



**Policy and Finance Committee Meeting – Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 – 18:00**

**To: Members of the Policy and Finance Committee:**

Councillors Marriott (Chair), T Eales (Vice Chair), Alwahabi, Birch, Connolly, G Eales, Hallam, Hibbert, Holland-Delamere, Kilbride, Purser, Russell, Stevens, Tarasiewicz

Cc'd to all councillors for information

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the **Policy and Finance Committee** of Northampton Town Council to be held at 18.00 hrs on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 in the Town Council Committee Room at Northampton Guildhall.

Public participation is welcomed in accordance with Standing Orders and the Council's Public Participation Policy

**Stuart Carter**  
**Town Clerk**  
**27<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Guildhall**  
**Northampton**  
**NN1 1DE**

**A G E N D A**

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the last meeting and ask questions as to the progress of any item**  
Minutes of the meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (p 3 – p 6)
- 4. To receive the minutes of the Accounts Sub-Committee meeting for information:**
  - (a) Minutes of the meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (p 7 – p 10)
- 5. Annual Accounts 2022/23**  
Report to be tabled
- 6. Review of Council's Financial Regulations**  
Report attached (p 11)
- 7. Review of Council's Standing Orders**  
Report attached (p 13)

- 8. Dignity at Work Policy**  
Report and draft policy attached (p 15 – p 24)
- 9. Whistleblowing Policy**  
Report and draft policy attached (p 25 – p 30)
- 10. Volunteer Policy and Child Protection Policy**  
Report and draft policies attached (p 31 – p 38)
- 11. Armed Forces Covenant**  
Report and supporting documents attached (p 39 – p 48)
- 12. Budget Working Group**  
Report attached (p 49)
- 13. Council Branding Update**  
Report attached (p 51)
- 14. Paperless agendas**  
Verbal update to be given
- 15. Boundary Commission Consultation Response**  
Report to be tabled
- 16. Accommodation Update**  
Report attached for members only (p 53 – p 54)
- 17. Items for consideration on the next agenda**

## POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD AT 6PM ON 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023 IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S OFFICES IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

**PRESENT:** Councillors Marriott (Chair) Alwahabi, Birch, Connolly, Hallam, Holland-Delamere, Kilbride, Soan and Tarasiewicz

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr S Carter (Town Clerk), Mrs C Maclellan and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

### 46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Russell.

### 47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were submitted.

### 48. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND ASK QUESTIONS AS TO THE PROGRESS OF ANY ITEM

**RESOLVED:** The Chair was authorised to sign the minute of the previous meeting held on 16th January 2023 as a true and accurate record.

### 49. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR INFORMATION:

In relation to the Accounts Sub-Committee minutes held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 the Finance Officer explained in response to a question, Wave Utilities were the water supplier for allotments and therefore the payment related to water bills. In response to a question posed, the Finance Officer stated Stageright provided event consultancy and it would be difficult to be costed to the individual event budget codes as multiple events could be discussed during one meeting.

Regarding the Accounts Sub-Committee minutes held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 the Finance Officer stated in response to a question, that some Councillor Community Fund applications had not been paid due to queries in relation to the organisations bank details.

Both sets of minutes were **NOTED**.

### 50. TO RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION ONLY THE MINUTES OF THE STAFFING SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 7TH FEBRUARY 2023

The Chair explained that three members of the staffing sub-committee intend to review the applicants and shortlist for interviews to be held the following week.

The minutes were **NOTED**.

### 51. NOTES FROM THE CIVIC MATTERS WORKING GROUP

Circulated with the agenda were the latest notes from the Civic Matters Working Group meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

The Town Clerk stated the invitation of representatives for the Twinning Association would be included on the Full Council agenda. The Chair added that the Town Council would aim to assist in recruiting members to the Twinning Association as their membership had declined.

The Town Clerk explained in response to a question, that the Heart of the Community Awards would require further discussion and decision to be made and would fall within the responsibility of the Community Services Committee.

**NOTED**

## **52. STUDY PROPOSAL**

Professor Steven Griggs (University of Staffordshire) and Dr Steven Parker (Open University) addressed the Policy & Finance Committee via Zoom.

The Town Clerk explained he circulated the proposal report and it was posed you attend to answer any questions on the strategy and how it would work.

In response to a question Professor Griggs explained no other Councils at the moment had been contacted and wished to consult the Town Council due to the existing relationship developed during the Community Needs Analysis study completed however, if Northampton Town Council declined others would be contacted.

Professor Griggs explained as part of the study they would wish to work with Northampton Town Council, another Council with West Northamptonshire Council and then two Town or Parish Councils within North Northamptonshire Council as a comparison.

Professor Griggs stated funding to support the research project would be sourced from the Economic Research Council and could take up to 6 months to hear whether the bid was successful however, if unsuccessful there was another form of funding could be applied for in September 2023.

Professor Griggs explained that if Northampton Town Council wished to partake in the research study a letter of intent would have to be supplied by the Council, then an ethics agreement would have to be formulated between the researchers and Council. Professor Griggs added that if the Council wished to cease the relationship it could at any time.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council submit a letter of intent to partake in the research study to Professor Griggs.

## **53. ST GEORGE'S DAY, REQUEST FOR FURTHER FUNDING – REFERRED FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Circulated with the agenda was a report detailing the request for further funding.

Councillor Soan stated the initial proposal presumed that graphic design and installation would be completed in-house however, this was not feasible as the Communications Officer post had not been filled. Councillor Soan continued that the largest cost was for the hire of an open space to host however, the Event and Project Office were due to have a meeting with All Saints Church regarding the hire of the portico.

**RESOLVED:** That a further £1,803 be allocated the St George's Day event from the General Events budget.

**NOTED**

#### **54. REVIEW OF SYSTEMS OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

The Town Clerk explained the report overviewed the internal controls and risk register that had been implemented. The Finance Officer explained a variety of internal control procedures and had engaged with Councillor so they could gain an understanding of the work done. The Chair added that a new internal control had been implemented of the Town Clerk completing a payroll check the process of one random Officer a month. The Finance Officer explained that quarterly invitations for Councillors to undertake internal controls would be sent so that each member of the Policy and Finance Committee would partake across the next two years.

**RESOLVED:** That review and assessment of the internal control assessment had taken place.

#### **55. ACCOMMODATION UPDATE**

Councillor Hallam made no contribution to this discussion.

The notes from the recent Accommodation Working Group were circulated to members with the agenda. It was highlighted that the priority was to stay at the Guildhall and that this was what was being prioritised. The links with the Mayoralty and the Guildhall were highlighted, as well as the prominent town centre location. It was also noted that NBC had intended that a long lease for the Guildhall be granted to the Town Council following its establishment.

The Chair stated that if any development arose he would call a meeting.

**NOTED**

#### **56. ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE – CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PROPOSALS**

The Town Clerk explained he had received a written correspondence about the electoral review of West Northamptonshire Council boundaries that would affect West Northamptonshire Council and the Town Council's and other parish council's wards.

It was noted that there was a plan to change the ward boundaries within the town council area.

**RESOLVED:** That an informal meeting of all interested councillors be called to consider the consultation.

#### **57. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Town Clerk explained the internal auditor had completed a review and their findings had been outlined within the report. The Finance Officer explained that the auditor requested a trial balance of the bank reconciliation and time period of invoices and reviews them.

The report had showed no deficiencies and no areas of concern.

**NOTED**

#### **58. REQUEST TO EARMARK UNSPENT GRANTS BUDGET AND EID BUDGET**

The Town Clerk explained that it was discussed at the Grants Sub-Committee any unspent funds from the Councillor Community Fund be earmarked for the General Community Grants Scheme to benefit the community rather than be placed in general reserves. A Councillor stated there has been a high volume of demand and this year had to defer items for next financial years budget.

**RESOLVED:** That any unspent grant funding at the end of each Financial Year be earmarked and reallocated into a Grants Reserve.

Similarly, a request to earmark unspent Eid funding for the current year had been received to assist with their plans for the coming financial year.

**RESOLVED:** That any unspent funding from the Eid event budget 2022-23 be earmarked and carried forward into the next financial year 2023-24.

#### **59. MARKETING AND BRANDING UPDATE**

The Marketing and Branding report was tabled at the meeting.

