



LUDLOW TOWN COUNCIL STAFFING COMMITTEE AGENDA

To: All Members of the Council, Town Clerk
Contact: Kate Adams
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Despatch date: 12th September 2025

STAFFING COMMITTEE

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the
Staffing Committee
at the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow, SY8 1AZ
on **THURSDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER 2025 at 9:30am**

Kate Adams
Deputy Town Clerk

Key Agenda Items:

- **RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY**
- **SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY**
- **EFFICIENCY REVIEW**

Public Open Session (15 minutes) – Members of the public are invited to make representations to the Council on any matters relating to the work of the Council or to raise any issues of concern.



1. **Health and Safety**

Councillors and members of the public are to note that the fire exit can be found to the left outside the Council Chamber and via the front door. The fire assembly point is on the pavement opposite the Guildhall. For fire safety purposes all Councillors should sign the attendance book and members of the public should sign the attendance sheet.

2. **Recording of Meeting**

Under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, recording and broadcast including blogging, tweeting and other social media is permitted during this meeting.

The act of recording and broadcasting must not interfere with the meeting.

The Council understands that some members of the public may not wish to be recorded and asks that they make this known immediately.

3. **Apologies**

To receive apologies as notified to the Deputy Town Clerk.

4. **Declarations of Interests**

Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate. (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations.

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest
- b) Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
- c) Declarations of Personal Interest

5. **Public Open Session (15 minutes)**

Members of the public are invited to make representations to the Council on any matters relating to the work of the Council.

6. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record and sign the open and closed minutes of the **STAFFING COMMITTEE** of 22nd August 2025.

7. **Items to Action**

To note the items to action from the **STAFFING COMMITTEE** on 22nd August 2025.



ITEM	ATTACHMENT
8. <u>RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY</u> To consider the updated Recruitment and Selection Policy.	8
9. <u>SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY</u> To review the risk assessment, policy and action plan.	9
10. <u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960</u> The Chairman will move that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.	No papers
11. <u>EFFICIENCY REVIEW</u> To consider the proposed Terms of Reference and a draft outline timetable for the efficiency review.	10
12. <u>UPDATE ON STAFFING ISSUE</u> To receive a verbal update on a staffing issue.	No papers
13. <u>UPDATE ON CURRENT RECRUITMENT</u> To receive an update on the current status of recruitment for the Deputy Supervisor and Market Assistant role.	No papers
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>M e m b e r s h i p</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Councillors: Cowell, Gill, Harris, Hepworth, Lyle, Maxwell-Muller (Vice Chair), Owen and Scott-Bell (Chair).</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Date of the next Staffing Committee meeting: 9.30am on Thursday 17th December 2025</p>	

Item 6.

MINUTES

MINUTES

Minutes of a Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **FRIDAY 22ND AUGUST 2025** at 9:30 am.

ST/18 PRESENT

Chair: Councillor Maxwell-Muller

Councillors: Cowell, Lyle, and Owen.

Officers: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk

ST/19 ABSENT

Councillors Gill, Harris, Hepworth & Scott-Bell.

ST/20 HEALTH & SAFETY

The Chair informed Councillors of the fire exits, fire assembly point and asked that everyone sign the attendance log.

ST/21 RECORDING OF MEETINGS

The Chair notified those present that under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, recording and broadcasting is permitted during public session of Council Meetings.

ST/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Gill, Harris, Hepworth & Scott-Bell.

ST/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
None declared.

Conflict of Interest
None declared.

Personal Interests
None declared.

ST/24 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public or press present.

ST/25 MINUTES

RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That the open and closed session minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on the 26th June 2025 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

ST/26 ITEMS TO ACTION

RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That the items to action of the Staffing Committee meeting held on the 26th June 2025 be noted.

ST/27 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY AWARD 2025/26

RESOLVED KC/RO (unanimous)

To note the pay award and adopt the new pay scales.

ST/28 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED IMM/KC (unanimous)

That that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public be excluded and the meeting continue in closed session.

The meeting closed at 10.08 am.

Chair

Date

Closed Session minutes will be issued.



CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

Minutes of a Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **FRIDAY 22ND AUGUST 2025** at 9:30 am.

ST/29 RECRUITMENT – DEPUTY SUPERVISOR

RESOLVED KC/IMM (unanimous)

To approve recruitment of the Deputy Direct Labour Force Supervisor and Market Assistant role.

To approve the Job Description (JD) and Person Specification (PS) including the Market Assistant role with a minor amendment to PS.

To approve the recruitment schedule with the addition of a shortlisting criteria meeting at 10am on Tuesday 23rd September.

To approve an interview panel including staff members and Cllrs Lyle, Maxwell-Muller and Scott-Bell (with Cllr Cowell as reserve member)

To approve the Job Advert including 'a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check is required for the role', Application Form, Short-listing Criteria / Scoresheet, Interview Questions, Interview Scoresheet, and Interview Test (to take place on the same day - managed by a member of the DLF team)

The meeting closed at 10.08 am.

Chair

Date

Item 7.

