



John Wright  
Town Clerk

## Lyme Regis Town Council

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### Human Resources Committee

**Core Membership:** Cllr G. Stammers (chairman), Cllr D. Sarson (vice-chairman), Cllr J. Broom, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Turner

Notice is given of a meeting of the Human Resources Committee to be held at the **Guildhall, Bridge Street, Lyme Regis** on **Tuesday 27 September 2022** commencing at 7pm when the following business is proposed to be transacted:

John Wright  
Town Clerk  
20.09.22

*The open and transparent proceedings of Full Council and committee meetings will be audio recorded and recordings will be held for one year by the town council.*

*If members of the public make a representation to the meeting, they will be deemed to have consented to being audio recorded.*

*If members of the public have any queries regarding audio recording of meetings, please contact the town clerk.*

Members are reminded that in reaching decisions they should take into consideration the town council's decision to declare a climate emergency and ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 and beyond.

### AGENDA

#### 1. **Public Forum**

Twenty minutes will be made available for public comment and response in relation to items on this agenda

*Individuals will be permitted a maximum of three minutes each to address the committee*

#### 2. **Apologies**

To receive and record any apologies and reasons for absence

#### 3. **Minutes**

To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 15 June 2022 (attached)

#### **4. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Members are reminded that if they have a disclosable pecuniary interest on their register of interests relating to any item on the agenda they are prevented from participating in any discussion or voting on that matter at the meeting and to do so would amount to a criminal offence. Similarly if you are or become aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter under consideration at this meeting which is not on your register of interests or is in the process of being added to your register you must disclose such interest at this meeting and register it within 28 days.

#### **5. Dispensations**

To note the grant of dispensations made by the town clerk in relation to the business of this meeting.

#### **6. Matters arising from the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 15 June 2022**

To update members on matters arising from the previous meeting that are not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda and to allow members to seek further information on issues raised within the minutes of the previous meeting

#### **7. Update Report**

To update members on issues previously reported to this committee

#### **8. To receive the minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 23 June 2022**

#### **9. Menopause Policy**

To allow members to consider a proposed menopause policy

#### **10. Vexatious Complaints' Policy and Guidance**

To provide policy direction and guidance to members and employees who are subject to vexatious complainants

#### **11. Review of Employee Handbook – Part 4**

To allow members to consider proposed amendments to the employee handbook

#### **12. Review of Councillor Data and Information 2021-22**

To allow members to consider 2021-22 councillor data and information

#### **13. Finance Manager Six-Month Review**

To allow members to consider the finance manager's six-month review and progression to the next spinal column point, effective from 1 July 2022

*That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded while members consider this item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960*

## **14. Exempt Business**

*To move that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business in view of the likely disclosure of confidential matters about information relating to an individual, and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.*

### **(a) Agenda item 13 – Finance Manager Six-Month Review**

**LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2022**

**Present**

**Chairman:** Cllr G. Stammers

**Members:** Cllr J. Broom, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr P. May, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Sarson

**Officers:** A. Mullins (support services manager), P. Williams (operations supervisor), J. Wright (town clerk)

**22/01/HR Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

*Cllr G. Stammers arrived at 7.03pm.*

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Broom that Cllr G. Stammers is chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

There being no other nominations, Cllr G. Stammers was duly **ELECTED** as chairman.

It was proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds that Cllr D. Sarson is vice-chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

There being no other nominations, Cllr D. Sarson was duly **ELECTED** as vice-chairman.