The Assistant Town Clerk explained that a brief had been created for a new logo to be developed to be used on marketing and communication materials. In response to a question, the Assistant Town Clerk stated the brief had been provided to the initial three organisations that responded to the tender. In response to another question, the Assistant Town Clerk stated that branding guidelines was part of the tender.

**RESOLVED:** That the Branding Budget be earmarked and carried forward into the next financial year 2023-24.

#### **60. INTERIM STRATEGY AND UPDATE ON LONG-TERM STRATEGY**

The Town Clerk explained he received a report from James Corrigan that would assist the Council to continue to develop its long-term strategy and once reformatted it would be circulated to all Councillors.

The Clerk also confirmed that he had almost finalised the details of an interim strategy which would be reported shortly.

#### **61. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**

It was noted that these items would be added to future Policy and Finance Committee meetings:

- (a) Review of Standing Orders
- (b) Review of Financial Regulations
- (c) Civility and respect pledge
- (d) Paperless agendas
- (e) Budget Working Group

**MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7:35PM.**

## **ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF THE ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023 AT 10AM IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHMPTON

**PRESENT:** Councillor Marriott, Birch and Hibbert.

Officers: S Carter (Town Clerk), C Maclellan (Finance Officer) and F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

### **86. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Purser.

### **87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **88. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th March as a true and accurate record.

### **89. REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23**

The latest budget indicating the expenditure and income for each budget code was tabled.

The Finance Officer (FO) explained two reports were included, end-of-year expenditure report from March 2023 and the other report included budget codes and numbers for Month One of Financial Year 2023-24. The FO explained that £884,000 had been transferred into reserves.

In response to a question in relation to Salaries & Pensions it was explained that there was a slight overspend due to the December 2022 back payment for nationally agreed payrise. Clerk explained that the 23/24 budget had been calculated to include provision for an additional officer though it was difficult to forecast wage spend exactly especially with overtime.

The FO explained that the salaries budget does not include any additional hour worked over the contractual hours. The FO explained she would undertake a budget projection exercise in partnership with the Town Clerk.

The FO explained that the budget codes had been slightly amended to what was agreed per the minutes of the Full Council budgetary meeting.

**NOTED**

### **90. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Tabled for the members was payment list for approval as attached to these minutes.

The FO explained the first section included payments made that required retrospective approval, a payment had been deducted for Xerox lease that was deducted via Direct Debit. In response to a question, the FO explained that St George's Day charges would be posted to the relevant budget

code. In response to a question regarding the Mayor's Parking Permit, the Town Clerk explained that it was a £10 annual cost for the administration of the Mayoral Vehicle's parking pass. In response to a question, the Town Clerk explained the £300 payment to Abington Park Café was paid for the refreshments however, the funds were donated by Abington Park Café to the Mayor's Charity.

The Town Clerk explained in relation to the insurance provided by, initially the Town Council was provided a two-year deal however, the facts and figures used by the Insurance Company to determine the premium was underestimated therefore, the 2023 renewal would be over-budget.

A Councillor asked for further information in relation to payment to West Northamptonshire Council. The Finance Officer explained the description was from the purchase order and she would be amended to state Civic Reception however, the payment itself was budgeted to the Civic Cost Code.

The Finance Officer explained the Councillor Community Fund grant applications were included within the payment list and this was due to approval

The Finance Officer explained that in relation to pensions there was a shortfall due to an Officer error that caused an underspend however, as the employee had paid the contribution which resolved the shortfall.

**RESOLVED:** That the payments as attached to these minutes be approved and where required be paid.

#### **91. INTERNAL CONTROLS**

The Finance Officer to give a verbal update and explained that the Town Clerk completed a payroll check for a random officer. The quarterly Councillor check would be conducted in the coming months.

**NOTED**

#### **92. BANK RECONCILIATION**

The Finance Officer tabled the bank reconciliation and supporting documents which was reviewed and signed by the members present.

**NOTED**

#### **93. RISK REGISTER**

The Town Clerk highlighted item 5 on the Risk Register, the Finance Officer had completed her FILCA training for which she was congratulated. He continued, that under item 7 had been reduced with the hire of the Communications Officer role.

In relation to accommodation it was reported that there had been no movement in securing accommodation however, the Town Clerk stated he would chase this and look at any judicial/legal precedent. A Councillor stated that Far Cotton & Delapre Community Council had been provided with accommodation at Delapre Abbey by WNC. The Town Clerk stated that he would see if he could get some information on this.

**RESOLVED:** The Risk Register was reviewed.

#### **94. YEAR END**



The FO explained Year-End had been completed, closed and reviewed by the council's accountant support who commented the accounts were clean and organised. The Finance Officer stated last year the same accountant had completed year-end 2022 however, she was able to partake in the exercise this year-end. The FO confirmed how valuable the support and advice from the accountant had been through the process, as well as offering another set of eyes.

The FO gave an update on the VAT return which was completed every quarter. A Councillor asked the Finance Officer if there were any processes or ways of working that she had seen at other councils which could improve the way we worked. The Finance Officer explained that unlike the town councils she had spoken with or visited the majority of the Town Council's financial documents were electronic rather than a paper format. The Finance Officer continued to explain that Officers complete a purchase order that must be reviewed by the Town Clerk prior to any purchase order being issued to the supplier. The Finance Officer explained the process implemented was very robust. The Town Clerk explained that it has been asked about a more automated system however, within his opinion an automated system was not required as the amount of purchase orders was not in line economically compared to the cost that would be incurred. A Councillor highlighted that an automated system may be required in the future as the Council grows. **NOTED**

#### **95. FURTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

The Finance Officer made Councillors aware she would make payments in the following days and authorising Councillors would receive notifications shortly. The Finance Officer explained that the volume of payments had decreased compared to last financial year.

It was noted that named substitutes would be useful and that this should be considered at a future meeting.

Next Meeting – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 11am.

**MEETING CONCLUDED: 11:00 AM**

Invoices Paid / Bank Deductions - Requires Retrospective Committee Approval					
12/03/2023	11750519A9021592	Wave Utilities	£	666.19	£ 666.19
24/02/2023	SINV041681	Worknest	£	114.22	£ 22.84
02/03/2023	Expenses Feb 23	Julie Thorneycroft	£	111.50	£ 111.50
14/03/2023	VOI0030934	ZenOffice	£	73.58	£ 73.58
31/03/2023	Bank Charge	Unity Bank	£	18.00	£ 18.00
03/04/2023	Xerox DD	Xerox	£	295.92	£ 59.18
27/02/2023	Ac ending 3373 Card Statement 5	Lloyds Card Statement	£	12.59	£ 12.59
27/03/2023	Corporate Card ending 3373	Lloyds Card Statement	£	466.76	£ 466.76
			£	1,758.76	£ 82.02
					£ 1,840.78

