



Seaford Town Council

Agenda

Personnel Committee Meeting

Thursday 17 September 2026

To the Members of the Personnel Committee, you are summoned to attend a meeting as follows:

Meeting Date	Thursday 17 September 2026
Meeting Time	7.00pm
Meeting Venue	Council Chambers, 37 Church Street, Seaford, BN25 1HG
Members	Councillors S Markwell (Chair), O Honeyman (Vice Chair), S Adeniji, L Boorman, R Honeyman, and L Wallraven

Steve Quayle, Town Clerk

11 September 2026

PLEASE NOTE:

- For members of the public that have registered to attend the meeting, please see the end of the agenda for further details of public access.
- In accordance with Town Council policy, there will be no public participation agenda item for this Personnel Committee meeting.
- Please note that if you don't register and just attempt to turn up at the meeting, this could result in you not being able to attend if there is no space.
- Public arrival time is between 6.45pm – 6.55pm, after which the front door will be locked and public will not be able to gain access to the meeting.
- Due to its confidential nature, the meeting will not be video recorded.

For further information about items on this Agenda please contact:

Email: meetings@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk

Telephone: 01323 894 870

Postal Address: Seaford Town Council, 37 Church Street, Seaford, BN25 1HG

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive details of any apologies for absence.

In accordance with Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, to approve or not the reasons for absence.

Please see the Information for Councillors at the end of this agenda for supporting information on this.

2. Disclosure of Interests

To receive any disclosure by councillors of interests that they are aware of in relation to matters on the agenda, whether registered or not, and confirmation of any procedural steps they will take because of this.

Councillors arriving late in the meeting will be asked to confirm if they have any interests to disclose at the point that they arrive.

Please see the Information for Councillors at the end of this agenda for supporting information on this.

3. [Review of the Menopause Policy](#)

To consider report 78/26 presenting the reviewed and updated Menopause Policy for adoption (pages 6 to 20).

4. [Second Review of a Draft Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy](#)

To consider report 79/26 the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for consideration by Committee and recommendation to Full Council for adoption (pages 21 to 36).

5. [Introduction of a Pay, Rewards & Benefits Policy](#)

To consider report 80/26 presenting the draft Pay, Rewards and Benefits Policy for consideration and recommendation to Full Council for adoption (pages 37 to 49).

6. [Policy Update – Employment Legislation Changes](#)

To consider report 81/26 presenting updated HR policies reflective of changes to employment legislation (pages 50 to 75).

7. Exclusion of the Press & Public

The Chair will move that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion on the next items of business for the reasons as set out below.

The resolutions of the items will be recorded publicly in the minutes of this meeting.

The Proper Officer considers that discussion of the following items is likely to disclose exempt information as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 and Data Protection legislation and may

therefore need to take place in private session. The exempt information reasons are shown alongside each item below.

Furthermore, in relation to paragraph 10 of Schedule 12A, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

8. General Human Resources Update Report – September 2026 EXEMPT

To consider exempt report 82/26 providing the Committee with an update on HR matters within the Town Council (exempt pages).

Reason for exemption: to provide confidential updates surrounding the Human Resources functions of the Town Council.

Explanation of Reason: under Data Protection legislation, information about an individual member of staff / groups of staff is confidential between the Town Council and staff member/s.

9. Review of On-Call Officer Trial and Consideration of Future Arrangements EXEMPT

To consider exempt report 94/26 presenting the results of the on-call officer trial and officer recommendations on next steps (exempt pages).

Reason for exemption: to provide confidential updates surrounding the Human Resources functions of the Town Council.

Explanation of Reason: under Data Protection legislation, information about an individual member of staff / groups of staff is confidential between the Town Council and staff member/s.

10. Consideration of an External Job Evaluation Process EXEMPT

To consider exempt report 84/26 presenting the external job evaluation outcome for review and to consider the recommendations within (exempt pages).

Reason for exemption: to provide confidential updates surrounding the Human Resources functions of the Town Council.

Explanation of Reason: under Data Protection legislation, information about an individual member of staff / groups of staff is confidential between the Town Council and staff member/s.

- Agenda End -

INFORMATION – MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Public Access:

Members of the public looking to access this meeting will be able to do so by:

1. Attending the meeting in person.

Due to health and safety restrictions, the number of public in attendance will be limited. The Town Council therefore asks that you contact meetings@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or 01323 894 870 to register your interest in attending at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Spaces will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.

Please note that if you don't register and just attempt to turn up at the meeting, this could result in you not being able to attend if there is no space.

Public Access to the Venue:

If you are attending the meeting in person, please arrive between 6.45 – 6.55pm where you will be shown into the meeting for a 7.00pm start. Please note that the front door of the building will be locked at 6.55pm and remain locked during the meeting for security reasons. As such, if you arrive after this time, you will not be able to access the meeting.

When members of the public are looking to leave, they must be escorted out of the building by a Town Council officer. There is also a signposted back door which can be exited through if required. Entrance through the rear fire escape of the building will not be allowed.

There is a lift for those requiring it to access the first floor. Please note that motorised scooters cannot be brought into the lift. Electric and other wheelchairs can be accommodated but there is a maximum weight limit of 400kg.

Public Participation:

In accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders, there will be no public participation at this meeting.

Public Comments:

Members of the public looking to submit comments on any item of business on the agenda can do so in writing ahead of the meeting and this will be circulated to all councillors. Comments can be submitted by email to meetings@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk or by post to the Town Council offices.

INFORMATION – COUNCILLORS

Councillor Questions:

If councillors have any questions on the reports and you think that officers may require time to prepare a response, please send these through in writing via email at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. A verbal response will be given when the officer is introducing the item in the meeting.

Councillor Apologies for Absence:

Section 85 of the Local Government Act requires that councillors must attend meetings regularly and that failure to attend any meetings for six consecutive months without an approved reason may lead to disqualification. Apologies must be submitted directly to an officer in advance, include a reason, and be formally approved by the meeting to be recorded. Absences without a reason cannot be approved.

Councillor Interests:

Please see the [Town Councillor Interests Guide](#) for information about what interests councillors must declare, when those interests become a problem for decision making, and what councillors must do if they have them.



Seaford Town Council

Report Number:	78/26
Agenda Item Number:	3
Meeting:	Personnel
Date:	17 September 2026
Title:	Review of the Menopause Policy
Strategy Programme Ref:	5.3b
Purpose of Report:	To present the reviewed and updated Menopause Policy for adoption
Contact Officer:	Darryl Keech, Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)
Supporting Documents:	Appendix A – Updated Menopause Policy

Officer Recommendations

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To adopt the changes to the Menopause Policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** At its meeting on 18 March 2026, Full Council adopted the Menopause Policy, as previously recommended by the Personnel Committee, with an instruction for this Committee to undertake a further review six months' later and provided delegated power to this Committee to adopt the revised policy.
- 1.2** This report covers the six-month review of the policy, as requested by Full Council.

2. Information

- 2.1** The proposed Menopause Policy is included at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2** Whilst the policy has been in place for six months, it has not resulted in any HR activity , but a number of staff have utilised this as a reference document to improve understanding.

2.3 Given the untested nature of the policy, officers recommend that large scale changes to the policy are not suitable at this stage. Officers have, however, made the following minor changes:

- Revised the Equality Act 2010 section to clarify how menopause may relate to protected characteristics
- Highlighted confidentiality in further guidance and reasonable adjustments
- Added clarification on reasonable adjustments in relation to disability
- Expanded the section of reasonable adjustments - temporary working arrangements, with further explanation
- Added a new section (Section 11) on Menopause-Related Sickness Absence
- Updated the signposting section to include GP support alongside the existing external support and organisation links

2.4 Amendments to the policy are included in red, underlined text for easy reference.

3. Financial Appraisal

3.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.



MENOPAUSE POLICY

This policy sets out the Town Council's commitment to supporting officers experiencing the menopause and the procedures in place to deliver this support

"Working with our community to secure Seaford's best future"

Policy Status

Version	0.1	Last Review Date	March 2026
Adopted Date	18 March 2026	Next Review Date	September 2026
Review Period	Six Months	Approving Body	Full Council

Version History

Date	Version	Approval	Status
March 2026	0.1	Full Council	New Policy

Related Policies and Other References

Policy Reference Code	Policy Name
C7	Health and Safety Policy
HRP6	Dignity at Work Policy
HRP7	Disciplinary Policy
HRP11	Flexible Working Policy
HRP16	Performance Management Policy
HRP20	Sexual Harassment Policy
HRP21	Sickness Absence Policy

Table of Contents

Section	Title
1.0	Introduction
2.0	Aim and Scope
3.0	Policy Application
4.0	Legal Framework
5.0	Defining Menopause
6.0	Statement of the Council
7.0	Roles and Responsibilities
8.0	Requesting Support
9.0	Council's Support
10.0	Potential Adjustments
11.0	Menopause Related Sickness Absence
12.0	Failure to Comply with the Policy
13.0	Further Support

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Seaford Town Council is committed to safeguarding the health, safety, and wellbeing of its officers and ensuring all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.2. The Council recognises that some officers may need additional support and consideration to improve their work experience, particularly during menopause.
- 1.3. By acknowledging this, the Council is committed to creating an open and supportive culture in which officers feel comfortable discussing, without embarrassment, how menopause-related symptoms may be affecting them at work.
- 1.4. Thus, the Council is dedicated to supporting officers experiencing menopause and ensures that managers are informed of the need to provide reasonable adjustments where necessary to minimise the impact of symptoms on officers' ability to perform and undertake their duties and workload.
- 1.5. This policy provides guidance for both officers and managers on how to support individuals who are experiencing perimenopause, menopause, or post-menopause.

2. Aim and Scope

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on supporting Council officers who raise menopausal issues, not only for individuals experiencing menopause, but also for those indirectly affected, including managers and colleagues.
- 2.2. To achieve this, the policy also addresses:
 - Providing clarity and direction on how the Council will manage and support menopause-related issues.
 - Reducing potential absenteeism related to experiencing menopause and supporting officers to remain effective in their work.
 - Raising awareness and understanding of menopause among all colleagues, enabling officers to have open and supportive conversations and feel confident in using the policy.
 - Creating an environment where officers experiencing menopause feel confident to raise issues about their symptoms and request support and adjustments when needed.
 - Ensuring that managers are informed about the possible symptoms of menopause, their impact on officers, and the

measures that can be taken to support affected individuals, including implementing reasonable adjustments.

- 2.3. By adopting and applying this policy, the Council aims to promote equal opportunities for all and eliminate discrimination related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 2.4. For the purpose of this policy, menopause, includes the perimenopause and post-menopausal stages.

3. Who This Applies To

- 3.1. This Policy shall apply to all officers of the Council, irrespective of their employment status, i.e., whether they are engaged on a full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent basis.
- 3.2. This policy shall not apply to councillors or any third parties engaged in work on behalf of the Council, including, but not limited to, agency personnel, consultants, and providers of services or supplies whose staff carry out duties for or in association with the Council.

4. Legal Framework

- 4.1. While no specific legislation directly addresses the impact of menopause in the workplace, employers are legally required under the Health and Safety at Work 1974 to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of officers.
- 4.2. Although menopause is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, menopause-related symptoms can, in some circumstances, have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 4.3. From 6 April 2026, employers with 250 or more employees may voluntarily publish Equality Action Plans setting out measures to support employees experiencing menopause. The requirement is expected to become mandatory from spring 2027. Whilst the Council is not a 'large' employer in the terms of the 2025 Act, it seeks to replicate these provisions as best practice. As such, this policy represents the Council's Equality Action Plan.
- 4.4. The Council acknowledges that less favourable treatment related to menopause or menopause-related symptoms may amount to unlawful discrimination where it is connected to age, disability, sex, or gender reassignment.

