to help locate the site - for example "field to the North of the Post Office".

Number

Suffix

Property Name

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Town/city

Postcode

Description of site location must be completed if postcode is not known:

Easting (x)

Northing (y)

Description

Applicant Details

Name/Company

Title

First name

Surname

Company Name

Address

Address line 1

Address line 2

Address line 3

Town/City

County

Country

Postcode

Are you an agent acting on behalf of the applicant?

Yes

No

Contact Details

Primary number

Secondary number

Fax number

Email address

Agent Details

Name/Company

Title

First name

Surname

Company Name

Address

Address line 1

Address line 2

Address line 3

Town/City

County

Country

Postcode

Contact Details

Primary number

**** REDACTED ****

Secondary number

Fax number

Email address

**** REDACTED ****

Proposed Demolition Works

Please describe the building(s) to be demolished

Unit 27 of the Concourse is a two storey retail unit.

Please state the reasons why demolition needs to take place

In January 2021, the unit became unoccupied and since then the unit has been vandalised extensively. Following their purchase of the unit in March 2023, the council commissioned an R&D asbestos survey which identified extensive asbestos-containing materials within the building. These materials have been disrupted by vandalism and break-ins. The unit has become a H&S concern of the council with them continually making efforts to make the site safe and secure. However, the vandalism experienced is repeated making the demolition urgently required.

Please describe the proposed method of demolition

- Asbestos removal
- Soft strip activities
- Demolition of above ground structures
- Disconnection of services
- Removal of the ground slab and foundations down to 4 metres deep

A full method statement can be provided following the appointment of the demolition contractor.

How and where would spoil/rubble be disposed of?

The disposal will be managed by the demolition contractor. The council will require the following; remove rubbish, debris, surplus material and spoil regularly and keep the site and Works clean and tidy. They require the contractor to comply with the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and other legislation governing the controlled tipping of refuse, with specific attention towards the Environmental Protection Act 1991 in respect of noise and dust levels arising from construction.

All reasonable precautions shall be taken to prevent spoil, rubbish, surplus materials and the like arising from the Works being dumped on or over land other than a public or private tip controlled or recognised by the Local Authority. The Contractor shall make due allowance for full compliance therewith.

Please provide details of the proposed restoration of the site

After the demolition is complete, the close board hoarding surrounding the boundary will be retained and the ground will be left as a surface course hardstanding.

When do you expect the works to commence (date must be post application submission)?

04/09/2023

When do you expect the works to be completed (date must be post application submission)?

23/10/2023

Are there any public Rights of Way within the site or immediately adjoining the site?

- Yes
 No

Is redevelopment or rebuilding proposed at a later date?

- Yes
 No

Does the proposal involve the felling or pruning of any tree(s)?

- Yes
 No

Site Visit

Can the site be seen from a public road, public footpath, bridleway or other public land?

- Yes
 No

If the planning authority needs to make an appointment to carry out a site visit, whom should they contact?

- The agent
 The applicant
 Other person

Pre-application Advice

Has assistance or prior advice been sought from the local authority about this application?

- Yes
 No

Declaration

I / We hereby apply for Prior Approval: Demolition of building as described in this form and accompanying plans/drawings and additional information. I / We confirm that, to the best of my/our knowledge, any facts stated are true and accurate and any opinions given are the genuine options of the persons giving them. I / We also accept that: Once submitted, this information will be transmitted to the Local Planning Authority and, once validated by them, be made available as part of a public register and on the authority's website; our system will automatically generate and send you emails in regard to the submission of this application.

I / We agree to the outlined declaration

Signed

Sarbjeeet Atwal

Date

03/05/2023

Amendments as per Planning Department request.

Budget Summary April 2023Year Ended 31st March 2024

	<u>2023/24</u>		Variance
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	
REVENUE EXPENDITURE			
Community Grants	26271	46075	19804
Democratic Services	-419	19386	19805
Planters	0	1500	1500
Youth Work	0	16240	16240
Dog Bins	-42	15200	15242
Senior Youth Club	0	30450	30450
Spotlight	5224	20660	15436
Bandstand	101	1165	1064
Community Engagement	-2957	40600	43557
Christmas Lights Overhead Exp	-1015	32555	33570
Christmas Event	250	17890	17640
Albert St Toilets	-372	44030	44402
Allotments & Community Orchard	624	7261	6637
War Memorial	0	600	600
The Chapel	435	2250	1815
Fenny Stratford Community Centre	4114	35641	31527
Professional Fees	10	11421	11411
Community Infrastructure Fund	-6000	13500	19500
Community Projects/Services	-1912	35820	37732
Well-being	-1500	52200	53700
Landscaping	0	124911	124911
Sycamore House (Office)	4989	21355	16366
Sycamore Hall	421	13851	13430
Staff Costs	37306	492557	455251
74/76 Queensway/Library	-1838	5000	6838
Council Support Services	6350	107357	101007
Rolling Capital Programme Contribution	0	55000	55000
Town Council Vehicle	4070	6517	2447
Neighbourhood Plan	1199	15000	13801
Newton Leys Pavilion	13686	108147	94461
Market	1622	3249	1627
	<u>90617</u>	<u>1397388</u>	<u>1306771</u>
INCOME			
Community Grants	1500	0	-1500
Spotlight	426	7910	7484
Community Engagement	10257	11490	1233
Precept/Grant	589306	1178612	589306
Albert St Toilets	0	12950	12950
Allotments & Community Orchard	12	10060	10048
Landscaping	0	43186	43186
Fenny Stratford Community Centre	2746	38080	35334
Sycamore Hall	0	0	0
Council Support Services	-64	18400	18464
Neighbourhood Plan	5800	0	-5800
Newton Leys Pavilion	4583	75000	70417
Market	144	1700	1556
	<u>614710</u>	<u>1397388</u>	<u>782678</u>
NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE	<u><u>-524093</u></u>	<u><u>0</u></u>	<u><u>524093</u></u>

ROLLING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

	<u>2023/24</u>		
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	Variance
Balance Brought Forward	497284	497284	0
Revenue Contribution	0	55000	55000
Sycamore House	0	0	0
Sycamore Hall	0	125000	125000
Fenny Stratford Community Centre	0	0	0
Newton Leys Pavilion	0	0	0
Landscaping	0	50000	50000
Sycamore Hall IT	0	16000	16000
Sub Total	0	191000	
Balance Carried Forward	497284	361284	