Invoice Date	Invoice No	A/c Name	Net Value	VAT	Invoice Total
05/04/2023	1302	Stage Right Productions	£ 626.45	£ 125.29	£ 751.74
06/04/2023	MTR-07176	Tangerine Red Ltd	£ 260.00	£ 52.00	£ 312.00
16/03/2023	424001358353	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 1,016.00	£ -	£ 1,016.00
13/04/2023	INV-1291	RTC Medical Solutions	£ 480.00	£ -	£ 480.00
23/02/2023	449	EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM	£ 15.00	£ -	£ 15.00
16/02/2023	14013695	Plantscape Ltd	£ 1,090.00	£ 218.00	£ 1,308.00
02/04/2023	11849879A984758	Anglian Water t/a Wave Utilities	£ 4.10	£ -	£ 4.10
26/01/2023	11550149.9	Anglian Water t/a Wave Utilities	£ 1,767.75	£ -	£ 1,767.75
13/04/2023	11878361A8990421 Graspin Lane 120123-110423	Wave Utilities	£ 170.83	£ -	£ 170.83
13/04/2023	11888967A984757 Broadmead 010323-310323	Wave Utilities	£ 4.10	£ -	£ 4.10
28/03/2023	70885-NORTPAR-09	BHIB Limited	£ 2,309.17	£ -	£ 2,309.17
30/03/2023	LCO01825	BHIB Limited	£ 14,057.87	£ -	£ 14,057.87
15/03/2023	307	Council for Voluntary Service Northampton	£ 78.00	£ 15.60	£ 93.60
11/04/2023	48319/0568655	Horizon Telecom Ltd	£ 665.60	£ 133.12	£ 798.72
16/03/2023	10876355	Idverde Ltd	£ 480.00	£ 96.00	£ 576.00
20/03/2023	INV:1000534	LUNAR PUBLISHING LTD	£ 150.00	£ 30.00	£ 180.00
28/03/2023	17468	Microshade Business Consultants Ltd	£ 295.00	£ 59.00	£ 354.00
14/03/2023	INV-MCR2204	MICHAELS CIVIC ROBES LIMITED	£ 185.35	£ 37.07	£ 222.42
03/04/2023	3/4/2023NORTHAMPTON	Northamptonshire Heritage Forum	£ 40.00	£ -	£ 40.00
16/03/2023	TPC045	The Park Cafe	£ 300.00	£ 60.00	£ 360.00
31/03/2023	491083	PSL Print Management Ltd	£ 600.00	£ 120.00	£ 720.00
14/04/2022	BK205732-1	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	£ 70.00	£ 14.00	£ 84.00
19/04/2022	BK205733-1	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
19/04/2022	BK205734-1	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
18/05/2022	BK206066-1	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
01/06/2022	MEM239364-1	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	£ 414.00	£ -	£ 414.00
24/03/2023	MTR-07141	Tangerine Red Ltd	£ 143.00	£ 28.60	£ 171.60
05/04/2023	MTR-07172	Tangerine Red Ltd	£ 48.00	£ -	£ 48.00
14/03/2023	OP/1624410	Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	£ 114.89	£ 22.98	£ 137.87
17/03/2023	424001359365	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 31.36	£ 6.27	£ 37.63
28/03/2023	424001377596	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 160.00	£ 32.00	£ 192.00
28/03/2023	424001377619	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 102.00	£ -	£ 102.00
28/03/2023	424001377622	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 42.60	£ 8.52	£ 51.12
31/03/2023	424001379798	West Northamptonshire Council	£ 1,377.00	£ -	£ 1,377.00
11/04/2023	VOI0031388	Zenoffice Limited	£ 71.29	£ 14.26	£ 85.55
11/04/2023	6	Alan Hodge	£ 150.00	£ -	£ 150.00
24/01/2023	107444968	Pitney Bowes Limited	£ 189.85	£ 37.97	£ 227.82
06/04/2023	17542	Microshade	£ 667.10	£ 133.42	£ 800.52
23/03/2023	UNI158	United African Association	£ 120.00	£ -	£ 120.00
Total Unpaid			£ 24,850.81	£ 1,262.10	£ 26,112.91
Total invoices that need retro approval			£ 1,758.76	£ 82.02	£ 1,840.78
Bank transactions not yet posted in Rialtas					
			£ 24,063.71	£ 1,128.68	£ 27,953.69

Invoices received after list produced and not posted to the system or Officer approved.					
06/04/2023	MTR-07184	Tangerine Red	£	98.00	£ 98.00
					£ 98.00

Salaries / HMRC / Pension payments MAR		Value
Salaries (Net) for April including Mayoral Allowance and Cllr. Allowances		£ 19,691.31
HMRC April		£ 9,099.32
Pensions April		£8125.25 and £151.92

**Approve fund transfer of £ (rounded down) from CCLA to Unity Bank for**

Below are the approved Councillor Community Fund Applications as per the minutes of the Grants Sub-Committee held in 24th March 2023:					
Application Reference	Organisation	Project	Ward	Councillor(s)	Amount
CCF173	Community Fridge Support	Community Fridge Support	Castle	Councillor Haqu	£387.42
CCF174	Northampton Bangladeshi Association		Castle	Councillor Haqu	£500.00
CCF175	Headway Northampton CIO	Outdoor and Garden Space	Spencer	T Eales	£2,000.00
CCF171	Vernon Terrace Nursery	New Nursery Outdoor Development	Abington	Councillor Purser	£1,486.00
CCF172	Briar Hill Primary School	Playground Project	Briar Hill	Councillor Connolly	£1,800.00
Total CCF					£6,173.42
Paid					£6,173.42
Unpaid					£0.00

**Grant value amended from original submission and committee approval - amendment approved retrospectively.**

APPLICATION REFERENCE	ORGANISATION	PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT REQUESTED	BUDGET	EXPLANATION
CCF130	Caring & Sharing Trust	Marriott	£500	£750	Councillor Marriott requested an additional £250 be allocated to CCF130 as he had remaining funds at the time due to an applicant not submitting a form prior to the deadline.
CCF133	Friends of Dallington Village	G Eales	£800	£850	Councillor G Eales had £50 remaining and once advised of this he allocated the additional £50 to CCF133.
CCF139	Girl Guiding Eastfield District	Hallam (£450) & Lane (£450)	£450	£900	Councillor Hallam in submission of CCF139 advised that £450 was to be deducted from both his and Councillor Lane's CCF for this application.
CCF163	United African Association	Ismail	£600	£800	Councillor Ismail had remaining funds and requested an additional £200 be provided to CCF163.
CCF166	The McCarthy-Dixon Foundation	Tarasiewicz (£980) Alwahabi (£687.41) Ismail (£434.67) Haque (£200)	£1,600	£2,067.41	Councillor Alwahabi, Ismail and Enam agreed to provide an additional funds towards CCF166 as they had funds remaining.
CCF170	Semilong and Trinity Neighbourhood Forum	Marriott (£520) & Birch (£181)	£520	£701	Councillor Birch requested the £181 remaining be allocated to CCF170 as she had funds remaining.

Signature 1  
Signature 2

**\*\* Balance in bank £328,689 therefore no recommendation to transfer funds this month to CCLA \*\***

**Northampton Town Council**

**Policy and Finance Committee**

**Review of the Council's Financial Regulations – report of Town Clerk**

**Purpose of report:** To inform the committee of the latest advice regarding the review of the Financial Regulations

**Recommended:** That the committee recommends to the Council that they adopt the [Financial Regulations](#) as is

Committee members will be aware that the Council has two documents which govern how it should operate, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Accordingly, each are required to be reviewed on a regular basis, usually annually.

A review of the Standing Orders is in recess, but we have been advised that the Financial Regulations should be adopted as is. Because in the coming year they will be reviewed root and branch by the National Association of Local Councils who then cascade them to all town and parishes.

The advice received from NALC is as follows:

***Review of Financial Regulations***

*At a meeting on Wednesday of all CALCs and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) it was announced that the model Financial Regulations (FRs) are to be given a root and branch overhaul. The document is one of the two key governance documents for parish and town councils (the other being Standing Orders) and the current model has been developed over many years. It has incorporated modern working practices in various updates along the way, but it is now time to “start again”. The process will be open and collaborative, so later this year there will be a call for clerks, RFOs, and Internal Controls Councillors to make comments and suggestions; we will let you know when that happens. The new model document will be available for adoption in early 2024. For the time being then, unless there is a burning need, councils are recommended to readopt their existing version without amendment and then consider the new model next year.*

The Council's Financial regulations can be viewed [here](#) and are based on the model document previously compiled by NALC.



**Northampton Town Council**

**Policy and Finance Committee**

**Review of the Council's Standing Orders – report of Town Clerk**

**Purpose of report:** To update the Council on a review of the Standing Orders

**Recommended:** That the committee adopts the current standing orders with the understanding that a further report will follow with recommendations for amendments and additions.

As stated in the previous report, Standing Orders are one of the two key council governance documents. The current standing orders are based on the NALC model document. Officers, the Chair, Cllrs Holland-Delamere and Connolly had been tasked with looking at them in depth and making necessary amendments where deemed suitable. However, owing to work volumes there is still some work to do on this.

The assistant town clerk is in the process of undertaking some work on the statutory parts of the Standing Orders, the group will then need to look at this as well as any other elements they wish to include and recommend to the council.

Accordingly, as the Council is required to review and adopt the document annually it is recommended that they do so with the knowledge that a thorough review is being undertaken with the recommendations to be forthcoming later in the year.

The present Standing Orders can be viewed [here](#).