- 4.5. The Council is therefore committed to treating officers experiencing menopause fairly and, where appropriate, implementing reasonable workplace adjustments to reduce or remove any disadvantage arising from menopause-related symptoms.

5. Defining Menopause

- 5.1. Menopause is a biological stage in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the conclusion of her reproductive period.
- 5.2. Menopause includes three main stages:
- **Pre-menopause** is the period before any menopausal symptoms occur,
 - **Perimenopause** when menopausal symptoms occur due to hormone changes, but periods still happen, and,
 - **Post-menopause** is the period after 12 months with no periods but still experiencing the effects of the menopause symptoms.
- 5.3. Menopause is usually a natural, gradual process, though it can sometimes occur suddenly due to medical intervention, and symptoms typically appear between ages 45 and 55.
- 5.4. Menopause is best described as a transition, as symptoms typically last for several years rather than being a one-time experience.
- 5.5. Menopause may lead to a range of symptoms, which vary in nature, severity and duration for each individual. These symptoms may also interact with one another and include, but are not limited to:
- 5.5.1. Physical symptoms:
- Hot flushes (brief and sudden surges of heat usually felt in the face, neck and chest and often require fresh air to relieve)
 - Headaches
 - Dizziness, aches and fatigue
 - Joint stiffness, aches and pains
 - Heavy bleeding and irregular periods
 - Sleep disturbances that can make people feel tired and irritable, including night sweats (hot flushes that happen during the night)
 - Palpitations (heartbeats that become more noticeable)
 - Skin changes (dryness, acne, general itchiness) and hair loss
- 5.5.2. Psychological symptoms:
- Panic attacks
 - Mood disturbances, including anxiety and depression
 - Memory loss and brain fog
 - Loss of confidence and reduced concentration

- 5.6. Menopausal symptoms may worsen pre-existing conditions, potentially resulting in discomfort, distress, physical pain, and thus reduced effectiveness at work, and may create challenges for officers in performing their daily tasks.

6. Statement of the Council

- 6.1. The Council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, embracing a culture in which every officer and member of the community is treated fairly, represented, and genuinely respected.
- 6.2. By adopting this policy, the Council supports a respectful and supportive environment for all officers and managers, where menopause-related distress and concerns can be managed through appropriate adjustments and mutual respect.
- 6.3. To foster this culture and environment, the Council attaches significant attention to avoiding:
- Lack of awareness about menopause
 - Unsympathetic management of menopause-related concerns
 - Increased emotional stress due to insufficient managerial support
 - Limited access to toilets and inflexible break times
 - Negative attitudes toward officers experiencing menopause
 - Poor access to drinking water
- 6.4. The Council has a zero-tolerance approach to any bullying or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. Therefore, if an officer is mistreated by a colleague due to menopause-related matters, this behaviour will be investigated and where appropriate, treated under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1. The Council recognises that achieving the objectives of this policy (see Section 2) requires collaboration between managers and their staff members. The following roles and responsibilities demonstrate the Council's commitment to these principles:
- **Line managers** are responsible for ensuring that they:
 - Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy and understand the support that they can provide to officers.
 - Promote open conversations and encourage a culture where officers feel able to talk about their symptoms, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation,

and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally.

- Keep all information shared by the officer in the strictest confidence and do not share further without the officer's consent.
 - Consider support arrangements and implement accordingly for officers who are perimenopausal, post-menopausal, or who are currently going through the menopause and experiencing symptoms, ensuring all agreed reasonable adjustments are adhered to, recorded and reviewed regularly to evaluate their effectiveness.
- **HR & OD Manager** is responsible for ensuring that they:
 - Provide support, advice and guidance to managers about how to handle and address absence and performance issues related to the menopause.
 - Maintain up-to-date knowledge of what is available to support officers experiencing menopausal symptoms.
 - Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented.
 - Ensure that officers are made aware of the support mechanisms available within the council and are signposted to further resources externally.
 - Encourage officers to seek help and support for menopausal-related concerns to manage their wellbeing in the workplace.
 - **Officers will:**
 - Put effort into understanding their responsibilities under this policy.
 - Take personal responsibility to prioritise their own health and wellbeing, and to speak to their GP for advice and regular check-ups.
 - Report any concerns they may have to their line manager if they are struggling with any aspect of their role because of symptoms associated with the menopause.
 - Report any instances of harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination related to menopause, whether experienced personally or witnessed.

8. Requesting Support

- 8.1. Officers who feel that menopause or associated symptoms are affecting their work or daily tasks are encouraged to discuss their concerns and/or needs with their line manager, allowing appropriate support to be provided and work performance maintained.
- 8.2. In cases where officers do not feel comfortable talking about it with their line manager initially, they are encouraged to liaise with the next senior manager (e.g., the line manager's manager) or the HR & OD Manager.
- 8.3. If, for any reason, an officer is unable to reach their line manager (e.g., due to annual leave or sickness absence), it is the officer's responsibility to raise the issue with the HR & OD Manager or the Deputy Town Clerk.
- 8.4. Requests may include temporary changes (e.g., adjustments to workspace arrangements) or seeking external supports such as guidance for accessing counselling services.

9. Council's Support

- 9.1. When support is requested, the Council will seek to provide appropriate support.
- 9.2. The Council will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments required to comply with the aims of this policy (see Section 2).
- 9.3. The Council will maintain confidentiality regarding any personal information shared and will securely store any related documents or written statements.
- 9.4. The Council recognises the rights of its officers to medical confidentiality whilst also recognising their responsibility to maintain work performance. Where menopause-related concerns affect an officer's wellbeing or work, they are encouraged to have a confidential and supportive discussion with their line manager to identify appropriate support, and where necessary, reasonable workplace adjustments.

10. Reasonable Adjustments

- 10.1. The Council recognises that menopause symptoms can vary significantly between individuals and may affect an officer's comfort, wellbeing, attendance, and ability to carry out their role.
- 10.2. The Council will ensure that officers experiencing menopause are not placed at a disadvantage and where appropriate, will provide reasonable adjustments (e.g., temporary changes to duties or easy access to workplace facilities) to support them.
- 10.3. Reasonable adjustments, as referred to by the Council, refer to measures designed to remove or reduce any disadvantage experienced by officers

going through menopause. These adjustments should be practical to implement, affordable, and not harmful to the health and safety of the officer and other colleagues.

- 10.4. Adjustments will be implemented only if a clear need for additional support has been identified.
- 10.5. Adjustments will be applied in consideration of both the Council's operational requirements and the officer's needs.
- 10.6. The Council acknowledges that it is important to understand the barriers an officer may face. Therefore, line managers are expected to engage in discussions with officers to understand the barriers they face and determine the most suitable adjustments to reduce the impact of menopausal symptoms in the workplace.
- 10.7. Reasonable adjustments that may be requested or considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Temporary Working Arrangements** may include:
 - **Flexible hours or temporary shift changes** to adjust officers' working hours where menopause-related symptoms affect their usual working arrangements. This may include avoiding very early morning or late-night shifts where disrupted sleep or fatigue is a significant issue or temporarily adjusting the working environment to avoid prolonged periods in warm working environments where hot flushes or temperature sensitivity may worsen.
 - **Additional short breaks** including being able to briefly access fresh air and return without unnecessary explanation. This may include briefly stepping away from the workstation to regulate body temperature, manage hot flushes, address discomfort, or take a moment to regain focus before returning to work without embarrassment. Where appropriate, officers should feel comfortable enough discussing any ongoing need for additional breaks with their line manager in a supportive and confidential manner.
 - **Allowing later start or earlier finish times for GP appointments or treatments**, enabling officers to adjust their working hours where necessary to attend medical appointments, treatment, or consultations relating to menopause symptoms. Where further adjustments to working hours are required to support recovery, officers are encouraged to discuss these with

their line manager in accordance with the Council's Flexible Working Policy.

- **Flexibility to leave work early when necessary** to support officers experiencing severe symptoms (e.g., heavy bleeding, feeling unwell, dizziness or acute discomfort) within their standard working hours.
- **Adjustments to start and finish times when working from home**, where the role and operational requirements allow, officers may adjust their working hours while working remotely to better manage menopause-related symptoms. This may include starting later after a disrupted night's sleep, finishing earlier during periods of severe symptoms, or temporarily varying working hours to enable employees to work more comfortably while maintaining their productivity.

- **Updates for Working Environment** may include:

- **Facilitating an accessible working environment** by relocating the workstation closer to the toilet and drinking water units.
- **Flexibility in work wear** to allow officers to use more comfortable clothing or fabrics while working.
- **Providing additional temperature, ventilation and lighting controls** to allow officers to adjust heaters, fans or lighting as needed and position themselves away from hot or cold spots in the office where they can get a breeze or have greater access to natural light.
- **Providing a quiet working environment** to support officer's focus and overall wellbeing.
- **Providing extra storage** for sanitary products and medicine.
- **Ergonomic adjustments** to ease joint pain and bodily discomfort.

10.8. All requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered sensitively and confidentially, and in discussion with the officer, taking into account their individual circumstances and the requirements of their role.

10.9. Any absence or change to the working schedule must be agreed with the officer's line manager and any absence or change should be addressed in accordance with the Council's Absence Management Policy.

10.10. If an officer is experiencing sickness related to menopause symptoms and/or is unable to work, they must report their sickness immediately to

their line manager or the HR & OD Manager, in the line manager's absence.

11. Menopause Related Sickness Absence

- 11.1. The Council does not expect officers who are unwell to attend work, including when their illness is related to menopause or menopause-related symptoms.
- 11.2. Officers who are unable to work due to menopause should report their absence and are encouraged to discuss their circumstances openly with their line manager where they feel comfortable doing so.
- 11.3. Line managers will deal with such absences sensitively and confidentially, ensuring that appropriate support is offered and any discussions are conducted with dignity and respect.
- 11.4. Where appropriate, the Council will consider whether reasonable workplace adjustments or other supportive measures may assist an officer in returning to work or reducing the impact of menopause-related symptoms.
- 11.5. In cases where an officer is absent due to long-term sickness, a referral to Occupational Health will be made in accordance with the Council's Sickness Absence Policy. Where menopause is known or suspected to be contributing to the absence, this should be included in the referral to enable appropriate advice and recommendations to be provided.
- 11.6. The Council will seek to support officers experiencing menopause-related sickness absence through regular wellbeing discussions, appropriate workplace support, and a phased return to work where recommended and operationally appropriate.

12. Failure to Comply with the Policy

- 12.1. While the Council encourages officers to report genuine concerns and support needs related to menopause, any officer who fails to follow the Council's procedures for reporting or confirming menopause-related sickness absence, or who misuses this policy (including providing false information about symptoms or abusing workplace adjustments), may be subject to a thorough investigation process, and treated as a serious matter. Where appropriate, and depending on the severity of the breach, the matter may lead to formal action under the Council's disciplinary or relevant conduct procedures.
- 12.2. In this case, the absence will be treated as unauthorised and will not be paid.