12/05/2023

Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council

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Invoices Due for Payment by 30 June 2023

For Purchase Ledger

Pay by Cheque

Invoice Date	Invoice No.	Ref No.	Invoice Detail	Authorise Ref	Date Due	Amount Due	Discount To Claim	Net Amount due
1st Choice Windscreens & Towbars [1STCHOICE]								
28/03/2023	SIN-023729		1st Choice Windscreens & Towba		28/03/2023	598.80		598.80
						598.80	0.00	598.80
Bletchley Turf [BLETCHLEYT]								
09/05/2023	09/05/23		09/05/23/Bletchley Turf		09/05/2023	139.20		139.20
Telephone :01908372385						139.20	0.00	139.20
Cherryfield Ecology LTD [CHERRYFIEL]								
23/01/2023	ON ACC 286		P/Ledger Electronic Payment		23/01/2023	-2,819.40		0.00
						-2,819.40	0.00	0.00
Cute Maps [CUTEMAPS]								
04/05/2023	181		181/Cute Maps		04/05/2023	840.00		840.00
05/05/2023	183		183/Cute Maps		05/05/2023	380.00		380.00
Telephone : Contact :S Y Murray						1,220.00	0.00	1,220.00
D2D Distribution Ltd [D2D]								
09/05/2023	004366		004366/D2D Distribution Ltd		09/05/2023	954.00		954.00
						954.00	0.00	954.00
Drax								
05/12/2022	IN1106562363		IN1106562363/Drax		12/12/2022	295.28		0.00
05/12/2022	IN1106562362		IN1106562362/Drax		12/12/2022	319.72		0.00
05/12/2022	IN1106562361		IN1106562361/Drax		12/12/2022	249.46		0.00
05/12/2022	CN1001480431		CN1001480431/Drax		05/12/2022	-823.21		0.00
05/12/2022	CN1001480430		CN1001480430/Drax		05/12/2022	-969.94		0.00
05/12/2022	CN1106327255		CN1106327255/Drax		05/12/2022	-650.80		0.00
06/12/2022	IN1106576548		IN1106576548/Drax		13/12/2022	529.26		0.00
06/01/2023	IN1106648287		IN1106648287/Drax		06/01/2023	430.37		0.00
05/02/2023	IN1106725224		IN1106725224/Drax		05/02/2023	482.00		0.00
12/03/2023	IN1106853239		IN1106853239/Drax		19/03/2023	159.02		0.00
12/03/2023	CN1001536829		CN1001536829/Drax		12/03/2023	-482.00		0.00
12/03/2023	IN1106853238		IN1106853238/Drax		12/03/2023	221.12		0.00
12/03/2023	IN1106853237		IN1106853237/Drax		12/03/2023	207.78		0.00
12/03/2023	CN1001536828		CN1001536828/Drax		12/03/2023	-430.37		0.00
26/03/2023	IN1106869114		IN1106869114/Drax		02/04/2023	140.27		0.00
17/04/2023	IN1106937140		IN1106937140/Drax		20/04/2023	40.03		0.00

Invoices Due for Payment by 30 June 2023

For Purchase Ledger

Pay by Cheque

Invoice Date	Invoice No.	Ref No.	Invoice Detail	Authorise Ref	Date Due	Amount Due	Discount To Claim	Net Amount due	
17/04/2023	IN1106937139		IN1106937139/Drax		24/04/2023	133.62		0.00	
17/04/2023	CN1001550598		CN1001550598/Drax		17/04/2023	-140.27		0.00	
Total of Invoices Due (DRAX)						-288.66	0.00	0.00	
Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation [ESPO]									
25/04/2023	6917665		6917665/Eastern Shires Purchas		25/05/2023	22.08		22.08	
25/04/2023	6917666		6917666/Eastern Shires Purchas		25/05/2023	158.52		158.52	
27/04/2023	6921249		6921249/Eastern Shires Purchas		27/05/2023	377.46		377.46	
Telephone :0116 2657095 orders						Total of Invoices Due (ESPO)	558.06	0.00	558.06
Geoffrey Leaver Solicitors LLP [GLEAVERSOL]									
27/01/2023	211754		211754/Geoffrey Leaver Solicit		27/01/2023	2,748.00		0.00	
24/04/2023	ON ACC 309		P/Ledger Electronic Payment		24/04/2023	-4,500.00		0.00	
28/04/2023	ON ACC 311		P/Ledger Electronic Payment		28/04/2023	-2,342.13		0.00	
Telephone :01908 692769						Total of Invoices Due (GLEAVERSOL)	-4,094.13	0.00	0.00
Initial Washroom Hygiene [INITIAL]									
23/05/2022	34303651		34303651/Initial Washroom Hygi		23/05/2022	-70.98		0.00	
Telephone :0203 668 5711						Total of Invoices Due (INITIAL)	-70.98	0.00	0.00
InspireAll Leisure and Family Support Se [INSPIREALL]									
14/04/2023	ON ACC 307		P/Ledger Electronic Payment		14/04/2023	-3.00		0.00	
						Total of Invoices Due (INSPIREALL)	-3.00	0.00	0.00
Mick Klein Expenses [KLEIN]									
09/05/2023	09/05/23		09/05/23/Mick Klein Expenses		09/05/2023	50.00		50.00	
						Total of Invoices Due (KLEIN)	50.00	0.00	50.00
LGRC Associates [LGRC]									
14/11/2022	ON ACC 266		P/Ledger Electronic Payment		14/11/2022	8.00		8.00	
Telephone :01404 45973						Total of Invoices Due (LGRC)	8.00	0.00	8.00
Locals of the Lakes [LOCOFLAKES]									
18/04/2023	FC23/24-16		FC23/24-16/Locals of the Lakes		18/04/2023	21.00		21.00	
Telephone :07946 815595						Total of Invoices Due (LOCOFLAKES)	21.00	0.00	21.00
MK Council [MKCOUNCIL]									
01/04/2023	69003054722		69003054722 23/24/MK Council		01/05/2023	4,024.00		4,024.00	
01/04/2023	69002910350		69002910350 23/24/MK Council		01/05/2023	1,384.00		1,384.00	