**Northampton Town Council**

**Policy and Finance Committee**

**Dignity at Work Policy – report of Town Clerk**

**Purpose of report:** To inform the committee of the draft Dignity at Work Policy and seek their recommendation to adopt it

**Recommended:** That subject to any amendments the committee recommends its adoption to the Council

One of the many policies the town council is recommended to have is a dignity at work policy. This details to staff and councillors the expectations placed upon them and how they can go about challenging behaviour should the need arise.

The Dignity at Work Policy plays an important part in preventing staff from experiencing bullying and harassment whilst at work and ensures all staff are clear about what is acceptable behaviour in the workplace.

This policy is based on best practise and supports the sector wide initiative that is calling upon town and parish Councils to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge. One of the requirements of this pledge is to have this policy in place.

The aims of the Dignity at Work Policy are to:

- Support and sustain a positive (thriving) working environment for all staff, free from any form of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour;
- Make it clear that discrimination and harassment are unacceptable and that all members of the council have a role to play in creating a thriving environment for everyone, free from discrimination and harassment;
- Provide a framework for respect and good conduct to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and harassment, including racial and sexual harassment and sexual misconduct;
- To highlight the options available to staff who feel they are or have been subject to bullying, harassment, racial discrimination, sexual misconduct, or any other inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour;
- Provide a mechanism by which complaints can, wherever possible, be addressed in a timely way;
- Set out the responsibilities for managing and supporting staff when concerns are raised under the Dignity at Work Policy.

Members are asked to consider any comments and/or amendments and subject to his recommend that it be adopted.

The Civility and Respect Pledge will be forthcoming at a future meeting.

**Northampton Town Council**  
**Dignity, Equality and Diversity at Work Policy**

Policy Number	Version	Owner	Date Published	Review Due	Review Team
Xx	Xx	TC	Xx	xx	Town Clerk



## **Introduction**

Northampton Town Council is committed to providing a workplace in which employees and Councillors are supported to fulfil their full potential. We have developed this policy to make clear our commitment to ensuring that all employees should be treated with dignity and respect at work, in line with UK anti-discrimination legislation.

The policy sets out standards of acceptable behaviour between employees; employees and Councillors, employees and customers. Adherence to these standards will help ensure that the working environment is free from all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

## **Aims of the policy**

The aims of this policy are to help ensure that all employees can achieve their full potential at work by creating an environment which is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. Where this does occur, the policy aims to ensure that appropriate and effective action is taken to prevent any reoccurrence.

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they do not behave in a way that could be regarded as bullying, harassment or discrimination by others. Line Managers also have a positive duty to challenge wrong-doing, under-performance and inappropriate behaviour.

Sometimes people are unaware that their behaviour causes offence and is unwelcome. If it is pointed out to them that their behaviour is unacceptable to another, the problem can sometimes be resolved. The policy includes informal as well as formal action to deal with complaints of unacceptable behaviour. Experience suggests that early responses to behaviour perceived as unacceptable are the best way to resolve that behaviour.

It is important that appropriate support is provided to all those involved in a complaint of unacceptable behaviour. Further details about the support available are given later in this document. In order to provide appropriate protection to individuals who speak out against unacceptable behaviour, we will take appropriate disciplinary action if there is evidence of victimisation.

This policy also works to ensure equal opportunities for everyone who encounters Northampton Town Council, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken).

All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Council. The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents available from the local community, representing society as a whole.

## **Equality Act 2010**

The introduction of the Equality Act is a framework which provides protection from direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on one of the following protected characteristics:

- Age

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

## **Types of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 include:**

### **Direct discrimination**

Direct Discrimination includes less favourable treatment “because of” a protected characteristic. This occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perception discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see discrimination by association below).

For example:

Andrew, a senior manager, turns down Sarah’s application for promotion to a Team Leader post. Sarah, who is a lesbian, learns that Andrew did this because he believes the team that she applied to manage are homophobic. Andrew thought that Sarah’s sexual orientation would prevent her from gaining the team’s respect and managing them effectively. This is direct sexual orientation discrimination against Sarah.

### **Discrimination by association**

This applies to race, religion, or belief and sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

For example:

Clare works as a project manager and is looking forward to a promised promotion. However, after she tells her boss that her mother, who lives at home with her, has had a stroke, the promotion is withdrawn. This may be discrimination against Clare because of her association with a disabled person.

### **Perception discrimination**

This applies to age, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

For example:

Tony is 41 but looks much younger. Many people assume that he is around 20 years old. Tony is not allowed to represent his company at an international meeting because the Managing Director thinks that he is too young. Tony has been discriminated against on the perception of a protected characteristic.

### **Indirect discrimination**

Protection from indirect discrimination applies to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership and disability and gender reassignment. Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even practice in the organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

### **Harassment**

In the Act, harassment is defined as “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Protection from harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment due to perception and association.

For example:

John is disabled and is claiming harassment against his line manager after she frequently teased and humiliated him about his disability. John shares an office with Steve, and he is also claiming harassment, even though he is not disabled, as the manager's behaviour has also created an offensive environment for him.

### **Third party harassment**

Protection from third party harassment applies to sex, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Act makes the employer is only liable for harassment of staff (by third parties) who are not employees, for example customers or contractors. The employer is only liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions, the employer is aware that it has taken place, and has not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

For example:

Chris is the line manager of Peter who is gay and works on Reception. Peter mentions to Chris that he is feeling unhappy after a customer made homophobic remarks in his hearing. Chris is concerned and monitors the situation. A few days later the customer comes into the office again and makes further offensive remarks. Chris overhears this and reacts by having a word with the customer, pointing out that his behaviour is unacceptable. Chris considers following this up in a letter to him pointing out that he will ban him if this happens again but does not send the letter. Chris keeps Peter in the loop with the actions he is taking and believes he is taking reasonable steps to protect Peter from third party harassment.

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated badly because they have done something in relation to the Equality Act. For example, making or supporting a grievance or an employment tribunal claim.

For example

Jan makes a formal complaint against her manager because she feels that she has been discriminated against because of marriage. Although the complaint is resolved

through the organisation's grievance procedures, Jan is ostracised by the rest of her team, including her manager. Jan could claim victimisation.

Instructing, causing or inducing discrimination, harassment or victimisation is prohibited for all the protected characteristics.

### **What are bullying, harassment and discrimination?**

Bullying has been defined by ACAS as:

"Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient."

Harassment has been defined by ACAS as:

"Unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident." The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone else on the grounds of their sex, race or disability etc. Such behaviour may be deemed unlawful.

### **Examples of bullying, harassment and discrimination include:**

- Ridiculing and picking on someone
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Making threats and being abusive
- Persistently criticising an individual in public or private
- Spreading malicious rumours or insults
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Misuse of position

This list is not exhaustive.

However, bullying and harassment is not managing, supervising, motivating and appraising employees in accordance with recognised procedures (i.e. firm but fair management).

### **The impact of bullying, harassment and discrimination**

Bullying, harassment and discrimination can affect individuals in many ways and can cause fear, anxiety and distress. It may lead to poor performance at work and reduced productivity.

Increased absenteeism can be a feature and in some cases, it may lead to resignation. Bullying or harassment may also have an impact on the individual's personal life and career progression.

Bullying, harassment and discrimination are also costly to organisations as they can contribute to:

- Increased sickness absence
- Reduced productivity
- Increased staff turnover
- Increase in civil and tribunal claims
- Poor public image
- Costs in management time dealing with the after effects

### **Responsibilities**

Managers and supervisors are responsible for preventing unacceptable behaviour within their area and for taking appropriate action to eliminate it if it occurs. They should ensure that all incidents are dealt with promptly and fairly and with due respect for confidentiality. Managers and supervisors also have a responsibility to ensure that victims are treated in a sympathetic and sensitive manner.

Employees have a personal responsibility to ensure that they do not breach this policy. Breaches will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action. Employees can do much to discourage discrimination by refusing to collude in any way when it occurs and by supporting colleagues who suffer unacceptable behaviour. Employees are also expected to co-operate with each other and have knowledge of and adhere to relevant Council procedures. Employees who witness bullying of other employees have a responsibility to raise the issue with their manager or another appropriate person who can deal with the unacceptable behaviour.

Examples of those who can provide help and support are set out below.

### **Advice and support**

Employees who feel that the behaviour of a colleague is unacceptable are encouraged to seek advice and support from someone who can listen to their concerns, support them in raising their complaint and advise them about this policy and the complaints procedure.