13. Further Support

- 13.1. Officers experiencing menopausal symptoms are encouraged to explore appropriate measures and options to manage these symptoms effectively.
- 13.2. The Council, therefore, will signpost its officers to appropriate sources of information, advice and support when needed, to help them understand and manage menopause symptoms and reduce the discomfort experienced. To achieve this, the Council recommends the following further support channels provide detailed guidance on managing menopause symptoms, treatment options, and healthcare support.
- 13.3. The Council encourages its officers to seek first advice from their General Practitioner (GP) as the first point of contact by reaching their GP by phone or through the NHS App or the NHS website. The Council suggest that GPs can provide the needed medical advice, possible treatment options, and recommended support tailored to the officer's needs.
- 13.4. Additionally, officers can access further guidance through the following resources:
 - **NHS Information** to access useful and detailed information and guidance for individuals experiencing menopause or early menopause <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/> or <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/early-or-premature-menopause/> official website.
 - **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidelines** to access guidelines on care and support offered to individuals by <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/address>
 - **Menopause Matters** as the award-winning, independent website providing up-to-date, accurate information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms, and treatment options on the official <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/> website.
 - **Women's Health Concern** as one of the charity organisations, aims to support women with their healthcare by providing unbiased, accurate information on its website, <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>
 - **Daisy Network** who provides information and support to women diagnosed with Premature Ovarian Insufficiency, also known as

Premature Menopause by <https://daisynetwork.org/> official website.

- **The Menopause Exchange** as an independent advice service about the menopause, midlife and post-menopausal health. They send out a free quarterly newsletter with useful impartial help and support and it's accessible via <https://www.menopause-exchange.co.uk/> website.
- **My Menopause Doctor** aims to empower women with the information they need to make informed decisions about any treatment they may take to turn menopause into a positive experience that does not negatively impact their lives. Further information is available on the official <https://yourmenopausedoctor.co.uk/> website.



Seaford Town Council

Report Number:	79/26
Agenda Item Number:	4
Meeting:	Personnel
Date:	17 September 2026
Title:	Second Review of a Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Strategy Programme Ref:	5.3b
Purpose of Report:	To present the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for consideration by Committee and recommendation to Full Council for adoption
Contact Officer:	Darryl Keech, Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)
Supporting Documents:	Appendix A – Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Officer Recommendations

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To recommend that Full Council adopts the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** As part of the ongoing review of policies and risk management, officers have identified that the Town Council's existing Equal Opportunities Policy, adopted in January 2020, does not cover the full scope of an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy and therefore requires updating.
- 1.2** The Committee is asked to review the draft EDI Policy and recommend this to Full Council for adoption.
- 1.3** This draft policy was previously brought to the Personnel Committee on 21 May 2026, however due to some queries regarding internal processes, a

motion was carried to bring the policy back to this meeting allowing further review.

2. Information

- 2.1** The proposed EDI Policy can be found in **Appendix A**.
- 2.2** In line with feedback received from this Committee in May, amendments have been made from the original draft policy and are shown as tracked changes on the appendix. This provides clarification of the internal processes for identifying and adding additional responsibilities to existing staff roles (section 11.3.1) and handling complaints against the HR & OD Manager (section 13.5).
- 2.3** The Equality Act 2010 places a legal duty on employers to take reasonable steps to eliminate any kind of discrimination in the workplace. It is important for the Town Council and its officers to understand what the law says about discrimination, so everyone knows their rights and responsibilities.
- 2.4** The Act encourages organisations to understand how protected characteristics shape the experiences of local communities, both individually and collectively.
- 2.5** Discrimination means treating someone 'less favourably' than someone else because of their protected characteristics.
- 2.6** The policy aligns with the law on discrimination where all employers must:
 - (a)** make sure they do not unfairly discriminate in any aspect of work
 - (b)** take steps to prevent discrimination
 - (c)** do all they reasonably can to protect people from discrimination by others
 - (d)** look after the wellbeing of their workers – this is called a 'duty of care'
- 2.7** All officers will undertake EDI training a minimum of once per year and this is scheduled into officer's training plans.
- 2.8** Ultimately, the Town Council wants to ensure that all its service provision and business activities are established with an equality, diversity, and inclusion perspective. Thus, the Town Council will not tolerate any behaviour, actions, or approaches that disregard this policy.

3. Financial Appraisal

- 3.1** There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

This policy sets out the Town Council's strong commitment to promoting a supportive, inclusive and respectful working environment, where any discriminatory behaviour or approach is challenged and addressed

"Working with our community to secure Seaford's best future"

Policy Status

Version	0.1	Last Review Date	August 2026
Adopted Date	TBC	Next Review Date	One year from adoption
Review Period	Annually	Approving Body	Full Council

Version History

Date	Version	Approval	Status
n/a-new policy			

Related Policies and Other References

Policy Reference Code	Policy Name
HRP7	Disciplinary Policy
HRP6	Dignity at Work Policy
HRP20	Sexual Harassment Policy
HRP14	Menopause Policy
HRP18	Recruitment, Induction and Leavers Policy

Table of Contents

Section	Title
1.0	Introduction
2.0	Aim and Scope
3.0	Who This Applies To
4.0	Legal Framework
5.0	Statement of the Council
6.0	Understanding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
7.0	Defining Discrimination
8.0	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives of The Council
9.0	The Council's Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
10.0	Roles and Responsibilities
11.0	Equal Opportunities in Employment and Training
12.0	Managing the Risk of Discrimination
13.0	Addressing Concerns
14.0	Monitoring and Review

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Seaford Town Council (the Council) recognises and values the diversity and inclusion in Seaford and within its workforce and promotes equality of opportunity.
- 1.2. The Council is committed to ensuring that all individuals are given the opportunity to be heard and that their views are respected and valued. The Council will promote positive and effective communication, support a greater understanding of diversity, and encourage open, inclusive, and constructive engagement with individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives.
- 1.3. The Council's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) reflects its aim to contribute to a more cohesive and inclusive community. To achieve this, the Council will:
 - Promote zero tolerance of discrimination
 - Value and respect individual differences
 - Represent all sections of the community, and ensure that every individual feels respected and appreciated
- 1.4. By doing so, the Council addresses to provide high-quality services and demonstrates its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by adopting this policy.

2. Aim and Scope

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure equality and fairness for all officers, demonstrating parity across the Council, encourage support and inclusion within the organisation, while ensuring nobody is discriminated against on the grounds of any protected characteristics (see Section 4).
- 2.2. The Council will achieve this by:
 - Welcoming the contributions that a diverse workforce brings through experience, knowledge and skills,
 - Providing all officers with equal and easy access to learning, training and development opportunities
 - Ensuring a working environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, victimisation and bullying while promoting dignity and respect as part of its organisational culture
 - Ensuring that the Council carry out recruitment and selection processes in a fair and non-discriminative way

- Ensuring that all Council policies and procedures incorporate relevant legislative requirements, statutory duties, and recognised best practice, and that these are made accessible to officers as required
 - Providing regular training for all officers to maintain a good understanding of the diverse needs of people from different identities and backgrounds
 - Providing guidance about the Council services and facilities, and, where necessary, making them available in multiple formats to guarantee equal access for all
- 2.3. The Policy demonstrates how equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are embedded in, and apply to, the Council's work, services and day-to-day operations to achieve its aims and objectives.
- 2.4. Therefore, this policy is intended to act as a guiding resource, embedding EDI across the Council and reflecting its priority to proactively reduce inequalities, remove barriers for officers, and deliver fair and accessible services.

3. Who This Applies To

- 3.1. This policy shall apply to all officers of the Council, irrespective of their employment status i.e., whether they are engaged on a full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent basis. The provisions of this Policy shall also extend to all individuals associated with the Council, including, but not limited to, elected members and contractors acting on behalf of the Council.
- 3.2. The Policy shall also apply to any third parties engaged in work on behalf of the Council, including, but not limited to, agency personnel, consultants, and providers of services or supplies whose staff carry out duties for or in association with the Council.

4. Legal Framework

- 4.1. The Council is committed to fulfil its statutory responsibilities to challenge all forms of discrimination and unfair treatment of individuals, both in the delivery of services and business.
- 4.2. The Equality Act 2010 places a legal duty on employers to take reasonable steps to eliminate any kind of discrimination in the workplace.

- 4.3. In addition, the Act encourages organisations to understand how the protected characteristics shapes the experiences of local communities both individually and collectively.
- 4.4. The protected characteristics refers to specific attributes or traits that are legally protected from discrimination. These characteristics ensure that individuals are treated fairly and equally, safeguarding them from any bias or unfair treatment in the workplace. The Equality Act outlines protected characteristics, as:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion and Belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual Orientation
- 4.5. In addition, the Policy will be implemented within the framework of the other relevant legislation, including:
- The Equal Pay Act 1970
 - The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
 - The Race Relations Act 1976
 - The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - The Protection from Harassment Act 1995
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief Regulations) 2003
 - The Employment Equality (Age Regulations) 2006
 - The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation Regulations) 2007

5. Statement of the Council

- 5.1. The Council ensures that all its service provision and business activities are established with an equality, diversity, and inclusion perspective.
- 5.2. Thus, the Council will not tolerate any behaviour, actions, or approaches that disregard this policy, and any breaches will be dealt with in line with the Council's disciplinary or relevant conduct procedures.
- 5.3. To strengthen its approach to EDI, the Council will:
- Maintain a zero-tolerance perspective to all forms of discrimination (see Section 7)

- Ensure that this Policy applies to all officers of the Council, regardless of role or status
- 5.4. The Council clearly states that it is a non-negotiable condition for all managers, councillors and officers to understand and adhere to this policy.
- 5.5. Each officer is responsible for behaving appropriately and showing respect for colleagues therefore, their actions and decisions comply with equality and inclusivity requirements.
- 5.6. Where possible, the Council expects its officers to raise their concerns regarding any discriminatory, disrespectful, or unfair treatment that they may witness or experience.

6. Understanding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- 6.1. The Council acknowledges, inclusive working environment as one in which everyone feels valued and knows that their contribution matters. Thus, they can perform their full potential, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances.
- 6.2. The Council is committed to meeting its legal duties (see Section 4) but also focuses on EDI for reasons beyond legal requirements. In doing so, the Council recognises that:
 - **Equality** is not about treating everyone identically; it is about acknowledging individual differences and making sure each person's needs are met. It means ensuring that everyone has a fair opportunity to achieve the same outcomes.
 - **Diversity** recognises that every individual is unique and that the wide range of backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and values people bring should be acknowledged, respected, and valued. Embracing diversity helps create an inclusive environment that encourages new ways of thinking, understanding and working.
 - **Inclusion** is about recognising, valuing, and supporting individual differences, and taking positive action to ensure that everyone feels welcome. An inclusive workplace is one where all individuals feel respected, valued and confident to raise concerns safely.
- 6.3. This policy defines equality of opportunity as ensuring all individuals have a fair chance to succeed and reach their full potential, free from discrimination or disadvantage. It focuses on fairness, not sameness, by providing equitable access to resources, development, and progression based on merit, skills and effort.