Invoices Due for Payment by 30 June 2023

For Purchase Ledger

Pay by Cheque

Invoice Date	Invoice No.	Ref No.	Invoice Detail	Authorise Ref	Date Due	Amount Due	Discount To Claim	Net Amount due	
01/04/2023	69003279287		69003279287 23/24/MK Council		01/05/2023	3,080.00		3,080.00	
01/04/2023	69003200714		69003200714 23/24/MK Council		01/05/2023	6,800.00		6,800.00	
01/04/2023	69003279296		69003279296 23/24/MK Council		01/05/2023	2,430.00		2,430.00	
01/04/2023	69003248987		69003248987 23/24/MK Council		01/05/2023	1,765.00		1,765.00	
Telephone :01908 252502						Total of Invoices Due (MKCOUNCIL)	19,483.00	0.00	19,483.00
Marcus Young [MYOUNG]									
01/05/2023	4103		4103/Marcus Young		31/05/2023	1,244.16		1,244.16	
						Total of Invoices Due (MYOUNG)	1,244.16	0.00	1,244.16
OVO Energy [OVO]									
10/05/2023	10/05/2023		10/05/2023/OVO Energy		10/05/2023	93.52		93.52	
						Total of Invoices Due (OVO)	93.52	0.00	93.52
Rialtas Business Solutions [RBS]									
28/04/2023	SM28041		SM28041/Rialtas Business Solut		28/05/2023	229.45		229.45	
Telephone :01793 731296						Total of Invoices Due (RBS)	229.45	0.00	229.45
SES Business Water [SES]									
26/04/2023	3		3/SES Business Water		26/04/2023	53.45		53.45	
						Total of Invoices Due (SES)	53.45	0.00	53.45
Shred-It									
04/05/2023	9505849377		9505849377/Shred-It		03/06/2023	114.29		114.29	
Telephone :0800 028 1164						Total of Invoices Due (SHRED-IT)	114.29	0.00	114.29
Society of Local Council Clerks [SLCC]									
11/05/2023	BK210226-1		BK210226-1/Society of Local Co		11/06/2023	72.00		72.00	
Telephone :01823 253646						Total of Invoices Due (SLCC)	72.00	0.00	72.00
Total Gas & Power Ltd [TOTALGAS]									
18/02/2023	291632907/23CR		291632907/23CR/Total Gas & Pow		18/03/2023	-0.01		0.00	
Telephone :01737 275800						Total of Invoices Due (TOTALGAS)	-0.01	0.00	0.00
						Total of Invoices Due (Purchase Ledger)	17,562.75	0.00	24,838.93
						TOTAL OF INVOICES DUE (ALL LEDGERS)	17,562.75	0.00	24,838.93

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Invoices Due for Payment by 30 June 2023

For Purchase Ledger

Pay by Direct Debit

Invoice Date	Invoice No.	Ref No.	Invoice Detail	Authorise Ref	Date Due	Amount Due	Discount To Claim	Net Amount due	
Wave - Anglian Water Business [ANGLIANWAT]									
02/09/2022	10969417		10969417/Wave - Anglian Water		26/09/2022	13.77		0.00	
02/10/2022	11095271		11095271/Wave - Anglian Water		24/10/2022	80.23		0.00	
17/10/2022	11158413		11158413/Wave - Anglian Water		16/11/2022	86.64		0.00	
01/11/2022	11212495		11212495/Wave - Anglian Water		24/11/2022	83.52		0.00	
02/12/2022	11334115		11334115/Wave - Anglian Water		28/12/2022	80.23		0.00	
02/01/2023	11455889		11455889/Wave - Anglian Water		24/01/2023	83.52		0.00	
02/02/2023	11573031		11573031/Wave - Anglian Water		24/02/2023	68.63		0.00	
22/02/2023	11667903		11667903/Wave - Anglian Water		24/03/2023	-575.13		0.00	
22/02/2023	11667902		11667902/Wave - Anglian Water		24/03/2023	-4.08		0.00	
02/03/2023	11699260		11699260/Wave - Anglian Water		24/03/2023	73.73		0.00	
02/04/2023	11845667		11845667/Wave - Anglian Water		24/04/2023	80.53		0.00	
15/04/2023	11895524		11895524/Wave - Anglian Water		15/05/2023	175.00		0.00	
17/04/2023	11902057		11902057/Wave - Anglian Water		15/05/2023	416.91		374.50	
18/04/2023	ON ACC 308		Purchase Ledger DDR Payment		18/04/2023	-149.00		0.00	
25/04/2023	ON ACC 310		Purchase Ledger DDR Payment		25/04/2023	-140.00		0.00	
02/05/2023	11966177		11966177/Wave - Anglian Water		24/05/2023	88.14		88.14	
Telephone :0345 070 4158						Total of Invoices Due (ANGLIANWAT)	462.64	0.00	462.64
Fuelcard Services Ltd [BPFUEL]									
31/03/2023	9004982590		9004982590/Fuelcard Services L		09/04/2023	49.80		0.00	
11/04/2023	ON ACC 306		Purchase Ledger DDR Payment		11/04/2023	-49.80		0.00	
07/05/2023	9005176586		9005176586/Fuelcard Services L		14/05/2023	71.44		71.44	
Telephone :01282 838800						Total of Invoices Due (BPFUEL)	71.44	0.00	71.44
British Gas Business [BRITISHGAS]									
01/05/2023	4634566		4634566/British Gas Business		15/05/2023	108.71		108.71	
03/05/2023	883207249		883207249/British Gas Business		18/05/2023	1,987.96		1,987.96	
04/05/2023	862413382		862413382/British Gas Business		19/05/2023	1,212.85		1,212.85	
04/05/2023	860810224		860810224/British Gas Business		24/05/2023	784.36		784.36	
Telephone :0845 072 3875						Total of Invoices Due (BRITISHGAS)	4,093.88	0.00	4,093.88
BT Telephone Payment Services Ltd [BT]									
20/04/2023	Q020 FX		Q020 FX/BT Telephone Payment S		04/05/2023	810.00		0.00	
01/05/2023	M087 2J		M087 2J/BT Telephone Payment S		15/05/2023	255.17		255.17	
02/05/2023	MO24 A2		MO24 A2/BT Telephone Payment S		16/05/2023	44.38		44.38	
04/05/2023	ON ACC 312		Purchase Ledger DDR Payment		04/05/2023	-810.00		0.00	
						Total of Invoices Due (BT)	299.55	0.00	299.55