ITEMS TO ACTION

Staffing Committee

Items to Action

<u>Min No.</u>	<u>Resolution</u>		<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Ongoing</u>					
<u>Staffing Meeting 14/11/24</u>					
ST/49	<u>STAFF TRAINING</u> <u>RESOLVED (unanimous) EG/DT</u> To note that sixteen members of staff attended a team working and prevention of sexual harassment training session at the Guildhall led by Cllr B Waite and Cllr E Garner on 6 th Nov 2024. That the points raised relating to risks during the training session would be anonymised and collated for further consideration by the Committee.		Risk Assessment to be brought back to Committee for annual review in Sept 2025.	For committee 18/9/25	
ST/15	<u>APPRAISALS</u> <u>RESOLVED ISB/DL (unanimous)</u> That the report on the appraisal process be received. That an agenda item to further discuss the appraisal process is brought back to the next meeting.		To bring back to Staffing Committee.		
<u>Complete</u>					
<u>Staffing Meeting</u>					

Staffing Committee

Items to Action

<u>26/06/25</u>					
ST/12	<u>POLICIES</u> <u>RESOLVED ISB/IMM (unanimous)</u> It was noted that the Bullying and Harassment Policy had not been reviewed recently and this should take place through the Policy & Finance Committee.	Passed to P&F for Oct 2025 meeting.	Complete	Sept 2025	
<u>22/08/25</u>					
ST/27	<u>LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY AWARD 2025/26</u> <u>RESOLVED KC/RO (unanimous)</u> To note the pay award and adopt the new pay scales.		Complete	August 2025	
ST/29	<u>RECRUITMENT – DEPUTY SUPERVISOR</u> <u>RESOLVED KC/IMM (unanimous)</u> To approve recruitment of the Deputy Direct Labour Force Supervisor and Market Assistant role. To approve the Job Description (JD) and Person Specification (PS) including the Market Assistant role with a minor amendment to PS. To approve the recruitment schedule with the addition of a shortlisting criteria meeting at 10am on Tuesday 23 rd September. To approve an interview panel including staff members and Cllrs Lyle, Maxwell-Muller and Scott-Bell (with Cllr Cowell as reserve member)	Post advertised PS amended.	Complete Complete	August 2025 August 2025	

Staffing Committee

Items to Action

	<p>To approve the Job Advert including 'a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check is required for the role', Application Form, Short-listing Criteria / Scoresheet, Interview Questions, Interview Scoresheet, and Interview Test (to take place on the same day - managed by a member of the DLF team)</p>	<p>Advert amended and advertised.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>August 2025</p>
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Item 8.

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Report No. ST/25/08

**Staffing Committee
18th September 2025**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As an employer it is important that Ludlow Town Council has an up-to-date Recruitment and Selection Policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To consider the updated Recruitment and Selection Policy.

3. CURRENT POLICY

- 3.1 A copy of the current policy, readopted in April 2016, is shown in Appendix 1.

4. UPDATED POLICY

- 4.1 An updated policy is shown in Appendix 2 (with changes highlighted in red).

The principal difference is that the updated policy contains greater detail about the Shortlisting Process to ensure best practice is being followed.

- 4.2 Further guidance regarding shortlisting can be found at : [Shortlisting: Best Practices for Employers | DavidsonMorris](#). This website provides a great summary of the process and the reasons behind it.

Deputy Town Clerk
September 2025

Implications

Wards Affected (All)

Financial (None)

Health & Safety (None)

Law & Order (Equality Act 2010)

Environmental Implications (none specified)



LUDLOW TOWN COUNCIL

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

**Adopted Full Council 3rd September 2012
Readopted Full Council 26th April 2016**



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1. Introduction

This procedure provides guidance to those involved in selecting staff on what Ludlow Town Council considers to be good practice.

The Council has made clear its commitment to equal opportunities for all by the adoption of an Equal Opportunities Policy. All selection processes must take place within the framework laid down by this policy.

All those involved in selecting candidates for jobs should be aware that legislation increasingly regulates employment behaviour. Failure to follow certain basic steps can lead to an aggrieved candidate referring a matter to an employment tribunal.

2. Aims

The key aims of the Council's selection procedures are to maximise the effectiveness of the selection process;

- i) to ensure that selection practice is in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and with equal opportunities legislation;
- ii) to ensure that a consistent and fair approach is adopted across the Council in the recruitment and selection of staff.

3. Elements in the Recruitment Process

3.1 Job description

The job description and the person specification (*see 2 below*) form the basis for the selection process.

On these depend the advertisement, further particulars, short listing criteria, structure of the interview and final selection.

Before deciding whether or how to fill a post the description of the duties associated with it will be reviewed by the Town Clerk to clarify the essential elements of the job and to ensure that the components remain relevant and shortlisting criteria will be drawn up.

The job description will be included in the further particulars.

3.2 Person specification

The person specification constitutes essentially a list of abilities, experience and qualifications which are essential and/or desirable to do the job. Candidates will be assessed against it. Once these criteria have been identified they must be maintained throughout the selection process. The list should be drawn up by referring to the summary of duties or job description the appointee will be required to undertake.

A person specification functions as a yardstick in the selection process and is essential to good recruitment practice. It is also important in the event of decisions being challenged by unsuccessful candidates.

Particular care should be taken to avoid indirect discrimination.

3.3 *Advertisements*

Posts will be advertised both internally and externally. All advertisements will be approved by the Town Clerk and conform to an agreed Council style.