7. Defining Discrimination

7.1. The Equality Act 2010 highlights that discrimination may occur in a variety of ways. The types of discrimination defined under the Act include:

- **Direct discrimination** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic (e.g., refusing to offer an available open position to the best-qualified candidate based on their sexuality).
- **Indirect discrimination** refers to a policy, practice or procedure that appears to treat everyone equally but, in practice, places individuals with a certain protected characteristic at a disadvantage (e.g., requiring evening work, which may disadvantage officers with religious commitments).
- **Discrimination arising from a disability** means unfavourable treatment because of something in connection with an individual's disability which cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim (e.g., where a Council applies a policy to all officers, but the policy puts a disabled officer at a particular disadvantage compared to others with no disabilities).
- **Discrimination by association** occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of their association with a person who possesses a protected characteristic, even if they do not have that characteristic themselves (e.g., a manager being overlooked for promotion because of their association with a partner from a minority race).
- **Discrimination by perception** happens when someone is treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic, regardless of whether they do (e.g., when the Council believes an officer has a disability, even though they do not, and treats them accordingly).
- **Harassment** may arise when a person is subjected to a conduct that violates their dignity in connection with a protected characteristic, or when behaviour creates a hostile, humiliating, degrading, or otherwise offensive environment related to a protected characteristic (e.g., consistent sexually offensive jokes in the workplace).
- **Victimisation** takes place when an individual is subjected to a detriment because they have, in good faith, undertaken a "protected act," or are suspected of having done so or intending to

do so (e.g., where an officer raises a concern about unfair treatment and is later left out of key team meetings).

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives of The Council

8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council have a duty to due.regard to the need to:

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between individuals who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between individuals who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Minimise disadvantages faced by individuals due to their protected characteristic

8.2. With this approach, the Council embraces four objectives:

- i. Demonstrating an organisational commitment and working culture that respects and maintains equality, diversity and inclusion across the Council and the town
- ii. Designing services around the needs of residents, ensuring that EDI is embedded at the earliest stage possible
- iii. Supporting disabled, LGBTQ+, neurodivergent and underrepresented residents to enable them to live free from disadvantage
- iv. Regularly reviewing policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect the needs of officers, and are applied consistently, fairly and transparently across the Council

9. The Council's Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

9.1. The Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring that all officers, councillors and service users are treated with fairness, understanding, dignity and respect. This commitment is embedded in the Council's organisational culture and is demonstrated through:

- Developing a working environment of respect through initiatives such as the Council's Staff Skills Training Program

- Embracing clear communication and shared understanding between the Council and its officers by this Policy
- Ensuring diversity and inclusion are considered every stage in the design and delivery of services to residents
- Recruiting officers through fair, transparent and accountable processes that promote best practice and equal opportunities for all.
- Identifying and addressing any barriers by recognising diverse needs and ensuring that the Council's workforce and service providers are equipped to deliver services that are equitable, accessible and responsive to these needs in an inclusive manner.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- 10.1. All officers are expected to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour, comply with this policy, and actively support the delivery of the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives.
- 10.2. The Council acknowledges that any progress in achieving these objectives (see Section 8) requires collaborative effort between managers and officers. The responsibilities are defined as:
 - **Line managers** are responsible for ensuring that they:
 - Set and communicate clear standards of behaviour in respect of EDI, reflecting zero-tolerance approach of the Council.
 - Ensure all officers understand the Policy and their personal responsibilities in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.
 - Foster a welcoming and trustworthy workplace where officers feel confident, they will be supported in any instance of inappropriate behaviour.
 - Design and deliver training to raise awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion in professional practice.
 - Lead with embedding the EDI principles across the Council, ensuring fair practices in recruitment, career development, and promotion based on merit and ability.
 - **The HR & OD Manager** is responsible for ensuring that they:
 - Support managers in implementing the Policy in a consistent, transparent and fair manner.

- Take complaints of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation seriously, ensuring they are investigated thoroughly, with appropriate actions taken.
- Provide guidance and access to relevant training, policies, and procedures so officers can understand and apply the requirements of this Policy.
- Ensure officers are supported in exercising their contractual and employment rights, promoting fair and equitable treatment at all times.
- **Officers will:**
 - Understand this Policy and its practical implications for their role, responsibilities, and day-to-day work.
 - Treat all residents, service users, and colleagues with dignity and respect, while responding positively when providing services.
 - Complete mandatory EDI training and be familiar with this Policy to understand the extent to which it has an impact on their role.
 - Challenge and report any behaviour that may breach this Policy.

11. Equal Opportunities in Employment and Training

- 11.1. The Council prioritises that its policies, procedures, and guidelines reflect its commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion.
- 11.2. Accordingly, EDI principles and objectives are embedded within standard practices to support fair, non-discriminatory recruitment processes and accessible training and development opportunities for all.
- 11.3. These principles are applied across various stages, including but not limited to the following:

11.3.1. Employment Practices

- The Council defines itself as an equal opportunities employer, committed to EDI across all recruitment, selection, and training practices.
- All applicants and officers are treated with fairness and respect, without discrimination based on any protected characteristics. Therefore, recruitment and selection procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure equal access to opportunities. Appointments

are made solely on merit, based on the skills, experience, abilities, and qualifications required for their role.

- The Council actively seeks to attract a diverse pool of candidates by maintaining recruitment practices that are welcoming, inclusive, and responsive to individual needs. Thus, job advertisements are carefully worded to avoid stereotyping or discouraging applicants from any background.
- Shortlisting for an available vacancy is conducted by more than one person to ensure a fair and unbiased assessment.
- During recruitment, applicants will not be asked questions that could indicate a discriminative approach based on a protected characteristics, health conditions, or disability prior to a job offer
- before a job offer is made (e.g., questions about plans relating to pregnancy or parenthood).
- Exceptions may apply in limited circumstances with approval from the, HR & OD Manager including:
 - i. Determining whether an applicant can perform essential job requirements, including any reasonable adjustments required
 - ii. Identifying reasonable adjustments needed for interviews or assessments
 - iii. Situations where the job offer is conditional upon a satisfactory medical check
- Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefits will be based on the ability and capability of candidates. All officers will be supported and encouraged to develop their full potential, ensuring that skills and resources are effectively utilised for both individual and organisational benefit.
- The needs of the Council may require an existing job position to include additional responsibilities beyond those currently assigned. In such cases, the Council can use an internal process open to all officers, providing equal opportunity to demonstrate the relevant skills, experience and capabilities required to undertake the additional responsibilities. To ensure transparency and fairness, internal applications will be evaluated and assessed in accordance with the Council's standard recruitment procedures, using the same assessment, interview and scoring methods and criteria applied to all external candidates. The appointment will therefore be based solely on merit, skills, experience and demonstrated

capabilities, ensuring that the officer selected is the most suitable person to undertake the additional responsibilities.

- The Council also ensures that part-time officers receive the same opportunities and treatment as full-time officers. Variations in working hours will not affect access to benefits, training, or fair treatment, and part-time status will never result in less favourable outcomes.

11.3.2. Training and Development

- The Council uses training as one of the tools to foster a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion across the organisation.
- In line with this, all available training and professional development opportunities are designed to be accessible to every officer.
- The Council's Equality, Diversity, and Discrimination Awareness Certification program available on the staff Skills Training is designed and provided to equip officers with the knowledge and tools to promote and understand respect, inclusivity and equality in the workplace.
- The Council ensures that the current and future training programs challenges generalised stereotypes, biases, ignorance, prejudice, and discriminatory attitudes, while encouraging representative information and inclusive language.
- Therefore, EDI principles are also integrated into training evaluation and feedback processes, ensuring that learning outcomes actively support equitable practices across all teams.

12. Managing the Risk of Discrimination

- 12.1. The Council recognises that discrimination may occur in the workplace, whether directly or indirectly.
- 12.2. Therefore, the Council introduces a range of initiatives to address, manage and reduce possible risks by:
 - Adopting this policy in line with other related Council policies and procedures
 - Providing staff training in relation to equality, diversity and discrimination
 - Implementing regular and effective supervision, along with a clear code of conduct

- 12.3. Through these preventive measures, the Council aims to ensure that all officers are able to raise concerns, where necessary, make complaints to reflect discrimination or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace.

13. Addressing Concerns

- 13.1. The Council strictly prohibits any forms of victimisation and unfair treatment under any circumstances, whether it occurs as a single incident or repeatedly, and whether harm is intended or not.
- 13.2. All officers have the right to raise a concern in good faith about discrimination they have faced or witnessed, without fear of victimisation.
- 13.3. The Council encourages officers to raise their concerns, knowing they will be listened and treated fairly and supported. If an officer does not feel comfortable or safe raising a complaint, they may do so anonymously. However, reporting discrimination anonymously may delay a thorough investigation and limit a clear understanding of the situation.
- 13.4. To seek advice and support, officers should submit their complaint to the HR & OD Manager, who is responsible for and trained to manage the process properly and accurately.
- 13.5. In cases where a complaint concerns the HR & OD Manager, the complaint should be referred to the Deputy Town Clerk, or in their absence, to the Town Clerk.
- 13.6. All complaints will be handled properly, sensitively and thoroughly, and will be investigated within an agreed timescale. Complainant(s) will be informed of any conclusions reached appropriately without breaching officers' confidentiality.
- 13.7. While the Council encourages the reporting of genuine concerns, making a false allegation of discrimination may be treated as a disciplinary matter in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

14. Monitoring and Review

- 14.1. The Council will continually seek to develop its approach to EDI by identifying good practices in employment and service delivery, and by regularly reviewing of this policy.
- 14.2. Thus, the Council will be responsible for monitoring and updating this policy to ensure it remains committed to EDI while reflecting any changes or developments in local and national legislation.

- 14.3. The Council will uphold its legal obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 when collecting, processing or storing officer's personal information, if any, for purposes related to this policy. All data will be managed in compliance with the Council's Data Protection Policy (see Data Protection Policy).

DRAFT



Seaford Town Council

Report Number:	80/26
Agenda Item Number:	5
Meeting:	Personnel
Date:	17 September 2026
Title:	Introduction of a Pay, Rewards and Benefits Policy
Strategy Programme Ref:	5.3b
Purpose of Report:	To present the draft Pay, Rewards and Benefits Policy for consideration and recommendation to Full Council for adoption
Contact Officer:	Darryl Keech, Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)
Supporting Documents:	Appendix A – Draft Pay Rewards and Benefits Policy

Officer Recommendations

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To recommend that Full Council adopts the draft Pay, Rewards and Benefits Policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** As part of the ongoing review of policies, officers have identified that the Town Council's does not have a policy that summarises the approach taken with regards to employee pay, rewards and benefits.
- 1.2** The Committee is asked to review the draft Pay, Rewards and Benefits Policy and recommend this to Full Council for adoption.

2. Information

- 2.1** The proposed Pay, Rewards and Benefits Policy can be found in **Appendix A**.

- 2.2** This policy is designed to provide an overview of the rewards and benefits of working for Seaford Town Council. It also provides a summary overview of pay, sick pay, flexible working, and time off in lieu (TOIL).
- 2.3** As well as providing clarity for current employees, this document is a good reference point for all potential new employees so they are joining with clear expectations where pay, rewards, and benefits are concerned.
- 2.4** It is worth highlighting that no review of benefits for employees has taken place as part of this process. The Town Council's employee benefits, aside from a generous pension scheme, are somewhat limited and do not align with those in the private sector, nor those in larger local authority organisations. A wider review of employee benefits will be completed by officers at some stage in the future to ensure that working for the Town Council remains an attractive offer. This will help to ensure the recruitment of the highest calibre of future employees and the retention of the existing team of officers.

3. Financial Appraisal

- 3.1** There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.