Invoices Due for Payment by 30 June 2023

For Purchase Ledger

Pay by Direct Debit

Invoice Date	Invoice No.	Ref No.	Invoice Detail	Authorise Ref	Date Due	Amount Due	Discount To Claim	Net Amount due
09/05/2023	KI-97525FB6-0022		KI-97525FB6-0022/E-on		24/05/2023	27.25		27.25
Telephone :0845 055 0065								
						27.25	0.00	27.25
						Total of Invoices Due (E-ON)		
						27.25	0.00	27.25
Payroll Options [PAYROLLOPT]								
21/04/2023	144277		144277/Payroll Options		31/05/2023	121.15		121.15
30/04/2023	144854		144854/Payroll Options		31/05/2023	115.15		115.15
Telephone :01908 630 777								
						236.30	0.00	236.30
						Total of Invoices Due (PAYROLLOPT)		
						236.30	0.00	236.30
PHS Group plc [PHS]								
19/04/2023	69759462		69759462/PHS Group plc		19/05/2023	41.77		41.77
Telephone :029 2085 1000								
						41.77	0.00	41.77
						Total of Invoices Due (PHS)		
						41.77	0.00	41.77
Trade UK [SCREWFIX]								
03/04/2023	1362349380		1362349380/Trade UK		31/05/2023	35.74		35.74
14/04/2023	1365531414		1365531414/Trade UK		31/05/2023	21.57		21.57
14/04/2023	1365531422		1365531422/Trade UK		31/05/2023	3.79		3.79
18/04/2023	1366566505		1366566505/Trade UK		31/05/2023	7.75		7.75
28/04/2023	1370261365		1370261365/Trade UK		31/05/2023	35.99		35.99
03/05/2023	1371651647		1371651647/Trade UK		30/06/2023	11.17		11.17
Telephone :01908 630213								
						116.01	0.00	116.01
						Total of Invoices Due (SCREWFIX)		
						116.01	0.00	116.01
Tatry Group Ltd [TATRY]								
01/05/2023	2686		2686/Tatry Group Ltd		31/05/2023	2,181.63		2,181.63
						2,181.63	0.00	2,181.63
						Total of Invoices Due (TATRY)		
						2,181.63	0.00	2,181.63
Worldpay Ltd [WORLDPAY]								
30/04/2023	254626994		254626994/Worldpay Ltd		19/05/2023	12.00		12.00
30/04/2023	254694317		254694317/Worldpay Ltd		19/05/2023	15.00		15.00
30/04/2023	254640013		254640013/Worldpay Ltd		19/05/2023	41.40		41.40
30/04/2023	254695787		254695787/Worldpay Ltd		19/05/2023	189.32		189.32
01/05/2023	WM12091123		WM12091123/Worldpay Ltd		20/05/2023	23.94		23.94
						281.66	0.00	281.66
						Total of Invoices Due (WORLDPAY)		
						281.66	0.00	281.66
						Total of Invoices Due (Purchase Ledger)		
						7,812.13	0.00	7,812.13
						TOTAL OF INVOICES DUE (ALL LEDGERS)		
						7,812.13	0.00	7,812.13

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford held on Thursday 11 May 2023 at 7.30 pm at Newton Leys Pavilion

ATM2023-1

Welcome

The Chair of the Town Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that the following people had sent their apologies for absence:

Milton Keynes City Councillors: Cllr Waqas Ahmed, Cllr Ed Hume, Cllr Nigel Long.

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council: Cllr Keith Ely, Cllr Ed Hume, Cllr Ayesha Khanom

ATM2023-2

Minutes

The minutes of The Annual Meeting of Electors in 2022 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings. A member of the public asked why the Town Councillors' attendance figures were not in the last newsletter and was advised that the attendance tables were in the annual report.

ATM2023-3

Annual Report and Accounts

The Chair introduced the Annual Report and draft Accounts of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council and highlighted aspects of the work that the Council had undertaken during 2022-23 and noted hard copies of the report were available on the Town Council website, social media and from the main office.

ATM2023-4

Reports from Ward Members of Milton Keynes Council

Cllr Emily Darlington reported on strategic priorities and highlights over the past year including a summary of casework undertaken, surgeries on the Lakes estate, progress with MKCC's White Ribbon accreditation action plan, future of the Blue Lagoon, Queensway parking issues and measures that have been put in place and the Lakes Estate regeneration progress with new play parks and new houses being built.

Cllr Mohammed Imran added an update and spoke about the parking issues in Bletchley and the work being undertaken to overcome these issues.

ATM2023-5

Presentation from John Cove, Chair of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal Board

John Cove gave a presentation on aspects of the Town Deal which is appended to these minutes. John shared how the £22.7m awarded to invest in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford was being spent. The nine projects that form the core of the Town Deal were explained in detail and attendees were able to ask questions on the delivery of the programme.

ATM023-6

Reports from Community Grants Recipients

A report was given by a representative from Friends of Bletchley Station who shared highlights of how a grant provided by the Town Council was used to benefit Bletchley train station and the local community.

Rev Steve Hallett representing Water Eaton Community Larder gave a report on a partnership between the larder and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council that has just entered into year 2 of the 3-year agreement and shared the positive work carried out that the funding has enabled.

ATM2023-7

Questions or proposals from Electors

The Chair shared questions and answers that were sent before the meeting. These are appended to these minutes and copies were made available at the meeting.

A member of the public spoke to seek confirmation that the landscaping responsibilities taken on by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council would include Housing Revenue Account Land. The Chair confirmed this to be the case.

Extensive discussion took place relating to illegal parking and pedestrian safety in the town centre and a member of the public asked what measures could be put in place to protect residents and visitors to Central Bletchley in Queensway. Paul Harrison, Network and Enforcement Manager from Milton Keynes City Council was in attendance and shared information on the enforcement measures in place to prevent the illegal parking. Concrete planters will soon be in place to physically stop vehicles from accessing the footway.

The issue of Town Councillor attendance at meetings was again raised and an elector expressed continued disappointment that some councillors did not attend meetings regularly and did not even submit apologies for absence. The Chair of the Town Council shared these concerns and noted that electors could exercise their displeasure at the ballot box. Meanwhile he advised that vacancies did arise on the Town Council from time to time and he encouraged residents to put themselves forward to co-option or election.