This person may be any one of the following: -

- A manager
- A Trade Union representative
- A colleague

### **Complaints procedure**

An employee can deal with unacceptable behaviour in various ways, ranging from asking the person to stop the behaviour (stage one), to informal discussions with an appropriate Manager or supervisor, or to making a formal complaint (stage 3). Employees are encouraged to follow each stage. However, it is recognised that in cases of serious misconduct, the employee should go straight to stages two or three.

Anonymous complaints will not normally be acted upon. An employee who raises an issue is not under an obligation to take further action. Equally, action may not be taken if they choose not to pursue a complaint (However, please see page 8 regarding malicious complaints).

It is recognised that on occasions it can be difficult for an employee who feels they are being subjected to unacceptable behaviour, to report this as they feel threatened. This will be taken into account when considering reports or when an employee is reluctant to report an incident.

### **Stage 1: Informal discussion**

Employees who feel that another colleague's behaviour is unacceptable are encouraged to raise their concerns in a diplomatic but clear way with the individual whose behaviour is causing concern.

In most cases informal action is likely to be successful, but it needs to be taken at an early stage when both parties can talk comfortably and openly with each other. If the behaviour continues, or the employee feels unable to follow this step, they have the option of contacting at any

informal stage a manager or Trade Union (TU) representative for signposting/support or should move to Stage 2.

### **Stage 2:**

Manager (Informal stage)

The employee should raise the matter in writing with the appropriate Manager (or if they are the cause of the complaint, the Town Clerk). The Manager will be expected to meet with both parties as soon as possible.

Initially this will be a separate meeting with each party so that the senior Manager can understand the complaint. The Manager will then try to hold a joint meeting to achieve an end to the unacceptable behaviour. If either party wishes to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative/colleague, this should be allowed. Mediation may be used as a solution to the situation. If the behaviour continues, or the employee feels unable to follow this step, they should move to the formal complaints procedure at Stage 3.

### **Stage 3:**

Formal complaints procedure

Before making a formal complaint there is an expectation that the employee will have attempted to use stages one and two. However, in exceptional cases, where the severity of the circumstances warrants such an approach the employee may move straight to this stage.

The employee should formally report the complaint in writing to the Town Clerk who will then arrange for the matter to be investigated, as soon as practicable. A complaint may also be made to the Town Clerk via a trade union representative. The Town Clerk will arrange for all parties (including witnesses) to be interviewed separately. Each party will be entitled to be interviewed with a Trade Union representative or work colleague present (in exceptional circumstances, a representative, such as a friend, may be allowed).

Notes will be taken during the interviews to ensure that an accurate record is available. A copy of the notes will be given to the interviewees for them to sign as an accurate statement of what they have said.

All complaints will be investigated in a sympathetic, sensitive, timely and confidential manner. Confidentiality will be maintained in so far as is consistent with progressing the investigation of a complaint. Employees will receive a fair and impartial hearing. All parties will be updated on progress on a regular basis.

The Town Clerk will consider the findings from the investigation and determine if there is a case to be answered. If the investigation reveals that the complaint is upheld, prompt action designed to stop the unacceptable behaviour immediately and prevent its recurrence will be taken. This may include action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

If the conclusion is that there is no case to answer, the complainant will be informed and will have the right to appeal against the decision. This will be heard by the Staffing Sub-Committee and the outcome will conclude the internal process.

Employees shall be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for making a complaint under the Equality Act 2010. Retaliation against an employee is unacceptable and

may be a disciplinary matter. Please also see the Whistle blowing Policy and the Public Concern at Work website for further support.

The making of a malicious and unfounded complaint against a colleague is also unacceptable and may constitute harassment which warrants formal disciplinary action.

### **Unreasonable behaviour by customers**

The Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment. We recognise that customers can sometimes feel vulnerable, threatened or frustrated. However, we feel that it is not acceptable for customers to be violent, threatening, abusive or aggressive to staff and we will not tolerate such behaviour. Employees who experience unreasonable behaviour from a customer will be fully supported if they decide to take appropriate action. Sometimes customers may not realise that their behaviour is unacceptable and by pointing this out to them the matter can be resolved.

Also, by remaining calm, listening carefully and empathising with the customer it is often possible to diffuse the situation and achieve a positive outcome.

### **Dealing with phone enquiries**

If you feel that the customer's behaviour is unreasonable, explain this to them and advise them that if they continue with this behaviour, you will not be able to help them. If you do decide to terminate the call, please record the fact on the incident reporting system and make your line manager aware.

### **Dealing with visitors**

If you feel that the customer's behaviour is unreasonable, explain this to them and advise them that if they continue with this behaviour, you will not be able to help them. If you are uncomfortable with the situation, seek support from your line manager. A record of the incident should be kept.

### **Unreasonable behaviour by Councillors**

Councillors are expected to treat employees in a professional and appropriate way. There are separate policies which cover the responsibilities and behaviour of Councillors. If you experience unreasonable behaviour by a Councillor, please make the relevant Manager aware and they will take further appropriate action.

### **Whistleblowing Policy**

This policy also has links to the Whistle blowing Policy. In some cases, an individual may choose to report any bullying and harassment anonymously through the Whistle blowing channels if there is fear of on-going conflict or victimisation.

Please see the Whistle blowing Policy for further details.

### **Accessibility**

The Council will ensure its communications and information is accessible to all and that no one is excluded. The Council will strive to ensure that everyone is able to engage with the Council, take part in consultations and take part in the work of the Council as directed by other policies eg questions at Committee meetings.

**Rationale and legal basis**

This policy takes account of UK anti-discrimination legislation, The Equality Act, ACAS guidelines and Health and Safety legislation and guidance.

Approved: xxxx



Northampton Town Council

Policy and Finance Committee

Whistleblowing Policy – report of Town Clerk

**Purpose of report:** To inform the committee of the draft Whistleblowing Policy and seek their recommendation to adopt it

**Recommended:** That subject to any amendments the committee recommends its adoption to the Council

As was stated in the previous agenda, a further policy the town council is recommended to have is a whistleblowing policy.

This policy is based on best practise and supports the sector wide initiative that is calling upon town and parish Councils to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge. One of the requirements of this pledge is to have this policy in place.

Having a whistleblowing policy in place can be helpful for the following reasons:

It gives employers an opportunity to educate staff and management and reinforces the standards expected in their organisation;

Employees ought to make protected disclosures to a suitably trained manager who:

- a. realises the seriousness of the situation;
- b. can make sure allegations are investigated as appropriate; and
- c. can take steps to limit the potential damage to the employer.

A clear whistleblowing policy can protect a firm in the event a false or malicious accusation is made by a current or former employee. A whistleblowing policy can explain the consequences of when such an accusation is made;

Having a whistleblowing policy in place communicates to staff that the employer takes any wrongdoing very seriously and is committed to identifying and remedying it;

A clear whistleblowing policy encourages a culture where wrongdoing can be addressed quickly and potentially before any regulatory action or damage to reputation;

A whistleblowing policy can also reinforce to staff the importance of their duty of confidentiality to the council

Members are asked to consider any comments and/or amendments and subject to his recommend that it be adopted.

The Civility and Respect Pledge will be forthcoming at a future meeting.



# Northampton Town Council Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Number	Version	Owner	Date Published	Review Due	Review Team
Xx	Xx	TC	Xx	xx	Town Clerk

## **Policy**

It is important that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by staff or others working on behalf of the council is reported and properly dealt with. We therefore require all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the council. This policy sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns that they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.

## **Background**

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters in the public interest. These are called "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made by an employee who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- a breach of any other legal obligation; or
- concealment of any of the above;

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for you to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. You have no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is the council's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

If you make a protected disclosure you have the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because you have made a disclosure. We encourage you to raise your concerns under this procedure in the first instance.

## **Principles**

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Staff and others working on behalf of the council should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.
- Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the person who raised the issue.
- No employee or other person working on behalf of the council will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the worker will not be prejudiced because they have raised a legitimate concern.

- Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure our disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent. You should report the matter to the Town Clerk or the Chair of the Council.

## **Procedure**

If you believe a Councillor has breached the councillor Code of Conduct, then raise it with the relevant group leader. Concerns relating to an alleged breach of the councillor Code of Conduct will be referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation.

This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of your own contract of employment, which should be raised via the Grievance Procedure.