PAY, REWARDS AND BENEFITS POLICY

This policy establishes the Town Council's strategic framework for managing pay, rewards and benefits, offering a guide that ensures all decisions are made with fairness and transparency while aligning with the Council's organisational values and commitment to supporting its workforce

"Working with our community to secure Seaford's best future"

Policy Status

Version	0.1	Last Review Date	September 2026
Adopted Date	TBC	Next Review Date	One year from adoption
Review Period	Annually	Approving Body	Full Council

Version History

Date	Version	Approval	Status
n/a-new policy			

Related Policies and Other References

Policy Reference Code	Policy Name
HRP9	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
HRP11	Flexible Working Policy
HRP18	Recruitment, Induction and Leavers Policy
HRP7	Disciplinary Policy
HRP16-1	Performance Management Policy
HRP8	Display Screen Users Equipment Policy

Table of Contents

Section	Title
1.0	Introduction
2.0	Aim and Scope
3.0	Who This Applies To
4.0	Legal Framework
5.0	Council's Approach to Pay, Rewards and Benefits Objectives
6.0	Pay Framework
7.0	Rewards and Benefits
8.0	Monitoring and Review

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Seaford Town Council (the Council) recognises that its officers are an essential asset in the delivery of effective services to the town and its residents.
- 1.2. Thus, the Council is committed to maintaining an effective and up-to-date pay, rewards, and benefits policy that supports the continuous improvement of services and delivers value for money.
- 1.3. The Council also understands that the fair distribution of pay and benefits can have a significant impact on organisational performance, employee engagement and retention, and service delivery outcomes.
- 1.4. In parallel, the Council prioritises a pay and benefits framework that is appropriate and transparent, and which rewards officers for the work they perform, thereby increasing workforce engagement and productivity.
- 1.5. This policy therefore sets out the Council's approach to pay, rewards, and benefits, ensuring that all officers are treated appropriately and reasonably, and explaining how these arrangements are managed across the organisation.

2. Aim and Scope

- 2.1. The Council recognises that pay and benefits are not only a means of rewarding officers, but also a way of supporting and recognising their meaningful contributions to the Council's services.
- 2.2. Accordingly, it aims to maintain a fair equal pay scale and develop appropriate staff benefits to attract and retain motivated and engaged officers who are proactive and committed to improving their work performance and professional skills, and to encourage staff retention.
- 2.3. This policy defines the Council's approach to pay and benefits, providing guidance to its officers while ensuring the efficient and cost-effective use of public funds to deliver high-quality services.
- 2.4. To achieve these objectives, this policy also addresses:
 - Ensuring that the Council manages this policy in a non-discriminatory and consistent way, taking into account current legislation
 - Encouraging and enabling officers to perform to the best of their abilities

- Recruiting and retaining skilled, experienced, and qualified officers in a competitive market
- Enabling the Council to attract employees with the required skills, knowledge, and experience

3. Who This Applies To

- 3.1. This policy applies to all officers of the Council, irrespective of their employment status, i.e. whether they are engaged on a full-time, part-time, temporary, or permanent basis.
- 3.2. This policy does not apply to any third parties engaged in work on behalf of the Council, including but not limited to, agency personnel, consultants, and providers of services or supplies whose staff carry out duties for or in association with the Council. It also does not apply to councillors.

4. Legal Framework

- 4.1. [The Equality Act 2010](#) requires employers to uphold fair pay practices in the workplace.
- 4.2. In line with the equal pay requirements of the Equality Act, the Council aims to ensure there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures.
- 4.3. The Council assures that any difference in pay reflects the varying requirements, responsibilities, levels, and expectations of each role. The Council uses a transparent and standardised job evaluation process to objectively justify these pay differences. This process is independently carried out by East Sussex County Council Job Evaluation Team.
- 4.4. The Council is committed to the 2010 Act as the primary legislation governing equal pay, and its subsequent amendments. Accordingly, the Council provides fair pay practices by:
 - Recruiting and grading all officer roles, where pay is determined by the required skills, capability, experience, and/or knowledge, irrespective of any postholder's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (protected characteristics)
 - Ensuring all staff are paid at the correct substantive rate for their role, including new starters.
 - Ensuring consistency of pay progression for officers performing similar roles or within the same grade.

5. Council's Approach to Pay, Rewards and Benefits Objectives

- 5.1. The Council prioritises that its pay scale, benefits, and rewards options are effective in attracting, recruiting, and retaining a skilled, experienced, and qualified workforce in a competitive local job market.
- 5.2. For this reason the Council offers a package of pay, rewards, and benefits (see Sections 6 and 7) to attract and retain the workforce necessary to support high-quality service delivery.

6. Pay Framework

- 6.1. The Council recognises the importance of fair and consistent pay management and aims to ensure its framework motivates officers to contribute positively to the Council's work. The pay framework is set out below:

6.1.1. Salary Scale

- The Council uses the nationally negotiated pay scale determined by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC). Its pay scales are based on a benchmarking process that determines the appropriate salary levels for each role, within the scheme's pay ranges.
- In line with this, the Council offers salaries based on an incremental structure for each grade level, in accordance with NJC provisions, with agreed rates applied from 1 April each year (see [Local Government Services Pay Agreement](#)).
- Hourly rates are calculated using the NJC formula by dividing the annual salary by 52.143 weeks (365 days ÷ 7) and then by 37 hours (the standard working week).
- Salaries are paid by BACS transfer (to the officer's nominated account) on or by the 25th of each calendar month, or on the last working day before the 25th if this falls on a weekend or bank holiday.
- All officers receive their monthly payslips via the PayCircle Online Payroll System, showing full details of pay and deductions.

- Subject to satisfactory performance (see Performance Management Policy), officers will progress automatically through their respective pay range by annual increments until they reach the maximum salary in the range. Their first increment will be payable on completion of their probationary period (usually 6 months), and thereafter on the 1 April each year (or six months after a previous incremental increase, whichever is greater) until they reach the maximum increment of the scale. The Personnel Committee may resolve to withhold an increment if it is considered that performance fell below the level expected, following an annual appraisal, or may resolve to award an additional increment for exemplary performance. In either case, this will be based on objective evidence produced and presented to the Personnel Committee for approval.
- New recruits are appointed at a salary point within the evaluated job range for the post. By default, new recruits will be appointed at the bottom increment of the grade range, however the Town Clerk (delegated to the Strategic Management Team) holds discretion to appoint on a higher increment within the grade range if it is deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

6.1.2. Time Off in Lieu (TOIL)

- TOIL may be granted where additional hours are worked beyond normal contractual hours, subject to prior authorisation by the relevant line manager. While TOIL recognises additional effort, requests to take TOIL time back remain subject to managerial approval and operational requirements.

6.1.3. Sick Pay

- The Council understands that officers may be absent from work as a result of ill health.
- In these circumstances, the Council provides pay for defined periods of absence due to sickness, injury, or accident.
- Officers on sickness absence will be paid at their normal rate of pay, including any bank holidays that fall within the period of absence.
- Entitlement to sick pay is subject to the submission of medical certification after the statutory period to the line manager or HR & OD Manager and is determined by length of service, as set out below:

During 1 st year of service	1 months full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay
During 2 nd year of service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During 3 rd year of service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During 4 th and 5 th year of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years' service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

7. Rewards and Benefits

7.1. The Council believes in valuing and rewarding the hard work, effort, commitment, and contribution of its officers in ways that go beyond salary alone. It is therefore committed to providing a range of opportunities that support sustainable productivity and promote wellbeing in the workplace. The Council's rewards and benefits include:

7.2.1. The Local Government Pension Scheme

- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a national, secure, defined benefit pension scheme for individuals working in local government and other participating employers.
- As part of their employment with the Council, all officers are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) administered by the East Sussex Pension Fund. For 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029, the Town Council contributes 18.1% of pensionable pay to the scheme, whilst employee contribution rates are determined by salary band in accordance with LGPS regulations. Employees may also elect to join the LGPS' 50/50 section, enabling them to pay reduced contributions whilst continuing to receive valuable pension and protection benefits.
- The benefits of joining the LGPS scheme include, but are not limited to:
 - Employer contributions that add significant value beyond personal pension arrangements
 - Tax relief at source on member contributions, including additional voluntary contribution
 - A transparent contribution structure with no hidden fees or charges, based on a percentage of pensionable pay

- A guaranteed package of benefits underpinned by statute
- Life assurance cover equivalent to three times annual salary from the date of joining
- Automatic access without medical underwriting requirements, unlike many private insurance alternatives
- The option to take part of the pension as a tax-free lump sum at retirement
- Ill-health retirement benefits, providing early access to pension benefits where qualifying conditions are met
- Pension increases linked to inflation to help maintain the value of benefits over time
- *Officers can refer to the [East Sussex Pension Fund](#) website or contact the HR & OD Manager or the Finance Manager for further information or clarification.*

The Council currently also offers an alternative pension scheme, NEST, which is available with employer contributions of 3% and employee contributions of 5%, subject to eligibility.

- It is UK government law that requires employers to automatically enrol eligible workers into a workplace pension scheme, unless they opt-out in writing. .

7.2.2. Flexible Working

- The Council offers a hybrid approach to working, enabling a balanced approach between the Council's operational priorities and officers' wellbeing.
- As long as it meets the Council's needs, flexible working arrangements may take a variety of forms, including part-time working patterns, compressed hours, 9-day fortnights, and working from home, promoting a healthy and sustainable work-life balance for officers.
- Officers can put in a request from day one of their employment to their line manager, who will then discuss this with the HR & OD Manager to ensure the appropriate process is followed.
- The Council does not ordinarily permit working from home for more than 50% of an officer's working week.
- The Council does not ordinarily require officers to work beyond their contracted hours, except where necessary to ensure the effective delivery of services and responsibilities. In the event of officers

being required to work beyond their contracted hours, TOIL will be accrued.

- This approach is intended to support officers in managing caring responsibilities, to maintain their work-life balance, whilst helping to reduce the demands associated with daily commuting.

7.2.3. Generous Annual Leave

- The Council offers a generous annual leave entitlement of twenty-five (25) days plus bank holidays per year (pro-rata for part time officers), this entitlement increases to 28 days plus bank holidays (pro rata for part time officers) following 5 years service.
- The annual leave year runs from 1 April, and new recruits are entitled to take leave from their start date.
- In addition to annual leave, officers are entitled to all statutory bank holidays, or substitute days where bank holidays fall on weekends. Where additional bank holidays or days of public mourning are announced by the Government, the Council will confirm officers' entitlement in this instance (as per above, this will be pro-rata for part-time officers).

7.2.4. Reduced Gym Membership at Wave Active

- All officers are eligible for a discounted gym membership at Wave Active Seaford through a corporate membership scheme, offering a 10% discount on either a 12-month full membership or a Flex membership. The membership benefits include:
 - Tailored member benefits, including additional discounts
 - Access to gym, swimming pool, racket sports, and classes
 - Free day passes for the staff to experience the facilities
 - Personalised fitness plans and regular progress reviews

7.2.5. Staff Discount at The View Seaford

- All officers are entitled to a 20% discount on food and a 10% discount on beverages at The View Restaurant, Seaford.

7.2.6. Free Car Parking

- The Council provides two free parking spaces in designated bays near the Council building, on a first come, first served basis.

7.2.7. Eye Test and Spectacles Contribution

- The Council provides reimbursement for a basic eye test and, where required, corrective spectacles, for officers who require them solely for regular use of display screen equipment (DSE) (see Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Users Policy).
- In this case, the Council will contribute a fixed sum towards the cost of spectacles. See the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Users Policy for contribution details.

