

Agenda item 4

For decision – updates to the Staff Handbook at December 2024

Author: Laura Flaherty, Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor

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 (SWC) to ensure that all policies are up to date.

Two months ago, we requested SWC to conduct a review of the Staff Handbook in its entirety. I am pleased to say that there were minimal updates required.

We were advised to update the following policies using the SWC templates and these are appended to this report:

[Appendix x.1 Grievance Policy](#)

[Appendix x.2 Absence Management Policy](#)

[Appendix x.3 Disciplinary Procedure](#)

I have amended these policies and adapted them to be in line with FTC processes. It is worth noting that the updated templates from SWC include much more detail about what staff can expect from these processes and helpful outline step by step the expected processes.

We were also advised to update the Bullying and Harassment Policy. At the time of writing SWC were putting the finishing touches to their template which will reflect the new sexual harassment legislation. I will bring this back to the next Oversight meeting once it has been updated.

The other amendments we were advised to make were minor and related to the following:

Capability Procedure

In section 7 page 27, the informal procedure it currently states that the Business Manager would carry out the process in consultation with the line manager and Town Clerk. At this stage this should be handled by the line manager who is much better to placed to start this procedure with an employee and can then consult with the Business Manager if needed, we have removed reference to the Town Clerk.

We have also amended section 8.6 on page 29 to include Managers in the list of those who would receive training.

Menopause policy

In section 5 on page 57 we amended the wording 'doctor nominated by us' to occupational health instead which is reflective of actual practice.

Breastfeeding Policy

On page 64 it references the HR Team for guidance on implementing the policy, as this team has not been formalised, for consistency across the handbook this has been amended to Business Manager.

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