### Stage 1

In the first instance, any concerns should be raised with the Town Clerk, who will arrange an investigation of the matter. The investigation may involve you and other individuals involved giving a written statement. Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out above. Your statement will be taken into account, and you will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained.

The Town Clerk (or delegated officer) will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to the Council, or any appropriate government department or regulatory agency. The Town Clerk (or delegated officer) will also invoke any disciplinary action if required. On conclusion of any investigation, insofar as confidentiality allows, you will be told the outcome and what the council has done, or proposes to do, about it. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

### Stage 2

If you are concerned that the Town Clerk is involved in the wrongdoing, has failed to make a proper investigation or has failed to report the outcome of the investigations to the relevant person, you should escalate the matter to the Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee. The Chair will arrange for a review of the investigation to be carried out, make any necessary enquiries.

### Stage 3

If on conclusion of stages 1 and 2 you reasonably believe that the appropriate action has not been taken, you should report the matter to the relevant body. This includes:

- HM Revenue & Customs

- The Health and Safety Executive
- The Environment Agency
- The Serious Fraud Office
- The Charity Commission
- The Pensions Regulator
- The Information Commissioner
- The Financial Conduct Authority

You can find the full list in The Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2014: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/496899/BIS-16-79-blowing-the-whistle-to-a-prescribed-person.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496899/BIS-16-79-blowing-the-whistle-to-a-prescribed-person.pdf)

### **Data protection**

When an individual makes a disclosure, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with the data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the report is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Date of policy: xx

Approving committee:

Date of committee meeting:

Policy version reference:

Supersedes: [Name of old policy and reference]

Policy effective from:

Date for next review:

Northampton Town Council

Policy and Finance Committee

Volunteer Policy and Child Protection Policy – report of Assistant Town Clerk

**Purpose of report:** To present two draft policies for adoption by members of the Policy and Finance Committee – **Volunteer Policy and a Child Protection Policy**.

**Recommended:** That members of the Policy and Finance committee read and adopt the draft policies as presented.

**Volunteer Policy**

Northampton Town Council is committed to delivering projects and events in its area and building on its reputation as a creative and dynamic place where quality of life is enhanced by a range of vibrant festivals, events and projects. To facilitate the council in delivering the varied events programme throughout the year it is keen to introduce volunteering opportunities within the community.

The full volunteering programme will aim to empower individuals, enhance skills and allow a chance for volunteers to meet and socialise with new people.

Attached is draft volunteer policy for adoption by the committee as a first step to our volunteering programme. It is based on best practise documents and will assist the council in many of its projects such as the Coronation Help Out and the Climate Change Forum, many of whom who assist on this are volunteers.

In turn, it provides assurances and guidance for the volunteers, assuming that they are valued and treated fairly.

**Child Protection Policy**

The draft Child Protection policy is aimed to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm whilst within the care of Northampton Town Council. This policy is an essential part of the safeguarding process and is necessary to instil confidence in our volunteers. The policy links with the volunteer policy as on occasion, children will attend with their parents. In addition, children and young people are attendees at all our events and it is necessary to have these policies in place accordingly. Again, this policy is based on best practise sector specific documents.

The Council has also been requested to take on work experience students, this policy will assist with managing that.

The attached draft policy is recommended for approval.







# NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

## DRAFT VOLUNTEER POLICY

At Northampton Town Council (NTC) we celebrate and support our residents, make Northampton bloom, promote a packed calendar of events, and proudly empower our people and communities.

As the largest town council in the country, from Boothville and Parklands in the north and Rushmills and Riverside in the south, to Rectory Farm in the east, St James and Kings Heath in the west, and Northampton town centre at its heart - we pride ourselves on making things happen.

We are proud custodians of an 800-year-old Mayoralty, honouring our distinctive Civic history and are committed to showcasing our local talent as well as our multi-cultural town's culture, creativity and diverse heritage with a focus on making Northampton cleaner, greener and healthier.

We organise a variety of fun, free, family focused events and projects and award more than £225,000 a year in grants to local organisations and groups with ideas and a determination to make a difference. We do all this while at the same time carefully managing our budget to ensure transparency and value for money for each and every one of our 130,000+ residents.

NTC officially formed on 1st April 2021. The town council is the first tier of local government that is closest to the community. Consisting of 25 elected councillors and a growing team of staff, we work to deliver and evolve the range of services we provide across four committees. We work closely with West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and Northampton Business Improvement District (BID), collaborating with many partners, businesses and organisations within the town.

### **Northampton Town Council – we are here for you.**

Northampton Town Council is responsible for the wellbeing of residents who live in the town's wards. The work we do falls into three main categories:

- representing the local community
- delivering services to meet local needs
- striving to improve quality of life in the town wards

Northampton Town Council involves volunteers to create a diverse organisation that includes communities and wider networks. Volunteers bring a wide range of skills, experience and knowledge which in turn, builds on the Town Council's resources to help achieve our mission and goals.

### **Statement of Intent:**

Northampton Town Council will provide volunteer opportunities to help people connect with others, learn new skills and gain confidence. The council will not replace staff paid roles with voluntary roles, but instead offer enhancing opportunities that benefit both the volunteer and the organisation. This may include specific roles within individual events or projects or a role that covers a variety of events.

Northampton Town Council also supports applications for work placements. Individuals on these schemes are also covered by the volunteer policy.

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Northampton Town Council. People volunteer for a number of reasons, for example:

- To socialise
- To put something back into society
- To regain or learn new employment skills
- To occupy their time
- Northampton Town Council acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways and that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. Northampton Town Council values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

### **Aim**

The overall aims of the volunteering policy are to develop and promote best practice in the involvement and support of volunteers in the work of Northampton Town Council. This policy aims to:

- Encourage the development of volunteering in all areas of the Council.
- Recognise and promote the importance of volunteering to the work of the Council.
- Ensure support, training and supervision for Council volunteers.
- Identify the standards to which Council employees and volunteers are expected to adhere.
- Provide guidance and best practice to Council staff in working with volunteers and ensure the application of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy to volunteering.
- Ensure that volunteering with the council is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.
- The Council aims to work with local communities and partners to develop a diverse range of suitable volunteering activities that are relevant for the people of Northampton.

### **Statement of Values and Principles**

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Northampton Town Council and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise, Northampton Town Council cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

### **Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers**

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all. The acceptance of a volunteer to a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out the agreed tasks. Any person must be aged 16 or over to volunteer with the Council.

### **Health and Safety**

The Council has a duty of care to avoid exposing our volunteers to health and safety risks. All volunteers will be made aware of the Council's Health and Safety Policies and Procedures and any practical safety concerns as part of their induction. Volunteers are expected to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Procedures. All volunteer roles will be risk assessed, covering both the tasks involved and the environment in which they will be conducted. In addition, where a volunteer makes us aware of a pre-existing medical condition or disability, an individual risk assessment may also be necessary. If the role requires PPE, the council will provide this as they would an employee.

### **Training**

All volunteers will be inducted and trained in their relevant role prior to carrying out any tasks on behalf of Northampton Town Council.

### **Safeguarding**

All supervisors must ensure that volunteers are aware of, and have received the appropriate training in the [Council's Safeguarding Policy on Children and Adults](#).

### **Expenses**

The Council is committed to paying reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses ensuring that potential volunteers are not excluded due to financial reasons. These need to be agreed with the relevant manager before the volunteer commences their activity. Where expenses are not agreed, volunteers must be made aware of this at their first opportunity in the recruitment process.

### **Volunteers in Receipt of Benefits**

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to establish whether volunteering is going to affect their entitlement to any social security benefits. Further advice should be obtained from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Job Centre Plus or Citizens Advice Bureau.

### **Insurance**

[Northampton Town Council's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them](#). The Council does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage. Where volunteers drive as part of their voluntary activity, and use their own vehicle, they

must ensure they possess the relevant class of insurance. Further guidance should be sought from the volunteer's own insurance company.

### **Equality and Diversity**

Northampton Town Council is a Disability Confident Employer, and are committed to equal opportunities and fair treatment for all. Whilst volunteers are not employees and are therefore not protected as employees under the Equality Act, it is not acceptable to discriminate against them. We will ensure that volunteering opportunities are inclusive and available to all. Volunteers still have a right not to be discriminated against, in the same way as a customer or service user has this right.