7.2.8. Staff Skills Training

- The Council recognises the importance of supporting the professional development of its officers through tailored training opportunities.
- To achieve this, Staff Skills Training is offered and available to all officers, with a range of CPD-certified (Continuing Professional Development) courses and learning modules.
- Certification courses include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Whistleblowing Training for Employees Certification
- ✓ Equality, Diversity and Discrimination Awareness Certification
- ✓ Sexual Harassment Awareness Certification
- ✓ GDPR in the Workplace Certification
- ✓ Lone Working Awareness Certification
- ✓ Suicide Prevention Certification
- ✓ Health and Safety in the Workplace Certification

- The Council also supports staff wellbeing through access to the Movement and Mindfulness Hub, offering 176 sessions designed to promote physical health, mental wellbeing, and overall wellbeing.

7.2.9. Counselling Support

- The Council provides a Counselling Service to all officers. This confidential support service offers assistance with personal issues (e.g. eldercare, family difficulties, depression, or anxiety) and work-related concerns (e.g. workload pressures, bullying, or harassment).

- The service is free of charge and available 24/7 to officers and members of their immediate household aged 18 or older (or aged 16–18 if in full-time employment).

8. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1. This policy will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect any changes in relevant legislation, regulations or amendments.
- 8.2. To support transparency and accountability, the Council's pay scales and staff benefits will be published on its website upon approval of Full Council.
- 8.3. Requests for further information about pay and benefits, including queries regarding terms and conditions, should be submitted to the HR & OD Manager for further clarification.



Seaford Town Council

Report Number:	81/26
Agenda Item Number:	6
Meeting:	Personnel
Date:	17 September 2026
Title:	Policy Update – Employment Legislation Changes
Strategy Programme Ref:	5.3b
Purpose of Report:	To present updated HR policies reflective of changes to employment legislation
Contact Officer:	Darryl Keech, Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)
Supporting Documents:	Appendix A – Sexual Harassment Policy Appendix B – Whistleblowing Policy

Officer Recommendations

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To adopt the updated Sexual Harassment Policy and Whistleblowing Policy, as a result of employment legislation changes detailed.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** On 18 December 2025, the Employment Rights Bill was passed, becoming the Employment Rights Act 2025.
- 1.2** This new Act has seen some of the most significant changes to employment law for decades and provides a detailed pathway for the introduction of the new legislation.
- 1.3** October 2026 sees the next stage of changes to legislation. In preparation, officers have worked through the Town Council's existing policies to ensure compliance with these changes ahead of October 2026.

- 1.4** In accordance with the resolution passed by Full Council on 23 July 2026, this Committee now has delegated power to review and adopt amended versions of the Sexual Harassment Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

2. Information

- 2.1** The information listed below details the changes in legislation applicable in October 2026.

2.2 Measures that will take effect on 1 October 2026

- (a)** The time limit for bringing a claim to the Employment Tribunal will increase from 3 to 6 months.

2.3 Measures that will take effect on 30 October 2026

- (a)** The trade union measures include:
- i.** the duty to inform workers of their right to join a trade union
 - ii.** strengthening trade unions' right of access
 - iii.** implementing reforms to access and unfair practices during the recognition and derecognition process, and all remaining trade union recognition measures, including freezing the bargaining unit when an application is received
 - iv.** new rights and protections for trade union representatives
 - v.** extending protections against detriments for taking industrial action.
- (b)** The harassment measures include:
- i.** requiring employers to take 'all reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment of their employees
 - ii.** introducing an obligation on employers not to permit the harassment of their employees by third parties
 - iii.** introducing a power that will enable the minister to make regulations at a later date, specifying evidence-based steps which employers must take to prevent sexual harassment (this will complement, not replace, the broader legislative requirement to take all reasonable steps).
- (c)** Other measures that will be introduced:
- i.** bringing forward regulations to establish the Fair Pay Agreement Adult Social Care Negotiating Body in England

- ii. procurement – reinstating the two-tier code to ensure outsourced private sector employees are offered no less favourable terms and conditions to employees transferred from the public sector.

2.4 Appendices A and B include the updated version of the following policies:

Appendix A – Sexual Harassment Policy

Appendix B – Whistleblowing Policy

2.5 Changes to the policies listed above are very minor but ensure that the Town Council complies to changes in legislation.

2.6 Changes to the Sickness Absence Policy appear as a separate item on this agenda, as officers have made changes beyond those impacted by legislative changes.

2.7 In March 2026, Full Council agreed with this Committee's recommendations that the Staff Handbook no longer be classified as a policy document and that power be delegated to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to update this document as required. For the Committee's information, and in line with this delegated power, officers have also updated the Staff Handbook to ensure that this is reflective of the legislative changes.

3. Financial Appraisal

3.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.



SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

This policy sets out the Town Council's commitment to providing a supportive, inclusive, and respectful working environment, where unacceptable behaviour is immediately identified, challenged, and addressed, and offers guidance on how to raise and handle a complaint about sexual harassment that occurs within, or is associated with the Council

"Working with our community to secure Seaford's best future"

Policy Status

Version	0.1	Last Review Date	July 2026
Adopted Date	23 July 2026	Next Review Date	July 2027
Review Period	Annually	Approving Body	Full Council

Version History

Date	Version	Approval	Status
July 2026	0.1	Full Council	New Policy

Related Policies and Other References

Policy Reference Code	Policy Name
HRP6	Dignity at Work Policy
HRP7	Disciplinary Policy

Table of Contents

Section	Title
1.0	Introduction
2.0	Aim and Scope
3.0	Who This Applies To
4.0	Legal Framework
5.0	Defining Sexual Harassment
6.0	Statement of the Council
7.0	Roles and Responsibilities
8.0	Reporting Process
9.0	Outcomes
10.0	Dealing with Third-Party Sexual Harassment
11.0	Handling Time-Off
12.0	Assessing and Managing Risks of Sexual Harassment
13.0	Further Support

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Seaford Town Council recognises that all officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council (see section 3 for who this policy applies to) have the right to work in an environment where the dignity of individuals is respected and is free from harassment. Thus, the Council is committed to providing a workplace without any forms of harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment.
- 1.2. The Council expects all of its officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council to maintain high standards, ensuring safety across all areas of the Council, and to act at all times in accordance with the Council's Sexual Harassment Policy.
- 1.3. The Council is committed to preventing sexual harassment and any victimisation associated with it, to ensure that all officers feel a sense of belonging and protection.
- 1.4. Apart from this understanding, all officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council are entitled to:
 - Be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy
 - Experience no form of unlawful discrimination
 - Be valued and regarded for their skills and abilities

2. Aim and Scope

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to maintain a supportive, inclusive, and respectful working environment within the Council, where unacceptable behaviour is immediately identified, challenged, and addressed.
- 2.2. The policy includes guidance on how to raise a complaint about harassment that has occurred and is associated with the Council.
- 2.3. It is intended that the Policy will enhance staff safety, boost morale, and reduce stress to support officers' commitment to the Council and its standard operating procedures.
- 2.4. The Policy applies to sexual harassment on any grounds the policy recognises that the initial harassment can be compounded by harassment related any of the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- 2.5. This protection expressly includes anyone who is undergoing, has undergone, or proposes to undergo gender reassignment, including trans individuals.
- 2.6. This policy also ensures that any allegation of harassment at work is taken seriously and investigated.

3. Who This Applies To

- 3.1. This Policy shall apply to all officers of the Council, irrespective of their employment status i.e., whether they are engaged on a full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent basis.
- 3.2. The provisions of this Policy shall also extend to all individuals associated with the Council, including, but not limited to, elected members and contractors acting on behalf of the Council. These groups are hereafter referred to within this policy as 'other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council'.
- 3.3. This policy shall also apply to any third parties engaged in work on behalf of the Council, including, but not limited to, agency personnel, consultants, and providers of services or supplies whose staff carry out duties for, or in association with, the Council. Also, referred to within this policy as 'other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council'.

4. Legal Framework

- 4.1. On 26 October 2024, the Worker Protection Act 2023 (Amendment to the Equality Act 2010) came into effect, making a significant change to the law regarding an employer's obligations to protect its employees from sexual harassment. The Equality Act 2010 now places a legal duty on employers to take **all** reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.
- 4.2. In accordance with the Act, the Council commits to taking necessary actions to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. These steps include:
 - Developing a culture of respect and inclusion through practices such as the Council's Staff Skills Training program for Bullying and Harassment.

- Providing a clear understanding and communication between the Council and officers through the Council's Sexual Harassment Policy
- Taking proactive steps to identify and mitigate risks of sexual harassment under the guidance of the HR & OD Manager.
- Ensuring that other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council are aware, and have a clear understanding, of the Council's Sexual Harassment Policy and how this applies to them.

5. Defining Sexual Harassment

- 5.1. Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- 5.2. Sexual harassment can happen to men, women, and people of any gender identity or sexual orientation. Anyone who sexually harasses someone at work is responsible for their own actions, regardless of their sex or gender.
- 5.3. A single incident can be considered sexual harassment without systematic repetition. It also includes treating someone unfairly because they have previously accepted or rejected unwanted sexual conduct.
- 5.4. Types of behaviours which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - 5.4.1. Physical conduct:
 - Unwelcome physical contact including patting, pinching, stroking, kissing and hugging
 - The use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favours
 - Physical violence, including sexual assault and rape
 - Fondling and inappropriate touching
 - 5.4.2. Verbal conduct:
 - Coercion
 - Sexual banter
 - Sexual advances, flirting
 - Making sexual jokes or comments
 - Sexual comments about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity
 - Spreading sexual rumours about a person or their sexual conduct outside of work
 - Addressing colleagues by using inappropriate nicknames

- Unwelcome comments on someone's appearance, body shape, age or private life
- Gossiping and speculating about someone's sexual orientation, including spreading malicious rumours.
- Intrusive questioning or suggestions about someone's personal life
- Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates, meetings or physical intimacy

5.4.3. Non-verbal conduct:

- Sexually suggestive gestures that act as a sexual intent
- Sending, sharing, or displaying sexually explicit materials such as improper messages, images, and videos by any medium, or posters and calendars that expose nudity
- Sending inappropriate emojis while emailing or messaging
- Inappropriate facial expressions such as whistling, winking, licking lips, or raising eyebrows in a suggestive manner

- 5.5. The complainant(s) refers to any officer(s) or other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council who raise a concern about sexual harassment. Equally, a respondent refers to any officer(s) or other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council who are the subject of the complaint.
- 5.6. Sexual harassment is usually directed at an individual, but it might not always be the case. Sexual harassment in the workplace can sometimes occur as generalised behaviour that is not directed at a specific individual but may be witnessed or overheard. In such cases, any officer or other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council who observes or is affected by this behaviour is entitled to raise a concern or make a formal complaint.
- 5.7. Intent is not required for behaviour to be considered sexual harassment. Any unwelcome conduct may still be deemed harassment regardless of the respondent's intention. For instance, an officer may experience harassment, even if they were not the intended target e.g., when pornographic images are displayed on a colleague's computer in the workplace.
- 5.8. Sexual harassment can take place at any time and any location, including the workplace or at any workplace events (e.g., while travelling with colleagues to an event or online work events). Incidents occurring within these environments remain subject to the provisions of this policy.