**22/02/HR Public Forum**

**S. Davies**

S. Davies, chairman of LymeForward, spoke in relation to minute number 21/77/HR, Staffing and Recruitment. She said on behalf of the directors of LymeForward CIC, everything now seemed to be clear and transparent regarding community engagement but it wasn't when they were seeking answers and clarification a few months ago. She quoted sections from the minutes referring to community engagement. S. Davies said she wished to remind the committee that at no point did LymeForward state it would not sign the grant agreement because discussions never reached that phase, owing to the fact they were led to believe the council would define community engagement objectives and this clearly did not happen. She said they were then asked to set a number of objectives and they advised they could not agree to such a request as it was too vague, the council's priorities were unknown, along with the timeframe, cost implication and preferred methodology. S. Davies said at the meeting, Cllr B. Larcombe said he didn't feel he knew enough about what the community engagement would involve and what it aimed to do. She said having undertaken an extensive review of all the documentation, including the term grants policy and terms of reference from the Human Resources Committee, they would now be writing to the mayor to request a full review.

**22/03/HR Apologies**

Cllr B. Larcombe – personal commitments  
Cllr R. Smith - work commitments  
Cllr G. Turner – work commitments

**22/04/HR To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 3 November 2021**

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2022 were **ADOPTED**.

**22/05/HR To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the extraordinary Human Resources Committee meeting held on 15 March 2022**

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 15 March 2022 were **ADOPTED**.

**22/06/HR Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were none.

**22/07/HR Dispensations**

There were none.

**22/08/HR Matters arising from the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 23 February 2022 and the extraordinary meeting held on 15 March 2022**

Cllr M. Ellis was concerned that the discussion at the extraordinary meeting digressed from the item on the agenda and that the chairman should ensure members stuck to the point. She was also concerned that reference was made to the 'behaviour of a small number of members' and she didn't feel it was appropriate for members to make these kinds of comments about others.

The town clerk suggested when all the committee chairmen were appointed, a meeting was held with the mayor to set out the standards required at meetings.

**22/09/HR Update Report**

Members noted the report.

**22/10/HR To receive the minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 17 March 2022**

Cllr M. Ellis asked if there could be dates included next to the health and safety audit actions in future minutes so members could see if they had been resolved.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, the minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 17 March 2022 were **RECEIVED**.

## **22/11/HR Appointment of Members to the Health and Safety Committee**

As there could be up to two staff members on the committee and one of the representatives had left the council, Cllr M. Ellis asked who the new staff representative would be.

The operations supervisor said the staff were currently voting for their representative and they would hopefully be in place by the next meeting.

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to appoint Cllrs D. Sarson, G. Stammers and J. Broom to the Health and Safety Committee.

## **22/12/HR Review of Employee Handbook – Part 3**

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the proposed amendments to the employee handbook related to maternity/adoption/paternity support leave; shared parental leave; adoption leave; parental leave; and parental bereavement leave.

## **22/13/HR Human Resources' Annual Review**

The town clerk highlighted the main points in the report and members noted it.

## **22/14/HR Pay Review**

Cllr G. Stammers said if members were inclined to carry out a pay review, there were two potential options for South West Councils to do this: they could speak to employees and evaluate their job and pay, or they could ask employees to do their own written evaluation.

The town clerk said any review should be conducted externally to determine if it pays its employees a fair rate. He said he couldn't underestimate the feeling of resentment among staff that the council said it would carry out a pay review three years but didn't go ahead with it.

Cllr M. Ellis asked if there was anyone else other than South West Councils the council could approach for competitive quotes.

The town clerk said he could also approach Motteram HR, which had helped the council with the introduction of new contracts, and there were other companies available.

Cllr J. Broom said he would support using South West Councils as the council was already a member. He also felt there should be a full root and branch review of the whole staffing system, but it was important to note pay could go down as well as up.

Cllr G. Stammers agreed a full review was preferable and felt it would show the council valued its employees.

Cllr C. Reynolds asked if the council would have to implement the findings if it was determined pay should go down.

The town clerk said the council was not bound by the findings of the review. He said following the 2014 review, the council decided to pay the middle rate of local town councils but there were some councils that had made a conscious decision to pay more and it

seemed smaller councils with smaller budgets paid better rates, particularly to lower paid staff.

The town clerk said the council could decide to pay in the top quartile in the region but it couldn't do that without the data from the pay review, which would involve looking at comparable jobs. He said if this committee agreed to South West Councils carrying out the review, he could have a discussion with them before Full Council to start the process, which would hopefully mean the outcome of the review could be brought back to this committee in September 2022.