The aim of advertising is to attract an appropriate number of candidates of suitable calibre and qualification and to demonstrate that the Council is an equal opportunities employer. The advertisement should be consistent with the person specification and the job description/summary of duties and all requirements stated should be justifiable and objective. If there is some flexibility available this should be stated - for example, that applications from part-time or job share candidates would be considered. The advertisement should not be too wordy as this reduces impact.

3.4 *Application Packs*

Following advertisement of a post the pack which is issued to enquirers will include a copy of the Job Advert, a flow chart showing the Staffing Structure, an application form, Job Description, Person Specification (if applicable), the date of shortlisting and the statement 'If you do not hear from the Council by the X date please assume that you have not been successful in applying for this position and we thank you for your application'.

Further Particulars may be given to provide general information about the Council, its activities and about the particular post.

3.5 *Applications*

The Council uses application forms for recruitment in respect of all staff.

All potential applicants should be directed to apply formally through the official named contact. This is essential to ensure co-ordination of the recruitment process, appropriate equal opportunities monitoring, and notification of unsuccessful candidates at the conclusion of the exercise. The form is designed also to elicit essential information from candidates.

3.6 *Shortlisting Process*

As soon after the closing date as possible those involved in the shortlisting will meet to draw up a shortlist of candidates to interview.

The shortlisting process is as follows:

1. Applications are received by deadline.
2. Original applications are only seen by Senior Admin Assistant.
3. They are saved in a protected folder on the server.
4. Before the shortlisting process begins information such as – Name, Address, Contact details, Signature etc are redacted. These are not seen by the shortlisting panel.
5. Shortlisting is undertaken by each member of the panel individually. Applications are scored against the essential and desirable criteria listed within the job description and person specification.
6. Each criteria is given a score of 0,1, 2 or 3. With 0 being no score and 3 exceeding the expectation.
7. The scores are collated by a LTC officer (normally the Town Clerk) and each applicant is then given an overall score enabling the applicants to be listed in order of most suitable based on their application form and the information provided.
8. A discussion follows to ensure all members of the shortlisting panel are in agreement regarding the number of applicants, and which applicants, to be invited to interview.

The Shortlisting Panel will consist of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, and where appropriate the DLF Supervisor, alongside as many of the Staffing Committee members are available.

Internal applicants can be scored during the shortlisting process, however, they are automatically interviewed for the vacancy.

Throughout the shortlisting process particular care should be taken to avoid both direct and indirect discrimination.

It is essential for monitoring purposes and for defence purposes in the event of a claim for unlawful discrimination that the Council keeps records of reasons for *not* shortlisting candidates.

Ideally, no more than six candidates should be identified for interview although this number is at the discretion of the shortlisting panel.

Particular care should be taken in fielding any queries from candidates not shortlisted, or unsuccessful following interview (*see 3.7 below*).

An example of the shortlisting composite sheet is shown in Appendix 1.

3.7 Interviews

The Interview Panel will comprise of no more than five people, one being the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk (and the Direct Labour Force Supervisor where appropriate) and three/four Members from the Staffing Committee.

The aim of the interview is to ascertain who is the most suitable candidate for the job and to ensure that the candidates have a clear picture of what the post entails.

Before the interviews begin the Panel will establish at the outset the aspects of the candidate's qualifications and experience to be explored by each Panel member.

To ensure equity, all candidates should be asked similar questions, with supplementary questions structured around each candidate to enable individuals to demonstrate their relevant skills and abilities.

Interviewers should be careful not to imply discrimination by asking questions about personal circumstances which are unrelated to the job. Such questions are contrary to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. Panel members should be aware that asking the same question of all candidates does not necessarily ensure non-discrimination; the use to which answers are put may be discriminatory. It is, however, legitimate to ask questions about health where this seems relevant.

Note taking is essential at interviews to ensure that relevant information is not forgotten when assessing all the candidates at the end of the interviews.

When all candidates have been interviewed the Interview Panel should compare their formal decisions about each candidate taking care to ensure that comparison should be primarily against the defined criteria in the person specification rather than against the other candidate/s.

Once a decision has been made on whom to appoint, the reasons for *not* offering the post to the other candidates should be recorded. This information is for the Council's own monitoring purposes and is essential for reference in the case of a claim of unlawful discrimination. The reasons given should relate to the comparison against the person specification.

3.8 Notification

An offer of appointment may be made verbally following the interviews but by authorised personnel only (normally the Town Clerk) and must be confirmed in writing by the Town Clerk.

Members of the Interview Panel are recommended not to enter into discussion with unsuccessful candidates but to refer them to the Town Clerk. Similarly, they should not enter into 'negotiations' with the successful candidate; this is the responsibility of the senior officer (normally the Town Clerk).

Where requested the Town Clerk shall offer candidates feedback on their application.

SHORT LISTING CRITERIA COMPOSITE SHEET

JOB TITLE -

[illegible]

PLEASE NOTE: Candidates are able to request copies of short listing or interview notes under the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act.

Item 9.