Any decisions made about a volunteer's suitability for tasks, or regarding their ongoing volunteering within the Council, will be made fairly and in line with equality legislation.

There is an expectation that all our volunteers will adhere to the Council's equality policies, ensuring that their own conduct when carrying out volunteering tasks does not discriminate against others or breach equality legislation. Volunteers are advised to read the Volunteer Handbook.

**We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.**

This policy was adopted on: .....(date)

Signed: .....(date)

Review Date: .....



# NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

## DRAFT Child Protection Policy

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and members, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Northampton Town Council.

### The purpose of this policy:

- to protect children and young people who receive Northampton Town Council's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;
- Northampton Town Council believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

### Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

### We recognise that:

the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989

- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

**We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

**We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.**

This policy was adopted on: .....(date)

Signed: .....(date)

Review Date: .....

**Northampton Town Council**

**Policy and Finance Committee**

**Armed Forces Covenant – report of Civic and Mayoralty Officer**

**Purpose of report:** To inform the Policy and Finance Committee of how the Covenant will be signed and for the Committee to agree on the pledges to be included in the Covenant. To agree that a working group be formed to manage the process

**Recommended:**

- (i) That the Policy and Finance Committee agree to the signing of the Covenant on Armed Forces Day 24<sup>th</sup> June 2023
- (ii) That the Policy and Finance Committee agree on the general pledges NTC's Covenant will uphold
- (iii) That the committee delegate the detail of the wording and the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant to the Town Clerk, Civic and mayoral Officer in consultation with the Chair and any other interested councillors

**1. Signing of the Covenant**

The Town Council at its last meeting agreed in principle that the Council should sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant and instructed this committee to look at the detail.

In the Armed Forces Day Planning Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023 it was discussed to allow the provision for the Armed Forces Covenant to be signed as part of the day's activities.

Attendees of the meeting were shown detail of the Freedom Parade for 103 Btn REME which took place on Armed Forces Day in 2017. There was a dais set up at the rear end of the memorial garden on Woodhill, the parade halted and short speeches and a presentation was held. It was agreed in the AFD Planning meeting that this formula would be practical and visually impactful for Northampton Town Council's signing ceremony.

LH has reached out to the Ministry of Defence and has been assigned an Officer from the East Midlands RFCA, Army Reserve Centre to support with the arrangements if approved.

**2. Covenant Pledges**

The Council will need to uphold the principles of the Covenant by; (information from the Armed Forces Covenant template)

- **Promoting the Armed Forces:** promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces-friendly organisation, to our staff, customers, suppliers, contractors and wider public.
- **Veterans:** supporting the employment of veterans, recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process; working with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to support the employment of Service leavers;
- **Service Spouses & Partners:** supporting the employment of Service spouses and partners; partnering with the Forces Families Jobs Forum (<https://www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk/>); and providing flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment.
- **Reserves:** supporting our employees who are members of the Reserve Forces; granting additional paid/unpaid leave for annual Reserve Forces training; supporting any

mobilisations and deployment; actively encouraging members of staff to become Reservists;

- **Cadet Organisations:** supporting our employees who are volunteer leaders in military cadet organisations, granting additional leave to attend annual training camps and courses; actively encouraging members of staff to become volunteer leaders in cadet organisations; supporting local military cadet units; recognising the benefits of employing cadets/ex-cadets within the workforce.
- **National Events:** supporting Armed Forces Day, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal Day and Remembrance activities;
- **Armed Forces Charities:** supporting Armed Forces charities with fundraising and supporting staff who volunteer to assist;
- **Commercial Support:** offering a discount to members of the Armed Forces community;

There is a [guide for local authorities](#) on what to pledge and how to deliver content of their Covenant pledges. As Stuart has previously advised there are 7 themes that Councils can pledge under, additionally Councils are permitted to write their own pledges.

### **Armed Forces Champion/s**

All pledges advised below can be managed by the Civic and Mayoral Officer who has volunteered to be an Armed Forces Covenant Champion for NTC i.e. the person responsible in the organisation to make sure that pledges are being met. LH has been coordinating Remembrance Day and Armed Forces Day for Northampton for the past 5 years and additionally has a brother who serves in the REME.

Additional Champions can also be nominated i.e. Councillors. WNC have both an Officer and Councillor Champion.

Information from

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-community-covenant/armed-forces-community-covenant#:~:text=The%20role%20of%20a%20'champion,and%20any%20blockages%20are%20resolved.>

**Pledges** – information from Covenant Example Pledges (APPENDIX 1) The themes are as follows; with notes on how we think view NTC is best placed to pledge under these items.

**1: Employment** – as NTC's staff is relatively small it could be best to pledge to support Armed Forces Recruitment (for example we often share recruitment drive information on the Mayor's Facebook page which we have been sent by Clare Street Barracks)

We can also pledge to support local businesses within our Parish who are dedicated to support veteran's seeking employment in our community such as Goodwill Solutions

We can formalise this pledge by sending out comms to local companies to see if they would like us to share their information on our platforms and we can liaise with 103 Bn REME regularly to make sure we have regular updates and information to share on our platforms.

It is possible to join the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Award Scheme – information is below – it



is worth noting that this aspect of the Employment Pledge will need to be separately managed and relates quite specifically to HR Policy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme/defence-employer-recognition-scheme>

**2: Communications, engagement and outreach** – NTC has a very healthy relationship with local Armed Forces Cadet groups, the RBL and many other local charities including but not limited to SAFA, RAFA, ABF and Help for Hero's. The Mayor has a Sea Cadet appointed to them every year NTC provides a small grant to the Sea Cadet unit in Northampton. Under this item we could pledge our continued support to our local Cadet force, charities and organisations.

**3: Commercial** – would not be an applicable pledge for a local authority

**4. Health and Healthcare** – would not be an applicable pledge for a Parish Council as we are not responsible for these services

**5: Housing** – would not be an applicable pledge for a Parish Council as we are not responsible for these services

**6: Education** – would not be an applicable pledge for a Parish Council as we are not responsible for these services

**7: Civic responsibilities** – is proposed to be the most relevant and active pledge for Northampton Town Council. We are responsible for Northampton's largest Military public events; Remembrance Day and Armed Forces Day along with the additional Laforay Parade held by the Sea Cadets. It is proposed that we pledge to continue this Civic support and promotion for these specific events and make provision for any future suggested events from the Military and local charities

In addition, it may be worth pledging that NTC sends a Champion to the WNC Covenant Meetings where we can be signposted on ways we can support locally.

### **3. Delegation**

As Armed Forces Day is 8 weeks away this report seeks permission for the tasks to be delegated to the below Officers/Members to finalise all arrangements ;

Town Clerk

Civic and Mayoral Officer

Councillors to be confirmed

It is proposed for it to be agreed that the first draft of the Armed Forces Covenant and Pledges to be agreed in this meeting (see Appendix 2)

## Signing the Armed Forces Covenant – Example Pledges

*The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated fairly and should not face disadvantages when seeking to access public or private goods and services in the UK. The Covenant also provides for special provision to be made for those who have given the most, where this is justified.*

*Signing the Covenant is voluntary. Organisations may choose to sign up in order to demonstrate their support for the Armed Forces Community and for the principles of the Covenant. All organisations – public, private or voluntary and small, medium or large – are welcome to sign the Covenant.*

*The Covenant is a flexible tool. While all signatories pledge to uphold and act in accordance with the basic principles of the Covenant, organisations are free to tailor their specific pledges to suit their circumstances. In other words, organisations are free to specify – with as much or as little detail as they think necessary – how exactly they plan to support and uphold the Covenant.*

*The team at Defence Relationship Management will help prospective signatories to develop their individualised Covenants. All prospective signatories begin with the basic Covenant template, but they can then choose what, if any, additional pledges they wish to add to this.*

*Listed below are some suggestions for pledges that prospective signatories may wish to consider. These can be edited or re-worded as appropriate. The suggestions are grouped thematically – each theme may be more or less relevant to particular organisations, depending on what that organisation does (for example, ‘housing’ may be especially relevant to certain local authorities, while private-sector businesses are likely to be particularly interested in pledges around ‘employment’).*

## **Theme 1: Employment**

- Support **Reservists** by offering them additional days of annual leave (paid/unpaid) in order to carry out their duties.
- Offer work placements, insight days, mentoring schemes and/or guaranteed interview schemes to **Veterans** seeking employment.
- Support the employment of Service **spouses, partners and dependants**, for example by: signing up to [Forces Families Jobs](#); offering short-notice leave to those whose partners are sent on deployment; and working with the tri-Service Families Federations.
- Promote **employment schemes** aimed at the Armed Forces Community, such as '[A Great Place to Work](#)' and '[Step Into Health](#)'.
- Offer additional (paid/unpaid) annual leave to **Cadet Force Adult Volunteers** to help them carry out their training requirement.
- Offer insight days to older **Cadets** looking for apprenticeships and further education opportunities.
- Engage with the [Career Transition Partnership](#).
- Work with relevant charities and the Career Transition Partnership to offer work opportunities to the **Wounded, Injured and Sick**.
- Consider ways in which **remote-working solutions** might benefit the mobile Armed Forces Community, especially partners and spouses.