The town clerk said the figures quoted by South West Councils in 2019 were subject to inflation but provided they were roughly the same amount, he would go ahead and instruct South West Councils; otherwise, he would report back to the Full Council on 27 July 2022.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to commission a full independent review of employees' pay by South West Councils.

#### **22/15/HR Ex Gratia Payment**

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential information relating to an individual within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

#### **22/16/HR Request for Unreduced Early Pension Payment**

Proposed by Cllr M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential information relating to an individual within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

#### **22/17/HR Exempt Business**

##### **a) Ex Gratia Payment**

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr P. May, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to make a £100 ex gratia payment to the lengthsman for early morning work for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

##### **b) Request for Unreduced Early Pension Payment**

Proposed by Cllr C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the request from a former employee for early payment of an unreduced pension.

*The meeting closed at 8.04pm.*

**Committee:** Human Resources

**Date:** 27 September 2022

**Title:** Matters arising from the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 15 June 2022

**Purpose of the Report**

To update members on matters arising from the previous meeting that are not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda and to allow members to seek further information on issues raised within the minutes of the previous meeting.

**Recommendation**

Members note the report

**Report**

**22/02/HR – Public Forum**

Further to comments made S. Davies of LymeForward in the public forum, the mayor received further correspondence from S. Davies regarding grant funding to the organisation. This matter will be considered by the Strategy and Finance Committee on 12 October 2022.

**22/08/HR – Matters arising from the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 23 February 2022 and the extraordinary meeting held on 15 March 2022**

Now all committee chairmen are in place, a meeting has taken place to discuss the management of council meetings, with the intention of adopting a common approach. All members received a letter from the mayor on 19 August 2022 outlining what was agreed at that meeting. Chairmen's meetings will be taking place every cycle going forward.

**22/11/HR – Appointment of Members to the Health and Safety Committee**

The new staff representative on the Health and Safety Committee is operations supervisor Pete Williams. This is in addition to enforcement officer Alan Jefferies.

**22/14/HR – Pay Review**

Arrangements have been made with South West Councils to undertake employee interviews on 20, 21, 26 and 27 September 2022. South West Councils aims to provide its report to the town clerk by 21 October 2022.

John Wright  
Town clerk  
September 2022



**Committee:** Human Resources

**Date:** 27 September 2022

**Title:** Update Report

**Purpose of Report**

To update members on issues previously reported to this committee

**Recommendation**

Members note the report

**Report**

**Finance assistant**

As anticipated, the new finance assistant Shanie Cox took up the post on 11 July 2022.

**Local government pay 2022-23**

In July 2022, the employers' side offered £1,925 on all scale points plus and additional day's leave.

The National Joint Council (NJC) unions are in the process of consulting their members; the consultation includes recommendations:

- UNISON's consultation ends 19 September 2022; its recommendation is neutral
- GMB's consultation ends 21 October 2022; its recommendation is neutral
- UNITE's consultation ends 14 October 2022; its recommendation is rejection.

If the employers' offer is accepted, payment won't be until November, at the earliest.

John Wright

Town clerk

September 2022

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 23 June 2022  
AT 2PM IN LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE

**Chairman:** Cllr J Broom

**Members:** Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr D. Sarson, Mr A. Jefferies (staff member), Mr P. Williams (staff member).

**Officers:** Mr J. Wright (town clerk), Mr M. Adamson-Drage (operations manager), Miss C. Austin (secretary).

**Apologies** Mr J. Wright (town clerk).

At this first committee meeting after the new council, Cllr J. Broom was elected as chairman. Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Mr M. Adamson-Drage.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted. Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Mr M. Adamson-Drage.

**Matters Arising**

The operations manager explained that office staff had undertaken a fire drill in the last six months, other than John Wright (and recent new starters). A fire drill would be held soon.