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY

POLICY:	SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY
Policy number:	SHP / 24 / v1
Available to:	All Staff, Councillors & Public (upon request)
Supersedes Version:	New policy
Approved by:	Full Council
Approval date:	28 th October 2024
Review due:	October 2025

1. Description

- 1.1. Ludlow Town Council is committed to providing an inclusive, supportive and safe environment for everyone who works here. This Policy applies to all employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers

2. Purpose of this Policy

- 2.1. The aim of this Policy is to prevent, respond to incidents that arise, and take action to effect long-term change by:
- educating all staff about sexual harassment and their role in developing a culture free from harassment.
 - fostering a working environment that supports the dignity and respect of all and is free from any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment, and violence, including gender-based violence.
 - where harassment does occur, providing a process and procedure for dealing with it to ensure it is properly managed.
 - capturing learning from what happened to help create an environment free from harassment.
 - monitoring our progress in achieving a workplace free from harassment; and
 - building continuous improvement into our culture.

3. Scope

- 3.1 Everyone has a part to play in being aware of, preventing and dealing with sexual harassment. This Policy sets out the expectations for the behaviour of our staff as well as what we can do to protect all staff from sexual harassment. It is supported by Councillors who are champions of this Policy.
- 3.2 We will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment in the workplace, will treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment. There is no time constraint around reporting an incident of sexual

harassment under this Policy or our Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

- 3.3 Sexual harassment will be treated as a disciplinary offence. Appropriate disciplinary action, including warnings and dismissal with or without notice in accordance with the staff Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure may be taken against any person who violates this Policy. There may also be circumstances where further training is mandated for individuals, teams or the whole organisation.
- 3.4 No one will be victimised for making a complaint of sexual harassment or for helping another person to make such a complaint. This means that anyone who makes such a complaint or who helps someone to make such a complaint, for example by giving evidence or information, will not be treated badly because of their actions. No one will be subject to disciplinary action or to any other detriment simply because their complaint is not upheld.
- 3.5 This Policy and the procedures outlined in it form part of eradicating the sexual and sexist harassment of all workers, and all other forms of gender-based violence.

4. What is Sexual Harassment?

- 4.1 Sexual harassment is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010. This act protects people against sexual harassment and harassment related to 'protected characteristics'. The protected characteristics that are covered by the Equality Act 2010 are:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 also provides for protection against discrimination by association, which provides protection for people who are discriminated against because someone close to them falls under the definition of one of the protected characteristics.

- 4.2 From October 2024 the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 strengthens the existing protection for workers against sexual harassment.
- 4.3 There is a duty on all employers to take responsible steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in their course of employment.

- 4.4 Sexual Harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or the effect of:
- violating the person's dignity, or
 - creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.
- 4.5 Unwanted conduct that has one of these effects can be harassment even if the effect was not intended. A single one-off event or a series of incidents can amount to sexual harassment. A person can be affected by sexual harassment even if the conduct is not targeted at them.
- 4.6 It is also unlawful to treat someone less favourably because they have either submitted a complaint of sexual harassment or have rejected such behaviour.
- 4.7 Anyone can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation or gender identity or that of the harasser. Sexual harassment may also occur between people of the same sex. We recognise that sexual harassment often arises as a form of violence against women and girls. Sexual harassment can also be a form of violence targeted at men and those with non-binary gender identities.
- 4.8 Sexual harassment is often a manifestation of power relationships and frequently occurs within unequal relationships in the workplace, for example between manager or supervisor and a more junior colleague, or a longstanding employee and a new joiner. It frequently arises as the result of sexism and power inequalities between women and men. In cases where sexual harassment is found to have occurred, such abuses of power will be taken into account in deciding what disciplinary action to take.
- 4.9 We also recognise that certain vulnerable or minority groups may be more at risk from sexual harassment. Where a person has more than one protected characteristic, this may increase the risk of them experiencing sexual harassment. This is because multiple categories of identity such as gender, race, sexuality, trans status, religion and disability can interact in ways that create complex systems of oppression and power which can result in harassment based on a combination of different aspects of a person's identity. We refer to this as intersectional harassment.
- 4.10 **What is 'unwanted conduct'?**
- 4.10.1 Unwanted conduct covers a wide range of behaviour which is unwanted or unwelcome.
- 4.10.2 Types of behaviours which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
- Physical conduct:
 - Unwelcome physical contact including patting, pinching, stroking, kissing, hugging.
 - Fondling, or inappropriate touching.

- Physical violence, including sexual assault and rape.
- The use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favours.
- Verbal conduct:-
 - Banter
 - Mimicry
 - Comments on a worker's appearance, age, private life, etc.
 - Sexual comments, stories, jokes or pranks
 - Sexual advances
 - Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy
 - Insults based on the sex of the worker
 - Condescending or paternalistic remarks
 - Sending/sharing sexually explicit messages/images (by any medium)
 - Coercion
 - Gaslighting (a form of covert emotional abuse)
- Non-verbal conduct
 - Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material or imagery
 - Graffiti
 - Acts affecting a person's surroundings
 - Posts or contact on social media
 - Sexually suggestive gestures
 - Facial expressions
 - Whistling
 - Leering
 - Predatory behaviour

The effect of such behaviour and whether it is unwanted should be considered from the point of view of the person who feels harassed (the "recipient").