ATM2023-8

Date of next Annual Meeting

The Chair noted that the provisional date for the next meeting was 14 May 2024, he thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

BLETCHLEY AND FENNY STRATFORD TOWN DEAL

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May 2023



Background



Milton Keynes has been successful in securing an award of £22.7m, as part of the Government's Town Fund, to invest in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford.

Milton Keynes was one of the 101 places eligible to bid for Town Deal funding. MK Council focused its bid on Bletchley and Fenny Stratford so it can make best use of current and future growth prospects, and the opportunities that will flow from East-West Rail.

The Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal Board was established in July 2020 to lead the bid and work with the community to ensure local people are involved in shaping the future of their area.

A total of 9 projects form the core of the Town Deal and each of these projects have had supporting business case submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), in order that grant funding can be drawn down and the projects move in to the delivery stages.



Board Composition

The Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal Board was established in July 2020.

It is chaired by John Cove, Chair of MK Dons Sport and Education Trust, and its members are drawn from a number of partners and organisations across Milton Keynes who have an interest in the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford area.

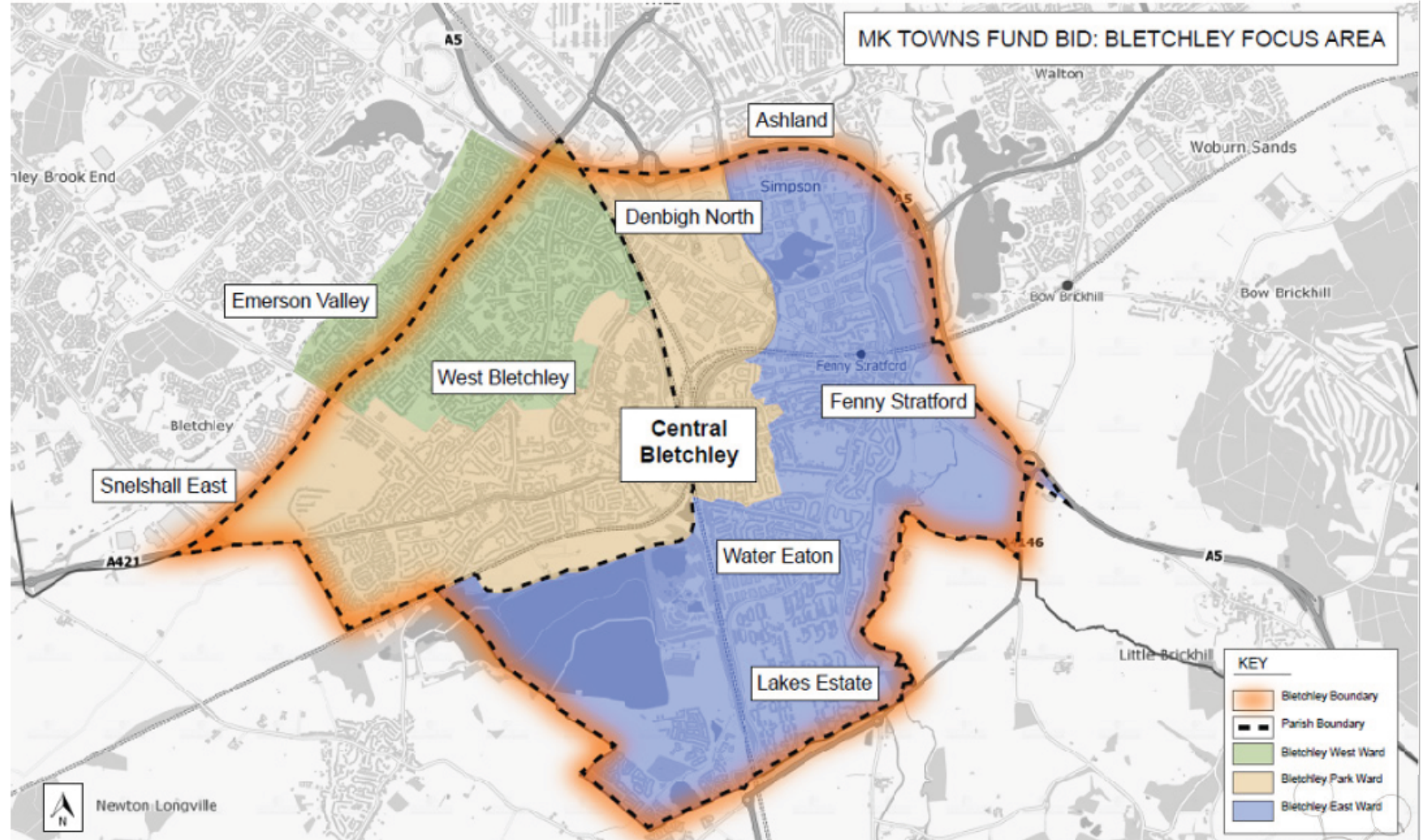
The Board is made up of the following core members:

- John Cove - Chair of the Board. Chairman of Milton Keynes Dons FC Sport and Education Trust.
- Councillor Pete Marland - Leader of Milton Keynes Council.
- Delia Shephard - Clerk to Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council.
- Helen Hupton - Clerk to West Bletchley Council.
- Angie Ravn-Aagaard - Treasurer of the Consortium of Bletchley Residents Associations (COBRA).
- Ian Revell - CEO of MK Community Foundation.
- Oliver Mytton - Deputy Director of Public Health at Milton Keynes Council.
- Hilary Chipping - CEO at the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Iain Stewart MP - Member of Parliament for Milton Keynes South.

****Additional attendees are required on an ad-hoc basis depending on the agenda****

Intervention Area

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford are located in Milton Keynes to the South West of the city. The settlements have roots back to the 12th century, but their significance increased with the arrival of the west coast mainline in the mid-19th century. The area thrived due to its location in WWII and was the chosen home of the 'codebreakers' at Bletchley Park due to connectivity between the knowledge hubs of Oxford, Cambridge and London.