**Item 1. Accidents, Injuries and Near Misses**

The operations manager informed the committee of a RIDDOR reported incident in April that has left one of the gardeners requiring longer term physio rehabilitation. They are back at work on light duties. Due to several incidents involving slipping on wet grass a remote-controlled lawn mower was discussed.

The operations manager informed the committee of an incident at the Bowling Green. The town clerk is responding to the formal complaint. There were no previous reports of damage to the wall. The operations manager has emailed the group scout leader to ask for a copy of his investigation and RIDDOR reporting, before the council's incident investigation is completed. PW suggested Bowling Green signage needed to be attached to the ground rather than the wall. The operations manager was contacting the Bowls Club about the siting of the signage.

**Action: Operations Manager**

Three accidents had been reported in the accident book by the cleansing operative in the last three months. In three separate accidents; the cleansing operative had some difficulty lifting heavy BBQ bins, had slipped on wet grass on East Cliff and had hurt himself attempting to open litter bins.

It was agreed that the employee has responsibility to keep himself safe, and litter bins and BBQ bins should be emptied before they become too heavy. Where they are too heavy a second member of staff should be called for or the job left until a second member of staff is available as per manual handling training. Members of staff present at the meeting indicated that the litter bins were simple to open and that retraining might be required.

**Action: Operations Manager**

## **Item 2. Fire safety records / Playgrounds / Automated External Defibrillator (AED)**

AED up to date

Monthly checks up to date

Weekly checks up to date

Fire Safety Log up to date

The chairman noted that a full fire check must now be conducted every 6 months. The operations manager would ensure this was happening.

**Action: Operations Manager**

## **Item 3. Ops Manager Monthly Inspection and Regular Inspections**

Cracks appearing on tiered paths in Langmoor gardens. The works supervisor suggested concrete, gravel or a wooden walkway and that further meetings with potential contractors were due to be held.

**Action: Works Supervisor**

## **Item 4. H&S Policy Statement of Intent targets**

Targets 2-15 achieved.

## **Item 5. Training**

Completed since last meeting:

Operations Manager displayed the updated Training/Competency Matrix.

- Data Security training completed in April
- First Aid courses completed in May & June (Valid for 3 years)
- Working at Height completed in April
- Safe Use and Inspection of Ladders completed in June
- AJ and JW completed Chapter 8 training for events road closures in June.

Upcoming courses included:

- Safe Use and Inspection of Ladders next week.
- Abrasive Wheel Mounters Course next week.
- Adult Mental Health First Aid Course next week.
- Face Fitting (in house) upcoming asap.

**Action: Works Supervisor**

Lawn Mower/Hedge Trimmer training – potential courses to be investigated.

The Operations Manager to book manual handling courses for office staff.

**Action: Operations Manager**

## Item 6. Policy Reviews

- a. COSHH Policy unchanged to be reviewed again in one year.  
Proposed by JB seconded by GS
- b. Legionella Policy to be re-written incorporating information from the recent legionella risk assessment document. The outside team were working through the report where they could and plumbing contractors would be employed for the other work. Members requested that the risk assessment was emailed to them.  
Proposed by JB seconded by GS **Action: Operations Manager**
- c. Management of PPE  
Replace/ Alter inspection record. Review again in one year.  
Proposed by JB seconded by GS **Action: Operations Manager**
- d. PAT Testing  
No change to policy. Review again in one year.  
Proposed by GS seconded by DS
- e. Weed Spraying  
Revision needed.  
Proposed by GS seconded by DS **Action: Operations Manager**

## Item 7. Any Other Business

Cllr G. Stammers explained that the Mayor had reported to her of a child receiving splinters from the large slide at Anning Road play park. The works supervisor would investigate.

**Action: Works Supervisor**

Repairs to the wall at Woodmead car park where a car has damaged it, needs rebuilding, The operations manager would look into insurance and repair. The works supervisor would organise clearing rubble in the car park.