- 4.11 There may be other sexual behaviour, which though not unwanted, is still inappropriate in the workplace (including in a place that may legally count as work such as at a work event or walking home). For example, engaging in a consensual sexual act in the workplace.
- 4.12 The following examples are intended to provide illustrations of the types of behaviours that will constitute sexual harassment. They are not exhaustive and there are many more examples of such behaviour. Importantly, sexual harassment can arise in various forms and to different degrees. As part of the review process for this Policy, we will ensure that the specific examples given in this Policy are updated so as to reflect the specific work environment in which our staff operate, taking account of the composition of our workforce and the types of work undertaken.
- 4.13 Certain types of harassment may be linked to more than one aspect of the recipient's identity. This is intersectional harassment. Examples that illustrate this are included here, but this Policy is not fully intersectional and must be

read with the Bullying and Harassment Policy for further guidance on other forms of discrimination.

- 4.14 Some forms of sexual harassment are clear violations of a person's dignity:
- Sexual harassment does not have to be targeted at one individual.
 - Sexual harassment does not have to be intentional.
 - It is not necessary for the recipient to say that they object to the behaviour for it to be unwanted.
 - There may be circumstances in which a course of conduct is not unwanted in the earlier stages, but at some point 'oversteps the mark' and becomes unwanted.
 - There may be circumstances where behaviour feels appropriate to those involved but causes concerns for others who may see or overhear it, even if nothing is targeted at them. This could still amount to sexual harassment in breach of this Policy.

5. When does this Policy apply?

- 5.1 This Policy will apply to any unwanted conduct that occurs in the course of a person's work and which takes place at their place of work, including in their home while working from home, on their commute, or at/while travelling to a place which is not their place of work if they are there for any reason related to their work, including for a work-related social event, business trip, training session or conference.

- 5.2 What if the alleged perpetrator is not a member of staff?

The sexual harassment of staff will not be tolerated, whether caused by those that work here or third parties including Councillors, members of the public, suppliers, clients or visitors to our premises. Any instance of work-related sexual harassment should be reported in line with this Policy, regardless of who the alleged perpetrator is.

6. Preventing Sexual Harassment

- 6.1 This section should be read in conjunction with the policies listed in section 18, the Health and Safety Policy is particularly relevant and other policies will provide context specific guidance. For instance, the Bullying and Harassment Policy should be consulted when alleged misconduct may incorporate intersectional discrimination.
- 6.2 As set out in section 4, sexual harassment can be more prevalent in certain environments, including where there are disparities in power between different groups of staff. This is often linked to women and men working at different levels of seniority within organisations, and includes power disparities as a result of disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, race and age. Women are the overwhelming majority of those who are sexually harassed at work. Disabled women, young women and LGBT workers experience even greater rates of sexual harassment. Women of colour frequently experience racialised sexual harassment.

7. Ludlow Town Council Duty of Care

7.1 The law imposes a duty of care on employers to provide a safe system of work for all staff. This includes a specific obligation to protect the health, safety and welfare of their staff and others who might be affected. In discharging this legal duty, we recognise that there are certain measures that can help to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace including ensuring that adequate measures are in place to tackle sexism and address inequality between women and men and people with non-binary identities, and ageism, and to prevent the conditions which cause and exacerbate high levels of stress. These include:

- **Good management practices** including anti-discrimination management practices, competent and respectful people management, awareness of the conditions that can allow sexual harassment to become prevalent and consistency in taking appropriate preventions and interventions (including prompt and unambiguous action to visibly demonstrate that concerns regarding sexual harassment will be taken seriously).
- **Risk assessments** that include consideration of factors that can increase the risk of sexual harassment including work-place stress, lone working, customer-facing duties, and lack of diversity and inclusion in the workforce.
- **Continuous awareness-raising** about the nature and impacts of sexual harassment, common reactions to sexual harassment and the requirement of respectful behaviour for all staff to create a culture free from harassment and identify and address incidents when they occur. Awareness of this Policy, a copy of which will be made available to all staff and Councillors and located on the Ludlow Town Council web page. A copy of which will also be provided to all new workers and Councillors on induction. The Policy will also be available, as appropriate, in translated versions for those whose first language is not English and in accessible formats such as easy read, braille, large print and sign language.
- **Appropriate and targeted training** on sexual harassment and about this Policy for all staff, including supervisors and managers at all levels of the organisation. It will include ally, role model and no-more bystander training to promote clarity about sexual harassment and the value of speaking out to raise concerns. The training is mandatory for all staff and will form part of the induction for new staff and staff receiving promotions or moving to new roles.
- **Reporting.** The Town Clerk will be the main contact for raising a concern or, in the Clerks absence the Deputy Town Clerk. The Chair of Staffing Committee and the Ludlow Town Mayor will also be part of the reporting line, particularly if the allegation of sexual misconduct is involving either the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk. Staff must be able to feel confident and have a confidential discussion where they can raise concerns of their situation and be provided with information regarding how to take further action and what support is available.
- **Monitoring progress.** The Policy and our progress against the above objectives will be transparently reported on and discussed, including at the Staffing meeting, team meetings, and Full Council meetings.

- 7.2 This Policy is supported and championed by the senior management team and endorsed by Ludlow Town Councillors. They will be actively involved in promoting it, attending staff training and being vocal champions of the Policy.