6. Statement of the Council

- 6.1. Seaford Town Council is committed to providing a safe and trustworthy environment for all officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council by adhering to the Policy, while fostering a culture of mutual respect.
- 6.2. In order to foster a culture of respect and dignity in the workplace, the Council shall:
- Maintain a zero-tolerance approach for sexual harassment of any kind.
 - Ensure that all complaints are considered promptly and that appropriate proactive action shall be taken where necessary.
 - Confirm that this Policy applies to all officers of the Council and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council, irrespective of their role or status.
 - Investigate cases fairly, sensitively and confidentially.
 - Ensures that all officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council are informed of, and will follow, the procedures for raising concerns and the complaint process as set out in this Policy
- 6.3. All officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council are responsible for ensuring that they behave in an appropriate manner, showing respect for colleagues and individuals engaged with the Council`s standard operations. Therefore, where possible, the Council expects its officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council to challenge inappropriate behaviour that they witness or that is directed towards them.
- 6.4. The Council emphasises that complainant(s) are not required to negotiate with respondent(s) to resolve the issue informally and personally. Instead, respondent(s) are solely obligated to report the matter (see section 8 below).
- 6.4.1. The Council confirms that the complainant(s) will not be discriminated against or victimised for raising a complaint. Furthermore, any information relating to a raised concern shall remain confidential and will only be disclosed where necessary to address a safeguarding risk.

7. Roles & Responsibilities

7.1. The Council acknowledges that achieving the purpose of this Policy (see Section 2) requires collaborative effort between managers and officers. Accordingly, the roles and responsibilities are defined to reflect the Council's commitment to this Policy and the principles outlined herein:

- **Line managers** are responsible for ensuring that they:
 - Monitor the workplace to ensure that zero-tolerance boundaries regarding any sexual harassment are in effect.
 - Be proactive in implementing any reasonable adjustments as necessary.
 - Support the creation of a culture where officers feel confident to work, raise concerns, and feel listened to.
 - Be a role model for promoting appropriate and professional behaviours in the workplace.
 - Support the implementation of the Policy in a fair, consistent and transparent manner.
- **The HR & OD Manager** is responsible for ensuring that they:
 - Ensure that appropriate immediate actions are identified and implemented upon receipt of a complaint
 - Provide guidance and advice throughout the complaint and investigation process
 - Ensure that a person is not targeted or mistreated for making, or being involved in, a complaint of sexual harassment.
- **Officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council** will:
 - Take accountability for raising any concern about sexual harassment in the workplace.
 - Co-operate with the Council and the overall harassment investigation process, whether a complaint has been filed against them or they have submitted a complaint.

8. Reporting Process

- 8.1. The Council recognises that complainants may feel uncertain about how to proceed when faced with a distressing issue. In this case, an informal discussion with their line manager or HR & OD Manager may help them to understand the situation clearly.
- 8.2. Any complaint may be formally reported by either:
 - Officers or other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council who have been sexually harassed, in the workplace or relating to their work or duties for the Council.
 - Officers or other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council who have witnessed sexual harassment, in the workplace or in relation to their work or duties for the Council.
- 8.3. The Council encourages anyone who experiences or witnesses sexual harassment to report it as soon as they feel able to do so. The Council recognises that experiences of sexual harassment can be distressing and that individuals may require time to process what has happened before coming forward. There is no expectation or requirement to report immediately and delays in reporting will not affect how a concern is treated or investigated.
- 8.4. For officers, ideally the report should be submitted to the Council's HR & OD Manager, who is responsible for and trained in managing the process properly and accurately. Alternatively, complainant(s) can raise the issue with their line managers or another work colleague if they feel more comfortable to do so.
- 8.5. If the complaint relates to the conduct of the complainant's manager, the complainant may choose to discuss the matter with the HR & OD Manager or senior management.
- 8.6. Reporting can be made verbally or in writing. The complainant(s) should keep a record of any incidents, detailing when, where, what occurred and who witnessed.
- 8.7. The Council encourages its officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council to raise their concerns in a transparent manner. If a person does not feel comfortable or safe raising a complaint, they can do so anonymously. However, reporting sexual harassment anonymously may cause a delay in conducting a thorough investigation and gaining a clear understanding of the situation.

- 8.8. Any concern raised shall be managed in accordance with the Council's Sexual Harassment Policy and, where appropriate, the Council's Disciplinary Policy.
- 8.9. Upon receiving a concern of sexual harassment, the Council will promptly and impartially investigate the allegations. The related investigation will be conducted by the HR & OD Manager with the support of the Town Clerk or a member of the strategic management team. Where not appropriate, the HR & OD Manager can be substituted by the Deputy Town Clerk or other suitably experienced individual e.g. an external HR professional.
- 8.10. Both the complainant(s) and respondent(s) shall be offered appropriate support under the guidance of the HR & OD Manager. Following meetings with the complainant(s) and respondent(s), additional interviews or investigations may be conducted if further information is required to assess the allegations.
- 8.11. Following the investigation, the Council will provide a report outlining its decision on the outcome of the complaint(s).
- 8.12. The Council prioritises confidentiality throughout the investigation process. Thus, any information received during the investigation meetings will be kept securely to ensure the safeguarding of individuals. However, the Council reserves the right to seek advice from, or share information with, appropriate external authorities (e.g., police) if it believes it is under an obligation to do so.
- 8.13. While the Council encourages the reporting of genuine concerns, making a false accusation of sexual harassment may be investigated as a potential disciplinary offence in line with the Council's disciplinary policy.
- 8.13.1. In the case of other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council, this may result in the termination of a works contract held with the Council.
- 8.13.2. In the case of councillors, this may result in a complaint being submitted to the Monitoring Officer.

9. Outcomes

- 9.1. The Council may reach one of the following conclusions to complete the investigation process:
- There is insufficient evidence to support the complaint; accordingly, no action will be taken, and the complaint is not upheld.

- A sexual harassment incident has occurred thus, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the Council's formal disciplinary process depending on the severity of the offence.
 - The complaint is upheld. The outcome and recommendations are communicated, including referral for disciplinary action depending on the severity of the offence and additional support to complainant(s).
- 9.2. A complainant(s) who is not satisfied that their complaint against an officer has been taken seriously must raise a formal Grievance outlining their concerns and this will be investigated following the formal processes in the Council's Grievance Policy.
- 9.2.1 In the case of other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council, this may result in the termination of a works contract held with the Council.
- 9.2.2 In the case of councillors, this may result in a complaint being submitted to the Monitoring Officer.

10. Dealing with Third-Party Sexual Harassment

- 10.1. The Council acknowledges that it carries the responsibility to protect its officers other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council from any third-party harassment.
- 10.2. Third-party sexual harassment can result in legal liability and will not be tolerated by the Council. Therefore, all officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council are encouraged to report any third-party (e.g., contractors, consultants, service suppliers, customers or clients) harassment they are victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy.
- 10.3. If any third-party harassment of officers or other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council occurs, the Council will take necessary steps to receive any complaints and to prevent it. The steps including, but not limited to, warnings to respondent(s) about their behaviour, banning them from the Council premises, reporting any criminal acts to the police, and sharing further information with other teams, units and services of the Council.
- 10.4. Any sexual harassment concern from a third party towards an officer or other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council must be reported immediately as per section 8 of this policy. The HR & OD Manager should assist the respondent officer or other parties carrying out work or

duties on behalf of the Council as a part of the support mechanism within the Council.

10.5. The Council prioritises preventing third-party sexual harassment to maintain a safe workplace. To ensure this, the Council has:

- A clear Sexual Harassment Policy that outlines third-party sexual harassment in addition to verbal, non-verbal and physical harassment
- A training mechanism for recognising and responding to third-party harassment and outlining the responsibilities of line managers and the HR & OD Manager to assist officers in case of any concern.
- Confidential reporting channels
- A working culture where officers and other parties carrying out work or duties on behalf of the Council feel supported in reporting any misconduct

11. Handling Time-Off

- 11.1. The Council adheres to its policies and legal requirements regarding any time off connected to sexual harassment issues or concerns.
- 11.2. If an officer requests time off after experiencing harassment, the Council will respond promptly and with empathy towards the request.
- 11.3. If needed, the Council will consider legal requirements regarding paid leave (e.g., sick leave for experiencing emotional distress or mental health issues or paid leave to allow the investigation to proceed while protecting the complainant(s) from harassment-related situations.
- 11.4. The Council ensures that taking leave for reasons related to harassment will not negatively affect the position or standing of the complainant within the Council.
- 11.5. The Council also commits to helping the complainant(s) feel secure and safe upon their return, including possible changes to working schedules or working environment arrangements.

12. Assessing and Managing Risks of Sexual Harassment

- 12.1. The Council acknowledges that sexual harassment is a risk that can occur in the workplace.
- 12.2. Therefore, the Council undertakes a Sexual Harassment Risk Assessment to assess and eliminate the possible risks.
- 12.3. In addition to this assessment, the Council employs the following measures to prevent and address sexual harassment:

- Having a process for reviewing policies and training
- Having managerial level oversight (e.g., Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk) to make sure the Council is taking necessary actions to eliminate sexual harassment
- Implementing preventive controls such as proper supervision and a clear code of conduct.

13. Further Support

- 13.1. The Council is open to providing additional information and guidance to its officers on how to address concerns and complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace, upon request.
- 13.2. The Council understands that concerns regarding sexual harassment may cause stress, anxiety, and mental health problems. The Council will consider reasonable adjustments to encourage its officers to seek help and be supported.
- 13.3. Under these circumstances, the Council also attaches importance to its officers having access to free counselling and advice. All council officers can contact Care First on 01179342121 who provide a 24-hour counselling helpline for additional mental health support.
- 13.4. For further support and contact, the following channels are also suggested by the Council:
 - Sussex NHS Partnership website for accessing resources and signposts for local mental health support:
<https://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/your-mental-health/getting-help>
 - The Samaritans to access free listening services by calling 116 123 or by messaging jo@samaritans.org email address.



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

This policy sets the procedure to ensure that the Town Council deals with whistleblowing concerns in a fair, transparent and consistent manner

"Working with our community to secure Seaford's best future"

Policy Status

Version	0.2	Last Review Date	August 2026
Adopted Date	8 January 2026	Next Review Date	January 2027
Review Period	Annually	Approving Body	Personnel

Version History

Date	Version	Approval	Status
January 2026	0.1	Full Council	New Policy

Related Policies and Other References

Policy Reference Code	Policy Name
PE5	Grievance Policy
PE5	Disciplinary Policy
CC2	Code of Conduct Policy

Table of Contents

Section	Title
1.0	Introduction
2.0	Aim and Scope
3.0	Who This Applies To
4.0	Defining Whistleblowing
5.0	Whistleblowing Policy and Grievance Procedure
6.0	Legal Framework
7.0	Making a Disclosure
8.0	Confidentiality
9.0	Investigation of the Disclosure
10.0	Recording and Monitoring of Whistleblowing Disclosures

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Seaford Town Council (the Council) is committed to conducting all its business in an honest, fair, transparent, and consistent manner. The Council expects all its officers, councillors, contractors and volunteers to maintain high standards, ensuring integrity across all areas of the Council, and to act at all times in accordance with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.
- 1.2. However, in common with all organisations and other councils, the Council is obligated to manage the risk of any misconduct, including, but not limited to fraud, unethical conduct, wrongdoing, or financial misconduct.
- 1.3. Officers, councillors, contractors or volunteers would often be the first to realise if there was something seriously wrong within the Council. However, they may be reluctant to voice their concerns, as they could worry about being perceived as untrustworthy colleagues. Furthermore, they may fear harassment or victimisation after disclosing concerns about wrongdoing within the Council. Under these circumstances, the risk of avoiding wrongdoing may arise, potentially leading to a delay in the necessary investigation for a suspected case of misconduct.
- 1.4. The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, transparency, and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect anyone who has serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns.
- 1.5. Therefore, to prevent misconduct and address it appropriately, the Council recognises that fostering a culture of openness and accountability is essential.
- 1.6. This policy document makes it clear that this can be done without any fear of victimisation, or discrimination. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to enable anyone to raise serious concerns within the Council.
- 1.7. Hence, this policy is key to ensuring that any disclosure made about wrongdoing is addressed promptly and properly, and in a manner that fosters transparency and confidence in the Council's functioning.