**Action: Operations Manager/ Works Supervisor**

The committee looked at videos of a potential remote-controlled mower known as RAYMO. This machinery to cut banks safely could potentially reduce the risk of injury to staff slipping on the grass banks. Quotes and alternatives were requested.

**Action: Operations Manager**

## Item 8. Next meeting date

It was decided the next meeting would take place on Thursday 22nd September 2022 in the meeting room at LRTC offices at 2pm. Cllr G. Stammers indicated she would not be able to make that date but members were content to set that date.

*The meeting ended at 3:30pm.*

**Committee:** Human Resources

**Date:** 27 September 2022

**Title:** Menopause Policy

**Purpose of Report**

To allow members to consider a proposed menopause policy

**Recommendation**

Members approve the proposed menopause policy

**Background**

1. Menopausal women are the fastest-growing demographic in the workplace and they may be struggling to manage the psychological and physiological changes their bodies are going through. A quarter of menopausal women experience debilitating symptoms, including hot flushes, night sweats and increased anxiety.
2. A large number of women find their symptoms negatively affect their job performance and many lose their confidence. This can lead to long-term absence or even women leaving their jobs. Unfortunately, menopause isn't openly talked about in the workplace; symptoms are personal and sometimes embarrassing.
3. Menopause at work is covered by certain pieces of legislation to protect employees:
  - Under the Equality Act 2010, menopause is largely covered under three protected characteristics: age, sex and disability discrimination
  - The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 provides for safe working, which extends to the working conditions when experiencing menopausal symptoms
  - The Acas Code of Practice on flexible working requests.
4. Aside from the legal obligations, the council should be able to recognise when support is needed and facilitate open conversations with employees about what they are experiencing.
5. To support this approach, a menopause policy has been drafted, appendix **9A**. The policy supports an open culture, encourages conversation, promotes flexibility, provides support to line managers and signposts to other organisations who can provide support.
6. It is also important to note that others may also be affected indirectly by the menopause, such as managers, colleagues, partners and family members. This policy also seeks to support those employees.
7. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full council on 26 October 2022.

Adrienne Mullins  
Support services manager  
September 2022

**Committee:** Human Resources

**Date:** 27 September 2022

**Title:** Vexatious Complaints' Policy and Guidance

**Purpose of Report**

To provide policy direction and guidance to members and employees who are subject to vexatious complainants

**Recommendation**

Members approve the Vexatious Complaints' Policy and Guidance, appendix 10A

**Report**

1. From time-to-time members and officers are subject to persistent and vexatious behaviour from members of the public.
2. The attached policy and guidance, **appendix 10A**, seeks to set out a framework for addressing this behaviour.

John Wright  
Town clerk  
September 2022

## Policy

### Vexatious Complaints

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide policy direction and guidance to members and employees who are subject to vexatious complaints

#### 2. Policy and Legal Context

- 2.1 The council must allow public access to its meetings, properly consider any complaint raised by a member of the public, and generally make information available to the public.
- 2.2 All employers are under a statutory duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their staff. This duty of care means that employers must identify any health and safety risks to which employees may be exposed at work and take appropriate measures to control any workplace risks.
- 2.3 Paragraph 4 of the council's complaints' policy lists complaints that are excluded and specifically paragraph 4.15 states, 'It is a persistent or vexatious complaint with no grounds'.

#### 3. Policy and Guidance

- 3.1 The council aims to deal with complaints fairly and impartially and to provide a quality service to those who make them. As part of this service and its overall interaction with the public, the council does not normally limit the contact customers have with its members and officers.
- 3.2 However, a very small minority of customers raise issues and make complaints that could be considered vexatious, i.e., they persist unreasonably with their complaints, or make complaints to make life difficult for the council, members and/or officers rather than genuinely attempt to resolve an issue.
- 3.3 This may involve making serial complaints about different matters or continuing to raise the same or similar matters repeatedly. The frequency, intensity, and extent of contact with the council can hinder the proper consideration of their complaints and reduce the ability of the council to provide services to others.
- 3.4 Having a blanket policy and procedure for managing these complainants isn't entirely practical, because:
- our presumption should always be a complaint is made in good faith
  - it is important to distinguish between people who make a number of complaints because they genuinely believe things have gone wrong, and people who are simply being difficult; some people are more difficult than others, some people are more tenacious
  - complainants will often be frustrated and aggrieved and it is therefore important to consider the merits of their case rather than their attitude
  - if someone has made vexatious complaints in the past, it cannot be assumed their next complaint is also vexatious
  - each complaint must be considered, and a decision made as to whether it is vexatious or genuine. We all see the world through different lenses, and this is unlikely to be clear cut in every instance