8. Procedure

8.1 Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors

- 8.1.1 All those with line management responsibility must ensure that all workers are aware of this Policy and understand their own, and the organisation's responsibilities. Targeted training on sexual harassment will be provided to all managers.
- 8.1.2 Managers and supervisors have a particular duty to ensure that, within their area of responsibility, everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- 8.1.3 To discharge this duty Ludlow Town Council, must:
- Always challenge any unacceptable or questionable behaviour that they become aware of even if they are not directly affected.
 - Be aware of behaviour and language that can cause offence including jokes and banter, and if necessary, remind workers of the expected standards.
 - Respond to complaints of sexual harassment swiftly, sensitively and objectively using specified procedures as appropriate based on <https://www.acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment/handling-a-sexual-harassment-complaint>
 - The focus in dealing with complaints should be to understand what has happened and address that proportionately, including where this involves the employer acknowledging failing and accepting fault and blame where appropriate.
 - Deal directly with third party perpetrators such as members of the public, volunteers, visitors or contractors, outlining actions which may include withdrawing service, terminating a contract, banning from the premises if behaviour is not moderated.
 - Ensure that this Policy is followed.
- 8.1.4 All complaints of sexual harassment must be dealt with in accordance with the organisation's Sexual Harassment Policy, following guidelines and reporting paperwork.
- 8.1.5 In terms of their own behaviour, managers and supervisors are expected to be exemplars to others. Any inappropriate behaviour or response to such behaviour or abuse of a manager's positional power will serve to condone harassment and will be considered a serious breach of this Policy and be managed under the Disciplinary Policy.
- 8.1.6 A line manager's failure to actively implement this Policy within their area of responsibility, or to fail to deal with sexual harassment when they become aware of it, could constitute a breach of this Policy and their employment contract, and disciplinary action may be taken.

9. Sexual Harassment Reporting Officers

- 9.1 We recognise that it can be difficult for individuals to discuss or report sexual harassment, for example, if the individual's manager is the perpetrator or is aware of the harassment but has not taken action to stop it, the worker is reluctant or too embarrassed to raise the matter with their manager, or feels that their manager may lack the skills, knowledge or sensitivity to deal with complaints of sexual harassment.
- 9.2 We are committed to ensuring that such difficulties are overcome so that allegations of sexual harassment are raised and can be acted upon. To aid in this endeavour the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk have been designated as the key officers to deal with complaints of sexual harassment and to offer advice to workers who believe that they or their colleagues have experienced sexual harassment. This will ensure that:
- empathetic assistance and support to workers with complaints of sexual harassment is provided.
 - the procedures for making a complaint and the potential outcomes are explained.
 - the main details of any complaint are established.
 - help is provided to the worker to decide what they want to do.
 - the complaint is passed to an appropriate manager for action if the worker decides to take the matter further.

A worker who makes any disclosure to the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk about sexual harassment is under no obligation to take further action. Workers who have been sexually harassed are not obliged to refer their complaints to the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk and any such disclosure is made voluntarily.

- 9.3 When information is shared with the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk it will be kept confidential at that point (save in cases where there is a risk to health and safety and sharing with appropriate parties is considered necessary as explained above). The reporting officers will explain the possible next steps and what may happen next with information, the safeguards in place, who it is kept confidential from and the circumstances in which it may be shared.

10. Responsibilities of Staff

- 10.1 All staff have a responsibility to contribute to a respectful and productive working environment. This includes supporting and caring for their colleagues, customers and services users. All staff have a duty to assist in the creation of a safe working environment, where sexual harassment is not tolerated.
- 10.2 To discharge this duty, individual members of staff must:
- Ensure they understand what sexual harassment is.
 - Be aware of how their behaviour may affect others.
 - Challenge unacceptable behaviour wherever possible as long as it is safe to do so. Forms of intervention include calling out behaviour that is unacceptable when it happens and addressing the person who is

behaving inappropriately; taking steps to defuse the situation/redirect those involved; checking in with the recipient of the behaviour after it has taken place, assuring them that what occurred was not acceptable or reporting the matter to your line-manager.

- Report incidents of sexual harassment when witnessed and/or support recipients of sexual harassment in reporting it.
- Co-operate in investigations into alleged sexual harassment.

11. What should I do if I have sexually harassed someone or been accused of doing so?

- 11.1 If you have, or are concerned that you have, engaged in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature (intentionally or otherwise), you should take responsibility for your actions as soon as you can, as they may amount to sexual harassment. This is important as it may prevent the recipient of your behaviour from experiencing further trauma. For further advice, you should contact the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk who will treat any information in accordance with paragraph 12.6.
- 11.2 If you have been questioned, accused, charged or prosecuted for a criminal offence (including one of sexual harassment, assault or rape) in relation to anything that has happened in a work context you must report this to us immediately.
- 11.2.1 This applies even if you deny the alleged conduct or do not consider the alleged conduct to be connected to work. A failure to report this could amount to gross misconduct in itself.
- 11.2.2 Alleged sexual harassment may be investigated by us under this process, our Disciplinary Policy or otherwise and could also amount to an act of misconduct/gross misconduct or otherwise result in your dismissal (including summary dismissal).
- 11.2.3 If, at any time, you are asked (verbally or in writing) by someone who considers your behaviour to amount to sexual harassment to stop, you must not persist in that behaviour. You should also report the incident to the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk. In such circumstances, it is important that you reflect on your behaviour and the way in which it is perceived and experienced by others. Remember that everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. An authentic apology and genuine assurance that the behaviour will not be repeated may be enough to end the matter. However, in some cases a direct apology without a third party to facilitate may not be appropriate and advice from a Sexual Harassment Officer should be sought in advance. You should be sensitive to the reaction/potential reactions of the recipient. If the recipient refuses to accept your apology or is upset further by it, you should not persist in contacting them. You should also seek advice from the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