2. Aim and Scope

- 2.1. The Whistleblowing Policy is primarily for disclosures where the interests of the organisation or general public are at risk. This policy should be

used if an incident arises that raises an ethical concern within the Council.

- 2.2. Therefore, the aim of the policy is to enable officers, councillors, contractors, and volunteers (hereafter 'Whistleblowers') to report unethical misconduct that relates to inappropriate or inadequate procedure, practice, or functioning within the Council.
- 2.3. This policy aims to:
 - Ensure whistleblowers feel confident in making a disclosure, questioning, and acting upon concerns about misconduct
 - Provide avenues and flexibility for whistleblowers to make a disclosure and receive feedback on any actions taken.
 - Ensure that all whistleblowers receive a response to their disclosure, where appropriate, and acknowledge that they have the right to ask for further information if the action taken is not satisfactory.
 - Protect the confidentiality of a Whistleblower by ensuring they are protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made a disclosure in good faith.
- 2.4. However, this policy shall not be used to deal with complaints or grievances which Whistleblowers may have about their employment and/or contractual terms.

3. Who This Applies To

- 3.1. This policy applies to all Council officers, regardless of whether they are full-time, part-time, temporary, or permanent officers. The policy also applies to contractors, including their staff working for the Council (e.g., agencies, consultants, and providers of services and supplies).
- 3.2. Additionally, this policy applies to all councillors and volunteers, who have a level of exposure to and involvement in Town Council activities and processes and it is therefore felt only reasonable that they also have a prescribed route for making disclosures. Albeit it is recognised by the Town Council that the strict definition of the term 'workers' in the legislation means councillors and volunteers are not afforded the same level of legal protection.

4. Defining Whistleblowing

- 4.1. Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing. In this Policy, the Council calls that making a "disclosure" or raising a "concern." The wrongdoing will typically

(although not necessarily) be something Whistleblowers have witnessed or become aware of at work.

- 4.2. Furthermore, it refers to a disclosure made in good faith and in the public interest by one or more Whistleblowers regarding wrongdoing, illegal acts or omissions witnessed.
- 4.3. The Council acknowledges a Whistleblower is a witness rather than a complainant.
- 4.4. Whistleblowing is not the same as making a complaint or raising a concern about poor treatment that that has been personally experienced. A Whistleblower is usually not directly or personally affected by the concern disclosed, although they may be indirectly.
- 4.5. This policy applies to disclosures regarding any aspect of service provision or the conduct of anyone acting on behalf of the Council. The above-mentioned disclosures include but are not limited to the following:
 - A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed.
 - Failure to comply with any legal or regulatory requirements or professional obligations.
 - Danger to the Council's standard operation (e.g., delays in projects or service provision)
 - Financial fraud or mismanagement of the Council
 - Breach of the Council's internal policies and procedures (e.g., disciplinary, health and safety policy).
 - Any types of conduct likely to harm the Council's reputation and trust and/or financial credibility.
 - Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information that may result in a breach of the Council's classified information and/or data protection.
 - Any deliberate damage to the environment (e.g., illegal dumping or dumping toxic waste that leads to water contamination).
 - Deliberate concealment of information tends to show any of the matters mentioned above.

5. Whistleblowing Policy and Grievance Procedure

- 5.1. The Council takes into consideration the distinction between whistleblowing and grievance while conducting its investigation into any incident of disclosing a concern, to proceed with the most proper procedure and suitable steps to investigate.
- 5.2. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy is designed primarily for disclosures where the interests of the Council are at risk.

- 5.3. The Whistleblowing Policy refers to a risk, unethical behaviour, or illegal activity that impacts others. It may involve situations that harm officers, volunteers, contractors, councillors, the Council as a whole, or the public. On the other hand, a grievance policy refers to an individual's complaint regarding their employment situation, such as workplace relationships or the application and interpretation of employment terms and conditions.
- 5.4. If a Whistleblower is uncertain about which policy applies to the intended disclosure, any uncertainty must be raised with the Council's HR & OD Manager for further clarification and consideration. Email address: HR@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk

6. Legal Framework

- 6.1. The Council is committed to the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 ("The Act") and the Equality Act 2010, amended to provide protection for Whistleblowers to raise legitimate concerns regarding any misconduct within the Council, and to provide a guarantee against victimisation of Whistleblowers.
- 6.2. The Employment Rights Act 1996 (ERA) as revised by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), gives protection to employees who whistleblow by safeguarding them from being ill-treated and from being deprived of their security or even their jobs for making protected disclosures.
- 6.3. The Council acknowledges that a Whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the matter in any way. It is the Council's duty to investigate the disclosure.
- 6.4. A Whistleblower will not be protected under the Act if the law is broken when making a disclosure.

7. Raising A Disclosure

- 7.1. The Council acknowledges that the whistleblower making a disclosure does not have to have firm evidence before doing so. Instead, the existence of a reasonable belief that wrongdoing is taking place is sufficient. Any evidence provided to the Council will be useful and would be considered in helping the Council investigate any disclosure, although it could be that the Whistleblower is not able to provide any evidence. Therefore, the Council reserves the right to request further information and explanation regarding the circumstances that gave rise to the disclosure as fully as possible.

- 7.2. The Council is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment and encourages individuals to raise concerns about sexual harassment or inappropriate behaviour at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.3. Reports relating to sexual harassment, a culture of harassment, or failures by the Council to take appropriate preventative or corrective action will fall within the scope of protected disclosures, particularly where there is a breach of legal responsibilities or risk to individuals' wellbeing.
- 7.4. The Council also recognises its duty to take proactive steps to prevent sexual harassment and views the raising of concerns as an important safeguard in meeting its legal and ethical obligations.
- 7.5. An officer is typically expected to raise any disclosure(s) either verbally or in writing to the attention of the associated line manager. Contractors or volunteers should make a disclosure in the first instance with their contact within the Council, usually the manager directly in charge. Afterwards, the manager will notify the designated Council's HR & OD Manager within three working days, whenever possible, to take the necessary action.
- 7.6. Any councillor/s wishing to make a disclosure about an officer, contractor or volunteer may do so by contacting the Town Clerk or Chair of Personnel Committee.
- 7.7. Any councillor/s wishing to make a disclosure about another councillor may do so by contacting the District Council's Monitoring Officer.
- 7.8. Please refer to 9.7 for the details of the hierarchical table for the whistleblowing process.
- 7.9. The line manager responsible and the designated HR & OD Manager must take all disclosures seriously.
- 7.10. The Council will aim to respond to written disclosures and acknowledge them within five working days of receipt. Furthermore, the Council will address the matter as soon as possible, keeping the Whistleblower informed of the progress throughout, as required. However, where a detailed investigation is considered necessary then the Council may need an extended period to investigate the disclosure. Where this is the case, it will be communicated.
- 7.11. The Council encourages putting names to the allegations to investigate and assess the situation as thoroughly as possible, because anonymous disclosures are more difficult to investigate and impossible to provide feedback on.
- 7.12. Whilst the Council would strongly prefer any disclosure to be made directly to the Council, it is acknowledged that PIDA makes allowances

for a disclosure to alternatively be made to a prescribed body, examples of relevant bodies/organisations below:

Information Commissioner's Office <https://ico.org.uk/>

The Citizens Advice Bureau <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity) <https://protect-advice.org.uk>

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)
<https://www.acas.org.uk/advice>

- 7.13. If the matter has been signposted by the Council to be addressed via an alternative mechanism, for example an external body (for example External Auditors/HMRC) then the Whistleblower will be informed of this, and progress will be shared with them in line with the rules of the external body, and not under the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1. Any disclosures investigated under the Council's Whistleblowing Policy will be examined comprehensively, swiftly, and with discretion.
- 8.2. The Council confirms that the disclosure will be addressed in accordance with the provisions outlined in the Act to avoid any harassment, victimisation or bullying of the Whistleblower.
- 8.3. No Whistleblower will be subject to changes to, or any detriment to their employment status, benefits, or work-related training due to making a legitimate disclosure. Furthermore, any alleged victimisation of the Whistleblower will be investigated as a potential disciplinary offence in line with the Council's disciplinary policy.
- 8.4. However, the Whistleblower will not be protected from the consequences of making a disclosure if, by doing so, they commit a criminal offence.

9. Confidentiality

- 9.1. The disclosure will be investigated, and as part of Council's investigation process, the Whistleblower will be interviewed and requested to submit a written statement detailing the nature and specifics of their report along with the rationale behind it.
- 9.2. This investigation may involve a formal review of internal processes or a more formal investigation.
- 9.3. The HR & OD Manager will contact the Whistleblower and remain the point of contact throughout the process. In their absence, the Deputy Town Clerk will manage the initial investigation.

- 9.4. The Whistleblower will not be penalised for making a disclosure even if it is not upheld unless the complaint was known to be untrue and/or made with malicious intent. Any intentionally malicious disclosures will be subject to a full investigation in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy and may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 9.5. The Council may, in certain circumstances, need to appoint an external investigator with relevant knowledge and understanding to complete the investigation process. The investigator (or investigators) may make recommendations for changes to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing. Therefore, the appointed investigators will undergo a thorough investigation, with possible outcomes being one or more of the following:
- Referral to the police,
 - Referral to an external auditor,
 - Referral to a disciplinary process, or,
 - No action to be taken depending on the outcome of the full investigation.
- 9.6. The Council may not be able to disclose specific actions taken during the investigation to ensure that it does not violate its obligations to maintain confidentiality regarding other individuals during the implementation of any internal procedure.
- 9.7. Below is the hierarchical table for the whistleblowing process.

Disclosures Relating To:	Stage 1 – Send To:	Stage 1 - Investigating Officer Options:	Stage 2 – Escalate To:
Town Clerk	Your line manager OR HR & OD Manager	Deputy Town Clerk (supported by Chair of Disciplinary & Grievance Panel)	Chair of CCMG & Chair of Personnel
Deputy Town Clerk	Your line manager OR HR & OD Manager	Town Clerk	Chair of CCMG & Chair of Personnel
Head of Place	Your line manager OR HR & OD Manager	Town Clerk	Chair of CCMG & Chair of Personnel

Disclosures Relating To:	Stage 1 – Send To:	Stage 1 - Investigating Officer Options:	Stage 2 – Escalate To:
All other officers	Your line manager OR HR & OD Manager	HR & OD Manager	Town Clerk
A Councillor/s by an officer, contractor or volunteer	Town Clerk OR Chair of CCMG & Chair of Personnel	External – District Council's Monitoring Officer	n/a
A Councillor/s by another Councillor	External – District Council's Monitoring Officer	n/a	n/a
A Council decision	Your line manager OR HR & OD Manager	Town Clerk OR Deputy Town Clerk OR Head of Place	External – District Council's Monitoring Officer

10. Recording and Monitoring of Whistleblowing Complaints

- 10.1. All incoming disclosures will be registered, documented, and stored in accordance with the Council policies.
- 10.2. The HR & OD Manager will maintain a safe record of disclosures made and the outcome of the investigation.
- 10.3. If ever unsure about the contents or any part of this policy, then the Whistleblower should speak to their line manager or the HR & OD Manager.