- vexatious actions can include or be separate from other complainant actions, e.g., persistency, malicious intent, abusive behaviour and harassment.

#### **4. Aim and scope of the policy and guidance**

4.1 Rather than attempt to develop a prescriptive policy and procedure, this document seeks to provide guidance on how to respond to vexatious complainants.

#### **5. Defining a vexatious complaint or behaviour**

5.1 Different organisations adopt different definitions of what constitutes a vexatious complaint or behaviour.

5.2 The following definition encapsulates the essence of those definitions: 'a vexatious complaint is one that is pursued, regardless of its merits, solely to harass, annoy or subdue somebody; something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome or unwarranted.'

5.3 To further expand on this definition, appendix A lists a range of situations which could be considered vexatious.

#### **6. Managing vexatious complaints and behaviour**

6.1 It follows that if defining vexatious complaints and behaviour is difficult, achieving a managed a solution is likely to be difficult. For this reason, each concern about whether a complaint or an individual's behaviour should be categorised as vexatious should be considered on its merit.

6.2 For councillors, the complaint or behaviour they are subject to should be discussed with the chairman of the relevant committee, mayor, and town clerk. If the councillor is the mayor, the chairman of the Human Resources Committee should be included in the discussion.

6.3 For employees, the complaint or behaviour they are subject to should be discussed with their manager and the town clerk.

6.4 In both instances, an agreed action plan should be drawn up. Options include:

- do nothing, the complaint or behaviour is not considered vexatious
- do nothing but monitor the situation because elements of the complaint or behaviour could be considered vexatious
- allow the vexatious complainant the opportunity to modify their actions and behaviour
- identify measures or restrictions that should be applied to the vexatious complainant, e.g., restrict contact to a named individual, restrict attendance at council meetings, notify them that correspondence or calls will not be dealt with, refer to the police

6.5 Where action is identified, legal advice should be obtained.

6.6 The subject of the vexatious behaviour and the member of the public concerned must be written to and informed of the actions that will be taken.

**Implementation date:** 26 October 2022

**Review date:** November 2025

John Wright  
Town clerk  
September 2022



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Examples of the behaviour of persistent complainants**

Refusal to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance with this from council staff.

Refusal to co-operate with the complaints' investigation process or insistence on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints' procedure or with good practice.

Making what appear to be groundless complaints about the employees dealing with the complaints or attempting to use the complaints' procedure to pursue a personal vendetta against an employee or team.

Making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of council staff whilst a complaint is being looked into.

Refusal to accept information provided, for no apparent good reason.

Persistent emails and telephone calls outside normal hours.

Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation process goes on and/or denying statements he/she made at an earlier stage.

Making statements or providing manufactured 'evidence' the customer knows are incorrect or persuading others to do so.

Raising at a late stage in the process significant new information which was in the customer's possession when they first submitted a complaint.

Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information or raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are all fully answered.

Lodging numbers of complaints in batches over time, resulting in related complaints being at different stages of a complaints' procedure.

Refusal to accept that issues are not within the remit of the council, e.g., overturning of court decisions, dismissal, or criminal prosecution of staff.

Making councillors and officers unreasonably accountable for the actions/inactions of others.

Electronically recording meetings, telephone calls and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other persons involved.

Seeking to coerce, intimidate or threaten staff or other people involved, whether by use of language, tone of voice or behaviour including body language.