## **Theme 2: Communications, engagement and outreach**

- Provide and/or promote **training**, such as e-learning, for your staff on the Armed Forces Community.
- Promote the Armed Forces Covenant, the [Defence Employer Recognition Scheme](#) and your support for the Armed Forces Community to your staff, customers/service users, supply chains and the wider public.
- Support or promote **Armed Forces events**, such as Armed Forces Day/Week, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal and Remembrance activities.
- Use the **Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme logos** in your communications and marketing.
- Create a dedicated Armed Forces page on your **website**.
- Establish an internal **Armed Forces Network** within your organisation, to enable staff members with an Armed Forces connection to meet and support one another and provide feedback to you as an organisation.

- Appoint an **Armed Forces Champion** within your organisation to act as a focal point for organising and promoting support for the Armed Forces Community.
- Engage with and support **local Armed Forces charities**, for example by supporting their fundraising activities.
- **Signpost** members of the Armed Forces Community to available support, for example from [Cobseo](#), the [Veterans' Gateway](#) or statutory services in your area.
- Run, facilitate or promote **support networks** (such as coffee mornings, breakfast clubs) for veterans and other members of the Armed Forces Community.
- Engage with any **local Armed Forces presence** – for example, local Army units, reservist units, RAF stations and/or naval bases.
- Develop relationships and **work collaboratively with other organisations supporting the Covenant** and the Armed Forces Community in your locality/region.

### **Theme 3: Commercial**

- Offer and/or promote **commercial discounts** for members of the Armed Forces Community via the [Defence Discount Service](#).
- Waive **cancellation fees** for utility and other contracts for those posted overseas or to areas outside the service provision.
- Ensure the Armed Forces Community has **fair access** to your services and is not put at a disadvantage by their service, for example as a result of their high mobility.

### **Theme 4: Health and healthcare**

- Take part in and/or promote **awareness-raising schemes**, such as veteran-friendly [accreditation for GP practices](#) and the [Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance](#).
- Ensure available **dedicated healthcare services** for members of the Armed Forces Community, such as [Op COURAGE](#) in England, are signposted and promoted.
- Offer **concessionary access** to leisure centres and sports facilities for members of the Armed Forces Community.

### **Theme 5: Housing**

- Waive the **local-connection requirement** for eligibility for social housing for ex-Service personnel [statutorily, the requirement must be disapplied for those who left the Armed Forces within the last five years, but local authorities can choose to disapply it for all ex-Service personnel].

- Provide for **additional preference** in your social housing allocation scheme for certain members of the Armed Forces Community.
- Promote **awareness** of housing and homelessness services among the Armed Forces Community.

## **Theme 6: Education**

- Note, promote and/or make use of the provisions for Armed Forces families in the **School Admissions Code** (England), for example by allocating school places in advance of a family arriving in a local area.
- Promote and/or use resources such as the **Service Children Progression Alliance's [Thriving Lives Toolkit](#)**.
- [For schools with Service children among their pupils] Develop a clear strategy for the effective use of any **dedicated funding** (for example the [Service Pupil Premium](#) in England) in support of Service pupils.
- Support and promote the **wellbeing of Service children**, recognising the particular experiences and challenges they may face.
- Promote **training and further/higher education opportunities** for Service leavers, ex-Service personnel and their families.

## **Theme 7: Civic responsibilities**

- [If you are a local council] Ensure upkeep of **war memorials and war graves** (with support from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission).
- Organise, facilitate, promote and/or take part in **remembrance and other ceremonial activities**.



## **Northampton Town Council**

**We commit to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, both regular and reservist, veterans and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country.**

Signed on behalf of:

**Northampton Town Council**

Signed:

Name:

Position:

Date:



**Northampton  
TOWN COUNCIL**

# The Armed Forces Covenant

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom  
His Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most, such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

## Section 1: Principles of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We, **Northampton Town Council** , will endeavour to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:

- *Members of the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantages arising from their service in the provision of public and commercial services.*
- *In some circumstances special provision may be justified, especially for those who have given the most, such as the injured or bereaved.*

## Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 We recognise the contribution that Service personnel, reservists, veterans, the cadet movement and military families make to our organisation, our community and to the country. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant by:

- **Promoting the Armed Forces: using our network we ledge to promote local Armed Forces contingencies such as 103 and 108 bn REME's recruitment drives and events, local Cadets and charities. Northampton Town Council will each year recruit a Sea Cadet to support the Mayor and provide the local Sea Cadet Unit with a grant.**
- **Civic responsibilities: with the co-ordination and promotion of local Military events such as Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Day and the Laforay Parade. We pledge to continue this Civic support and promotion for these specific events and make provision for any future suggested events from the Military and local charities**

2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and/or on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Armed Forces Community and our constituents on how we are doing.



**Northampton Town Council**

**Policy and Finance Committee**

**Budget Working Group – report of Town Clerk**

**Purpose of report:** To seek the committees view on the formation of a budget working group

**Recommended:** That the committee recommends the formation of a budget working group

Members will recall that the Chair previously highlighted an intention to introduce a budget working group.

The primary aim of the working group would be to work Chairs and Vice Chairs accountable in an informal meeting with regards to budget management, planning, planned expenditure etc.

This would give Chairs and Vice Chairs a steer on how the other committees are working from a finance perspective.

It should be noted that the Accounts Sub-Committee monitors budgets and reports accordingly.

The following terms are suggested:

Membership: Chairs and Vice Chairs of Standing Committees

Occurrence: Once a quarter

Timing: to be held in the day

Venue: Hybrid, online or TC office

Chair: Incumbent Policy and Finance Chair

The first meeting has been scheduled for 31 May 2023 at 11:00 hours.



**Northampton Town Council**

**Policy and Finance Committee**

**Council Branding Update – report of Assistant Town Clerk**

**Purpose of report:** To update on the progress of the Marketing and Branding project for Northampton Town Council.

**Recommended:** That the committee note the report and its contents.

The final branding and logo brief document circulated to three local creative companies, Third Avenue Creative, Creative Folks and Tangerine Red.

**Branding WG meeting – 19<sup>th</sup> April**

A meeting of the branding working party (Cllrs Birch, Holland-Delamere, Russell, Kilbride and officers) was held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023. All three creative companies had submitted branding proposals in line with the brief. At the meeting the proposals were discussed in depth, a decision was taken to appoint Third Avenue Creative as the chosen supplier.

**Branding WG meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> April**

A meeting of the working group was held on 26<sup>th</sup> April – Ben Tompkins (Founder, Third Avenue Creative) was invited to the meeting. Ben advised the group of the following stepped process which was agreed by the group.

**Research:**

The first step is to understand Northampton Town Council - the organisation, its goals, customers and the expectations and behaviour, and how the new brand factors into all of it. This stage will give a foundation for moving forward with the design and development of the new branding.

**Concept Design:**

Third Avenue will provide initial design concepts for the brand; including logo, colours, font and examples of supporting collateral. 3-4 design concepts will be provided.

**Brand Development:**

Agreement on the final concept leading to the design of all the supporting brand collateral and guidelines that define the brand.

**Final Delivery:**

Following sign off of the branding collateral and supporting documents Third Avenue will provide the necessary logo files and templates in order for Northampton Town Council to fully implement the new branding across the organisation.

A September branding launch was agreed by the working party.

