

Agenda item 5

For decision – Approval of updated chapters of the Staff Handbook for 2024

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The staff handbook contains all policies relevant to staff, from absence management to shared parental leave.

It is important that Frome Town Council as an employer is confident that this document is up-to-date and complies with UK employment law. We work closely with South West Council's to ensure that all policies are up to date.

As you may be aware a few key pieces of employment legislation have been amended as of April 2024, these centre around leave entitlement.

The most notable is flexible working: it is now a day one right to request flexible working. Previously you had to have 26 weeks service before making a request. Flexible working can range from:

- Part-time working
- Job share
- Flexible working hours
- Term time only working
- Occasional working from home

Employees are also entitled to make 2 requests within a 12 month period, whereas previously this could only be 1. It is worth noting that as an employer, FTC does not have to grant the request if it does not meet the business need. However, we would work very closely with the employee to find an accommodation that works for them and the business. Flexible working is now something many prospective employees look for from future employers. I also believe it is a benefit we should actively promote when recruiting.

Other chapters that have been updated are maternity/paternity/adoption leave and the general leave policy. These and the flexible working policy are all appended to this report:

[Appendix 5.1 Flexible Working Policy](#)

[Appendix 5.2 Leave Policy](#)

[Appendix 5.3 Maternity/Paternity Adoption Leave Policy](#)

These are templates as suggested by South West Council and track changes show amendments to make them FTC appropriate.

The remainder of the Staff Handbook will be reviewed later in the year and brought back to an Oversight Committee meeting in the Autumn.

Recommendations

1. Approve the changes to the policies as shown in the appendices
2. Delegate to the Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor to update the Staff Handbook with the new policies and ensure all employees have an up to date copy