Submitting repeat complaints, after the complaints process has been completed, essentially about the same issues, with additions/variations which the customer insists make these 'new' complaints which should be put through the full complaints' procedure.

Using valid new complaints to resurrect issues which were included in previous complaints.

Persistence in contacting the council and demanding responses or action long after the council has closed the investigation into a complaint and all rights of review and appeal have been exhausted.

**Committee:** Human Resources

**Date:** 27 September 2022

**Title:** Review of Employee Handbook – Part 4

**Purpose of Report**

To allow members to consider proposed amendments to the employee handbook

**Recommendation**

Members approve the proposed amendments to the staff handbook

**Background**

1. In April 2018, the council introduced new contracts of employment. An amended employee handbook was also introduced alongside the contracts.
2. All human resources' policies and procedures were incorporated into the handbook. All employees were issued with a handbook and new employees are provided with a copy when they join.
3. The council is not legally required to provide an employee handbook but it is good practice as it outlines the relevant policies and procedures and working practices.
4. The policies and procedures within the handbook were formally reviewed every three years and had varying review dates. When the handbook was updated, it was intended it would be reviewed every three years as a whole.
5. We are now at the point of the three-year review. As the handbook is over 100 pages long, it is intended to bring reports to this committee in several manageable parts.
6. The first section of the handbook up to page 47 was brought to the meeting on 3 November 2021, the amendments were recommended for approval and subsequently approved by Full Council on 15 December 2021.
7. The second section of the handbook up to page 79 was brought to the meeting on 9 February 2022, the amendments were recommended for approval and subsequently approved by Full Council on 16 February 2022.
8. The third section of the handbook required a significant re-write to include family friendly policies and was brought to the meeting on 15 June 2022. This section was subsequently approved by Full Council on 16 February 2022.

**Report**

8. The final part of the handbook from page 80 has now been amended, **appendix 11A**.
9. The proposed amendments are shown as tracked changes and are primarily to update factual details, to strengthen policies and procedures, or to provide more clarity.

10. The Social Media Policy was recently reviewed by the council and the latest version is now included in the handbook (it has not been track changed).
11. The Health and Safety Policy has been removed from the handbook. Although it is an essential document for employees, as it is reviewed and amended annually and the handbook is reviewed every three years, the version in the handbook would become outdated almost immediately. The Health and Safety Policy will therefore be provided to staff separately each time it is reviewed.
12. The Equality and Diversity Policy has not been amended because it is due for review by the Strategy and Finance Committee. Once reviewed, an updated version will be included in the handbook.
13. The risk assessment related to the Lone Working Policy has been completely replaced as there were two risk assessments in existence; this standardises the document.
14. The subject of exit interviews and their confidentiality has recently become an issue within the organisation. Exit interviews should be confidential between the employee and their line manager and any issues arising that require action may be brought to the council's attention. However, there have been several cases where members have asked to see exit interviews or employees have asked that their exit interviews are circulated to members. In some instances, this has had significant repercussions as other employees who have been named in the interviews have not been party to what has been said about them, nor do they have the right of reply. Going forwards, exit interviews will continue to be confidential and this is outlined in the Leavers' Policy.
15. The Homeworking Policy, which was approved by the Full Council on 27 October 2021, will also be included in the handbook.
16. If approved, the Menopause Policy will also be included in the handbook.
17. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full council on 26 October 2022.

Adrienne Mullins  
Support services manager  
September 2022

**Committee:** Human Resources

**Date:** 14 September 2022

**Title:** Review of Councillor Data and Information 2021-22

### **Purpose of Report**

To allow members to consider 2021-22 councillor data and information

### **Recommendation**

Members note the report

### **Report**

#### **2021-22 councillor establishment**

1. There are 14 seats on the council; 13 members are elected and one co-opted.
2. There were three changes in establishment in 2021-2022: Cllr Leon Howe left the council in December 2020 and Cllr Tara Webb was elected to the council in May 2021<sup>1</sup>; Cllr Kelsey Ellis resigned from the council in September 2021 and Cllr Caroline Aldridge was co-opted in November 2021; and Cllr Williams died in January 2022 and Cllr Philip May was elected in May 2022.