11.3 What should I do if I am the recipient of unwanted conduct of a sexual nature?

- 11.3.1 You can report any concerns to your manager and/or the Town Clerk. In some cases, you may feel able to ask the perpetrator to stop the behaviour. If that is ineffective, or you do not feel able to do this, an informal discussion with a line-manager can be a useful way of talking through what has happened and deciding what further action you wish to take. Such discussions will be dealt with in confidence. However, if the harassment is of such a serious nature because of the high immediate risk to the safety of the complainant, or others with whom the perpetrator may come into contact, the employer may need to take further action (see paragraph 12.6.2).
- 11.3.2 Recipients of sexual harassment are encouraged to report any instances of sexual harassment, victimisation or discrimination experienced. Reporting is an important step in preventing the behaviour and is important to the recipient's ongoing health, safety and wellbeing, and will enable them to access appropriate guidance and support. However, we recognise that there may be many reasons that someone who has experienced sexual harassment may not report it and are committed to making it easier and less stressful to do so.

11.4 What should I do if I have witnessed unwanted conduct of a sexual nature?

- 11.4.1 You do not have to be the recipient or target of sexual harassment to raise a concern or make a complaint. If you see it happening or become aware of it, you should report it provided it is safe to do so and you feel able to do so. We recognise that past experience of sexual harassment may make this difficult. Your actions can be important in helping create a culture free from sexual harassment and ensuring that there are no bystanders. Tackling sexual harassment is everybody's responsibility. Those who have witnessed sexual harassment can use the reporting mechanisms outlined below.

12. Reporting Mechanisms

- 12.1 It is important that any concerns are reported as you may be the first to formally raise something that has been occurring for some time.
- 12.2 There are different ways in which you can report such behaviour. These different methods recognise that each individual who experiences sexual harassment will have different needs and might desire different outcomes. You should choose the reporting mechanism(s) that you feel most comfortable with.
- 12.3 The Town Council retains the right to investigate concerns that we become aware of even if these are based on anonymous reporting or complaints are withdrawn. Our ability to investigate and take action may be restricted in these circumstances, and we will act with respect and empathy towards any person who has raised a concern but no longer wishes to be involved in the process.

As an employer, we may still pursue matters if it is appropriate and proportionate to do so. This is important to ensure that we can tackle concerns about potential sexual harassment within the Town Council.

12.4 Reporting to the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk

- 12.4.1 An informal discussion with the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk can be a useful first step in talking about what has happened. See section 11.3 for details and confidentiality rules.
- 12.4.2 This may be followed by a formal report. There is no obligation to make a formal report, but as outlined below, for legal reasons, formal action to address specific incidents will normally only be taken once a formal report has been received.

12.5 Reporting to the Police

- 12.5.1 A person may also report concerns about sexual harassment to the police when they consider it appropriate to do so. Personal safety is paramount and where a person has any concerns about criminal behaviour we recommend reporting to the police. See sections 12.8.7 and 12.9.4 for more information on how this Policy can link to police matters.

12.6 Informal Reporting

- 12.6.1 If a person reports sexual harassment to a line-manager but does not want to take the matter any further, the individual receiving the complaint will keep in contact with them to periodically check whether the situation has improved.
- 12.6.2 Although the wishes of the complainant to keep the report on an informal footing will be adhered to wherever possible, there may be some circumstances where the harassment is of such a serious nature that Ludlow Town Council will need to take action because of the high immediate risk to the safety of the complainant, or others with whom the perpetrator may come into contact with. In such situations, the Town Council will put in place appropriate safeguards, such as instigating a formal investigation with suspension, or transfer of the alleged perpetrator, to prevent further harassment, or victimisation of the complainant.

12.7 Formal Reporting

- 12.7.1 If informal action does not stop the sexual harassment, or a formal report is made, a formal procedure will be initiated in line with the grievance process outlined in the Grievance Policy.
- 12.7.2 The process allows both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative, or a colleague.

- 12.7.3 A person who believes that they have been sexually harassed and who decides, whether after discussions with a line-manager or not, to formally report it should, in the first instance, report the alleged act or acts to their line manager. If they do not feel that the line manager is an appropriate person, for example if the line manager is the person doing the harassment, the report should be made to the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk. Where possible, the worker should set out in writing details of the complaint including dates and times of the alleged incident(s) and an account of the behaviour. They should also include what their desired outcome is; the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk can support workers in establishing this.
- 12.7.4 All complaints will be handled and investigated in a timely and confidential manner. The complainant will be invited to a meeting with the person to whom the report is made within 5 working days of reporting the alleged act or acts. The worker will have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or a work colleague or any other person of the complainant's choosing. Following this initial meeting, the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk to whom the complaint is made will instigate an investigation.