The Projects

Innovation Hub/Centre
Revolving Development Fund (RDF)
Transport Hub
Public Realm Improvement (PRI)
Redway Improvements
Technology Park Bletchley
Transformation at Bletchley Park
Fibre Connectivity
Active Marketing of Vacant Sites (AMoVS)



Innovation Hub



Project Objective:	Redevelop the former Fire Station and Police Station sites into a new Innovation Hub
Business Case Progress:	Approved January 2023 first release of funds received April 2023
Project Value:	£3,662,345
Delivery Body:	Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP)
Project Details :	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding ask from the Towns Fund will support construction and fit out of an Innovation Hub within the wider mixed-use development scheme at the station gateway. The proposed site is currently occupied by two derelict and prominent brownfield sites in Bletchley – the former fire and police stations. These sites are located immediately west of Bletchley Station on the main approach to Bletchley Town Centre. • The intention is to operate the Innovation Hub under a model that is commercially sustainable, led by a third party and does not require any revenue funding from MKCC. • The current proposal, once delivered, is expected to be of interest to a suitable operator due to the location, fit out funding and rent expectations. 	



Revolving Development Fund (RDF)



Project Objective:	Remediation and development of up to 3.185 ha of dilapidated and underutilized land
Business Case Progress:	Approved March 2022, first release of funds received June 2022
Project Value:	£8,910,000
Delivery Body:	Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP)
Project Details:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Revolving Development Fund will facilitate the acquisition and re-use of run-down and dilapidated sites for new and improved uses (such as housing and commercial uses). • Once the initial tranche of key sites in central Bletchley have been re-purposed, it is anticipated the fund will facilitate further development over a further two waves during a ten-year fund operating period. • The fund will be focused on three waves of interventions in the area outlined in the recent Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document published by Milton Keynes Council. This will involve multiple sites to facilitate land assembly across the three fund revolutions. This affords the RDF operational flexibility to identify sites that will make a significant difference to the functioning and experience of the town centre. 	



Transport Hub



Project Objective:	To enable the delivery of a first stage of works to improve the links between Bletchley Railway Station and Bletchley Town Centre
Business Case Progress:	Approved January 2023 first release of funds received April 2023
Project Value:	£3,910,000
Delivery Body:	Milton Keynes City Council
Project Details:	
<p>The funding will enable delivery of a first stage of works to improve the links between Bletchley Railway Station and Bletchley Town Centre.</p> <p>The key proposed investments are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Replacing Brunel Roundabout with a left in-left out priority junction. 2) Reducing Saxon Street to a single lane in each direction. 3) Improving access to the bus station and CEMEX site. 4) Introducing interim traffic signals to avoid the need for buses to U-turn. 5) Replacing the Princes Way Roundabout with a signalised junction. 6) Improving the pedestrian crossing and Redway infrastructure 7) Extending the Redway to the Brunel Centre. 	



Public Realm Improvements (PRI)



Project Objective:	Delivery of new public spaces, new/upgraded cycling and walking paths, new/upgraded community hubs, spaces and assets, reduction in crime, pedestrianisation, perceptions of the place by residents/business/visitors, land values
Business Case Progress:	Business Case approved March 2022. First funds received April 2023
Project Value:	£2,101,655
Delivery Body:	Milton Keynes City Council

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Project Details:

- The Town's Fund investment will enable the establishment of a Public Realm Improvement Fund to deliver public realm interventions in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford to improve the appearance, attractiveness, safety and usability of these areas. The area of operation will be the Town Deal Boundary.
- Investment will be coordinated with other Town's Fund projects, particularly the Revolving Development Fund, to maximise the impact of spend. The project will seek to bring about wider structural change to the layout and movement patterns within Bletchley town centre, improving the visual and physical connection between Queensway and the railway station and town to the west of the railway, making the town centre more visible and accessible to visitors arriving by train and tourists visiting Bletchley Park.
- This intervention, together with the improvements to the quality of the town centre public realm will generate increased footfall and dwell time in the town centre and support increased diversity of the retail and leisure offer.



Redway Improvements

Project Objective:	To design and deliver a Redway facility and highway improvement scheme. There will be 4 sections to the project
Business Case Progress:	Business Case approved March 2022, first release of funds received June 2022
Project Value:	£760,000
Delivery Body:	Milton Keynes City Council
Project Details:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Towns Deal will provide funding to deliver Section 4 of the Blue Lagoon Scheme (Scheme 251) Redways route.• The scheme is part of the Highways Committed Schemes to support current and future development. It will provide the link from the existing Redways in Bletchley from the Lakes Estate, Newton Leys and Blue Lagoon Nature Reserve to Bletchley Town centre via the highways infrastructure at Water Eaton Road.• The section of the route is critical in unlocking the wider benefits and usability of the proposed sections of the route, Sections 1, 2 and 3, which would otherwise be disconnected from the wider road infrastructure.	



Technology Park Bletchley



Project Objective:	To deliver learning equipment to support digital skills and capabilities in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford for over 500 students per annum
Business Case Progress:	Business Case approved March 2022, first release of funds received June 2022
Project Value:	£306,000
Delivery Body:	Milton Keynes College
Project Details:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Towns Fund investment will support the delivery of hardware and equipment to support digital skills development.• The resource will be delivered in the enterprise lab of the South-Central Institute of Technology and will have the capability to be fully self-contained, flexible and mobile.• The unit will enable the resource to be transported to other education settings to extend its use and impact across the area.• The resource could also be used by other groups in the community such as the Rivers Centre and other local Community Centres that support adults as well as young people.



Transformation at Bletchley Park



Project Objective:	This project will involve the redevelopment of a significant wartime building (Block E) at Bletchley Park to facilitate the creation of a new dedicated learning facility, with eight new fully accessible classrooms and a high specification lecture theatre.
Business Case Progress:	Business Case approved March 2022, first release of funds received June 2022
Project Value:	£2,240,000
Delivery Body:	Bletchley Park Trust
Project Details:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is a key component of a wider scheme to renovate historic wartime Blocks A & E including major new gallery spaces and a collection centre. The renovation of these heritage assets is a unique opportunity to shed light on a crucial part of British WW2 history and open more of the site to the public. The project will provide learning opportunities and experiences to attract onsite and outreach visits, expanding the reach of the Bletchley Park stories and achievements. Learning activities at Bletchley Park are currently delivered from two permanent and two temporary classrooms. Planning consent requires these two temporary classroom spaces to be removed in Spring 2023. The proposed investment will increase capacity on site and enable Bletchley Park to work with neighbourhood schools to build engagement and increase visits from Bletchley and Fenny Stratford schools. 	