#### **Gender profile**

3. There are currently eight male members (57%) and six female members (43%). The number of female councillors is above the national average of 36%.

#### **Meeting attendance**

4. There were 50 meetings of the Full Council and its committees in 2021-22. Attendance figures take into account if a member is not on a committee, if someone left or joined the council part-way through the year, and also Cllr Williams' long-term sickness absence before his death.
5. Attendance figures are as follows:

Cllr Caroline Aldridge	71%
Cllr Belinda Bawden	64%
Cllr John Broom	94%
Cllr Richard Doney	82%
Cllr Kelsey Ellis	73%
Cllr Michaela Ellis	68%
Cllr Brian Larcombe	84%
Cllr Cheryl Reynolds	60%
Cllr David Ruffle	63%

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<sup>1</sup> The long gap between one member leaving and another joining was due to Covid-19 restrictions, which meant elections were not allowed to take place until 6 May 2021

Cllr David Sarson	88%
Cllr Rob Smith	56%
Cllr Gill Stammers	95%
Cllr Graham Turner	89%
Cllr Tara Webb	21%
Cllr Stan Williams	26%

## Members' and mayoral allowance

5. The members' allowance was set by the Dorset Parish Independent Remuneration Panel in 2021 at Level 2<sup>2</sup> which is £400 per annum, i.e., 3% of a Dorset Council members' annual allowance. The scheme proposed by the remuneration panel allows town and parish councils to increase members' allowances by one further level based on budget, size, number and complexity of operations and breadth of commercial activity. On 6 April 2022, the Full Council approved a recommendation from this committee to pay councillors a level 3 allowance of £534 per annum.
6. On 6 April 2022, following a recommendation from this committee, the Full Council approved mileage rates in accordance with HM Revenue and Customs Mileage Allowance Payments and expenses in line with Dorset Parish Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations<sup>3</sup>.
6. The panel also recommends that if a council pays an enhanced basic allowance to its chairman, it should not be more than twice that paid to other members. This council set its mayoral allowance in 2021-22 at £4,700.
7. Six members received an allowance for the whole or part of 2021-22: Cllr C. Aldridge, Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr T. Webb and Cllr S. Williams.

## Training and development

8. During 2021-22, the following training and development was undertaken by members:

	<b>Training</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cllr B. Bawden	Finance for Councillors	15/06/2021
Cllr B. Bawden	Communication	22/06/2021
Cllr B. Bawden	Future Communities	27/07/2021
Cllr B. Bawden	Housing training	06/09/2021
Cllr C. Aldridge	Welcome and governance (in-house)	30/11/2021
Cllr B. Bawden	Levelling Up Communities	23/02/2022
Cllr C. Aldridge	Finance (in-house)	01/03/2022

## Monitoring officer

9. No complaints were referred for investigation by the monitoring officer in 2021-22.

<sup>2</sup> The level for each local council is determined by the size of electorate.

<sup>3</sup> Expenses along with allowances have recently been uplifted in line with increases in Dorset Council members and are displayed on the town council's website.

## Representation on external bodies

10. In 2021-2, members represented the council on 26 external organisations. The number of organisations represented by each member was:

Cllr Caroline Aldridge (from November 2021)	1
Cllr Belinda Bawden	4
Cllr John Broom	3
Cllr Richard Doney	2
Cllr Kelsey Ellis (until September 2021)	5
Cllr Michaela Ellis	4
Cllr Brian Larcombe	4
Cllr Cheryl Reynolds	3
Cllr David Ruffle	3
Cllr David Sarson	4
Cllr Rob Smith	1
Cllr Gill Stammers	1
Cllr Graham Turner	0
Cllr Tara Webb	0
Cllr Stan Williams (until January 2022)	2

11. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 26 October 2022.

Adrienne Mullins  
Support services manager  
August 2022