Fibre Connectivity

Project Objective:	To provide fibre connectivity to areas within the Town Deal area not yet connected to a fibre network
Business Case Progress:	Business Case approved January 2022, first release of funds received April 2022
Project Value:	£100,000
Delivery Body:	Milton Keynes City Council

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Project Details:

- The project will support the installation of fibre optic infrastructure to support full fibre connectivity
- The project will connect 12 premises in Park Gardens to the network to enable purchase of a service as required by each household/business.
- Most of the benefits will be social rather than economic but could also help to Improve perceptions of the place by businesses, though gaining a forecast improvement is not feasible for this relatively small deployment area
- Increased Number of people who are able work remotely at least some of the time – 40 residents in Park Gardens are likely to fall into this category

The contractor – City Fibre have indicated there may be issues relating to subsidy control, as a result the project is currently on hold awaiting the outcome of the Government project Gigabit scheme which will hopefully target the highlighted residents



Active Marketing of Vacant Sites (AMoVS)

Project Objective:	To promote the opportunities within the Bletchley Town deal area, attracting more investment, jobs and businesses.
Business Case Progress:	Business Case approved March 2022, first release of funds received June 2022
Project Value:	£710,000
Delivery Body:	Milton Keynes City Council
Project Details:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategic driver for this project is to attract more businesses to locate in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford by actively promoting the regeneration programme and showcasing the commercial opportunities arising from the Town Deal. This will emphasise the commercial advantages of the location such as good connectivity and price competitiveness compared to central Milton Keynes. This project recognises that whilst Milton Keynes has enjoyed strong economic growth in recent years, a more focused approach is required in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. This project will play a role in supporting the wider programme of investment through the Towns Deal to showcase the investments being made in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford around fostering an improved public realm, enhanced connectivity and accessibility, improvements to skills & training and the supportive environment for start-up companies in the digital and media domains. 	



Programme Delivery Stage



As we move in to the delivery stage of the programme, the Town Deal Board will continue to meet throughout 2023 and beyond.

Minutes and papers are available on the website on the Groundbreaking Bletchley and Fenny Stratford website as well as Milton Keynes CMIS.

DLHHC will continue to actively monitor the progress of the programme and we will be bi-annually providing thorough monitoring and evaluation reports to them on all projects.

As the projects progress we will be improving communications and will be providing regular updates on progress and milestones through newsletters and website updates.



Any Questions?

Questions

- 1 Why are all the Town Council's meetings held at Newton Leys Pavilion? Why can some of them not be held in the Community Centre in George Street?**

Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:

The decision about when and where to hold meetings is made by councillors. Since the meeting room at Bletchley Library became unavailable for public use the town council has held meetings at Newton Leys Pavilion, Fenny Stratford Community Centre, Sycamore House or Spotlight. Most regular meetings have been held at Newton Leys Pavilion because there is a suitable room of sufficient size which can accommodate full council plus a reasonable number of residents and there is good parking and disabled access. Our meeting room at Sycamore House is only suitable for small committee meetings. Spotlight is also not suitable for the configuration required for large committees or full council. Parking near Fenny Stratford Community Centre can be difficult for those who cannot access the building on foot so Newton Leys Pavilion was preferred.

Councillors considered alternating meetings between Newton Leys and Fenny Stratford. However, to maximise revenue and promote local use of the community centres it is more beneficial to use just one for regular council meetings rather than alternating venues. This allows block bookings on Tuesday evenings to remain available for the community at Fenny Stratford Community Centre.

The town council's future plan is to hold its meetings at Sycamore Hall once the building has been refurbished. Meanwhile arrangements have been made to record and webcast council meetings via YouTube which take place at Newton Leys Pavilion starting from the annual meeting of the council in May 2023. This will allow residents to observe or participate remotely if they are unable to be physically present.

-
- 2 Exactly which areas will the Town Council be responsible for when it takes over landscaping from Milton Keynes City Council? Will the Town Council receive any money from the City Council, or will the full cost have to be met by residents through the parish precept?**

Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:

The Town Council will be responsible for landscaping maintenance of all areas owned by Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) and currently maintained by their landscaping contractor with the exclusion of

- the Blue Lagoon
- Manor Road cemetery
- Lakes estate regeneration sites
- grid road verges.

Privately owned land including public open space which has not been adopted by the city council or the town council will not be included..

The town council will receive an annual financial grant from MKCC equivalent to the payment that would be made to the city council's contractor if they were to undertake the same work. The town council will then be responsible for any costs above the amount of the grant.

-
- 3 When the Neighbourhood Plan currently under preparation is finalised, what standing will the plan have when Milton Keynes City Council considers planning issues relating to the parish? Will the City Council have to abide with what is set out in the plan, or will the document merely be one which it will need to 'take account of' (that is, ignore when it clashes with something the council wants to do or see done)?**

Response provided by Milton Keynes City Council:

Following a successful 'yes' vote at referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan would become part of the Development Plan for Milton Keynes, alongside other documents including Plan:MK, the Site Allocations Plan, the Minerals Local Plan and the Waste Plan Development Plan Document. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict - unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently (e.g. in a review of Plan:MK).

- 4 What plans are in place for resident consultation about the latest Neighbourhood Plan with support from resident associations? Could there be an opportunity to use a unit in the Brunel centre for wider engagement activity to raise awareness?**

Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has overseen an extensive programme of community engagement to raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan at different stages of development. Details of this are provided on the Neighbourhood Plan website

<https://www.bfsnp.org.uk/>

along with the current project plan for the neighbourhood plan itself. At the time of this meeting the steering group is focussing on collection of evidence and policy development. There will be further community engagement at later stages of the plan the next being most likely to take place in September 2023. The detailed form and timetable for this engagement will be informed by the outcomes of the current stage as will the location of events. A unit in the Brunel Centre could be used if practicable.

- 5 I believe that some years ago, the Town Council agreed to contribute towards the cost of PCSOs operating in the area. Does the council still do so? If it does, how much does it make available and on what basis is the funding made available, and does the council believe it receives value for money?**

Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:

No, the Town Council does not contribute towards to the cost of PCSOs operating locally and has not done so during the last 7 years at least.

- 6 There often feels like an invisible divide between residents in East and West Bletchley due to the division of the town into 2 Council areas. How are the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council working collaboratively with West Bletchley Council to ensure all local residents are kept well informed of development projects across the town in an accessible and inclusive way?**

Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council is aware of perceptions of a “divide” between residents of West Bletchley and our area which is not always helpful. The railway line also encourages a sense of physical separation.

We recognise there are some significant differences between the communities of West Bletchley and those of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. Our primary role is to act in the best interests of our own residents. This means our position may not always correspond with West Bletchley Council’s position.

Nevertheless Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council works collaboratively with West Bletchley Council in several ways and we enjoy a positive and friendly relationship. Both councillors and officers of the two councils meet and liaise formally and informally on a regular basis. This may be on specific projects or on general matters of principle. Recently issues of mutual interest have included responses to MKDP’s acquisition of local sites in the town, work on the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford neighbourhood plan, approach to the proposed Milton Keynes Southern bypass and others. However each council will always undertake its decision making independently and separately.

The councils also have independent approaches to their publicity, communications and community consultation. Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council notifies its residents of development projects across the town (including significant sites outside our boundary) via our website, newsletters, social media posts, council agendas and public meetings which may also involve invitations to developers or planning authority officers.

7 What proactive measures is the Council taking to entice new and diverse businesses into Queensway high street and to promote wider Bletchley & Fenny Stratford as a tourist destination, capitalising on visitors to Bletchley Park?

Response provided by Milton Keynes City Council:

Milton Keynes City Council are currently working on promoting Bletchley and Fenny Stratford as a place to do business, through one of nine projects within the Town Deal regeneration. The ‘Marketing Bletchley’ project (Active Marketing of Vacant Sites) aims to attract more businesses to locate in the area by actively promoting the regeneration programme and showcasing the commercial opportunities arising from the Town Deal. So far, MKCC have undertaken over 100 business engagements and moving forwards, we are planning on creating and developing a narrative for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford, to support in marketing the area. MKCC are working closely with Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council in delivering this project.

For further information regarding the Town Deal visit:

<https://groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk/>

Should you wish to discuss or share an idea please contact:

info@groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk

To subscribe to the Town Deal newsletter

email: info@groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk

Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:

The town council has a history of seeking to attract visitors to the town centre. Recent proactive measures include provision of regular specialist markets and community events in the town centre such as the Big Street Eat, Christmas lights event and others which encourage footfall and economic activity. We hope this will lead to more interest in our town centre.

We are currently working on a digital trail project in the town centre and a range of environmental and infrastructure projects which would make the town centre more attractive and improve public realm facilities.

The town council has consistently supported policy initiatives and planning documents which would lead to the “opening up” of Bletchley town centre and improved visibility of the town centre from the railway and bus stations. The town council also seeks an eastern entrance for the railway station which could encourage rail visitors to Bletchley Park use the town centre.

The town council has worked with Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal and with officers and members of Milton Keynes City Council to influence the short- and long-term development of the town centre with the intention of making it more appealing to new businesses. Recently we offered funding to help develop a new business association and we are considering local businesses as part of our developing neighbourhood plan.

However the town council is not a landowner in the town centre and has no statutory powers which would enable it to directly “entice new and diverse businesses” into the high street.

Following multiple safety incidents on Queensway due to unsafe driving and parking, what action is the Council taking in the short-term to escalate and remediate this issue to ensure resident safety?

Response provided by Milton Keynes City Council:

Please be assured that Milton Keynes City Council is fully aware of the concerns you have raised regarding vehicles driving and parking on the footways in Queensway.

I have checked the Council's accident data records, which show that in the past 5 years, there has been no reported accidents (collisions between vehicles and pedestrians) on the footways in Queensway. This data has been verified by the Council's Senior Road Safety Engineer.

I can confirm that under Section 72 of the Highways Act 1835 (as amended), it is an offence to drive onto a pavement or footway (to park or otherwise), which at present can only be enforced by the Police. However, the Council is able to issue a penalty charge notice to any vehicle that is parked on the footway where waiting or loading is prohibited (through a traffic regulation Order and associated signs and/or road markings). Unfortunately, at present there are sections of Queensway where the footways are unrestricted and therefore, the Council does not have any powers to currently enforce when vehicles are parked there.

The Council has increased its level of parking enforcement on Queensway, which is patrolled more frequently than any other road in Bletchley and between October 2022 and February 2023 the Council issued 96 penalty charge notices in Queensway, which was more than any other road outside of Central Milton Keynes.

The biggest challenge that we face with parking enforcement in Central Bletchley, is that many of the offending motorists (parked on the footway) are keeping a look out and drive away when they see a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) approaching. This prevents the Council from issuing a PCN. When issuing a penalty charge notice, the CEO is required to gather sufficient evidence to prove that the vehicle was in contravention at the time the PCN was issued, this includes photographs of the vehicle parked on the footway.

We are also working with the Town Council to install large (heavy) concrete planters along those parts of the footway (in Queensway), in order to physically prevent vehicles from being able to access the footway in the first instance. The planters are due to be installed this year.

We will continue to monitor the situation in Central Bletchley and issue penalty charge notices to any vehicle that we come across contravening the parking restrictions.

Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:

The town council, working in partnership with Milton Keynes City Council, will be co-funding three projects during 2023-24 which may contribute to remediation of these problems. The projects include

- provision of additional signage directing motorists to the Bletchley Leisure Centre multi storey car park

- provision of concrete flower planters in part of Queensway to deter pavement parking
- acquisition and deployment of speed indication devices to mitigate speeding in parts of our area.

The town council is not the highways authority; it has no parking enforcement powers and there is a limit to its influence in achieving a safe town centre. We have consistently advocated with Milton Keynes City Council at the most senior levels for a multi-pronged approach to our parking problems. We have also engaged with Thames Valley police on this matter. It is hoped that future developments in the town centre especially the outcome of longer-term Town Deal investment plan projects will facilitate a more integrated design-led approach to parking and safety.

Proposal

Being made aware that West Bletchley Parish Council has a “Parking Education Officer”, I am proposing that Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council considers establishing a similar post.

Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

The town council is always willing to consider proposals and ideas put forward by residents of the area. On the assumption that this proposal will be supported by those attending the annual meeting of electors the clerk to the council will ensure this suggestion is considered by the town council at the earliest practicable opportunity.

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