12.8. The Investigation

- 12.8.1 At the outset of the investigation the position concerning confidentiality will be explained to participants before they take part. In practice, there will be a requirement for those giving evidence (including complainers and alleged perpetrators) to the investigation to keep what they have said in the process confidential (though they will be given details of those in the organisation that they can speak to for support). It will also be explained how the information they provide in the process may be used and shared in the future. While the sensitive nature of information will be respected and it will be managed accordingly, participants should understand that the information may be used as part of a subsequent HR process. For example, it could form part of a disciplinary investigation in which case the information would be shared with the alleged perpetrator. It may be that materials are ultimately used as evidence in legal proceedings which could be held in a public forum. Within the organisation, confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible, with information only being shared when appropriate. We may at times need to involve external agencies where a criminal offence may have been committed, or if maintaining confidentiality would pose a risk to the complainant or to others. In all other circumstances, breach of confidentiality may be a disciplinary offence.
- 12.8.2 Staff shall be guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing whether they are the complainant or the alleged perpetrator.
- 12.8.3 As a first stage in investigating the complaint, the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk will arrange to interview separately the complainant, and the alleged perpetrator, both of whom may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. We recognise that the complainant may

prefer to talk to an investigator of the same sex, and this will be facilitated wherever possible.

- 12.8.4 Managing a complaint under this Policy will mirror the structure of any other Grievance Process while also recognising the unique issues and skillsets that may be needed to properly manage a sexual harassment complaint.
- 12.8.5 The appointed investigator will hold the same role as a grievance hearer. Their remit will be to:
- (i) investigate the complaint;
 - (ii) provide an outcome to the complainant; and
 - (iii) where appropriate make a recommendation as to whether the matter should be referred to a disciplinary process centred around the alleged perpetrator.
- 12.8.6 Our default approach is for the person investigating the concern to decide on the outcome for the complainant, because they will have a first-hand understanding of all of the information and will have spoken with all witnesses. This reduces the need for the person raising the concern to re-tell their story to multiple people and we hope will therefore minimise the need to re-open any past trauma. However, the person raising the complaint under this Policy will have the option of requesting that a separate person be appointed for stages (i) and (ii) above. That would create separation between the investigation stage and the decision making stage. The person raising the complaint should request this at the time of raising the complaint should they wish to build in that separation. We will then discuss the impact of that change in process with them and agree a final approach with the preference of the complainant being accommodated unless it would be unreasonable to do so.
- 12.8.7 As explained at (iii) above, one possible outcome could be that disciplinary action is recommended, in which case the investigation carried out under this Policy will form part of the disciplinary investigation. An independent panel of Staffing Committee members will always be appointed as Disciplinary Hearer. The Disciplinary Hearer will be responsible for satisfying themselves that a reasonable investigation has been carried out for the purpose of the disciplinary matter they are tasked with considering (that may be the same as, wider than, narrower than, or otherwise different from the complaint investigated under the Sexual Harassment Policy). In doing so, they may instruct the Sexual Harassment Investigator to carry out further investigation for the disciplinary process. A separate Disciplinary Investigator may be appointed to complete the disciplinary investigation (and that person will be able to rely on all materials contained in the sexual harassment investigation as far as appropriate). The Disciplinary Hearer may also carry out further investigation themselves. It is possible that in a sexual harassment matter a Disciplinary Hearer may wish to speak to certain witnesses including the person who raised the complaint first hand to gain a fuller understanding of their evidence. The Disciplinary Hearer will conduct a fair disciplinary process while remaining mindful of minimising the circumstances in which a complainant is required to re-tell their account as this may re-open past trauma.

- 12.8.6 A timeline for completion of the investigation will be set and communicated to the complainant, along with regular updates on progress. Should the timeline be subject to change, a clear explanation will be provided to the complainant by the investigator. We will also explain to recipients of sexual harassment when information may be shared with an alleged perpetrator to ensure that they are not surprised at any stage in the process.
- 12.8.7 If the sexual harassment constitutes a potential criminal offence, such as a sexual assault, indecent exposure, stalking and/or offensive communications, the investigator will provide the complainant with appropriate support should they wish to report the matter to the police. In such cases, we will liaise with the police regarding the investigation and any linked grievance and/or disciplinary processes and take advice on how to conduct a fair process. Where there is an ongoing risk of serious harm to an individual, the investigator will contact the police directly and inform the complainant that they have done so. We may choose to begin liaising with the police on an anonymous/no names basis for high level guidance where appropriate.
- 12.8.8 We also recognise that when a workplace matter is also the subject of potential criminal investigation, the alleged perpetrator may be seeking independent legal advice, and as part of that may be advised not to participate in the internal work process as this could impact upon criminal proceedings. We will not draw any adverse inference from any lack of participation in the process for this reason (i.e. we will not assume that a failure to respond suggests a person is guilty of wrongdoing). However, we may still need to progress matters and take a decision on next steps based on the information available.
- 12.8.9 We will ensure that the complainant, and the alleged perpetrator, are not required to work together while the complaint is under investigation. In a serious case, as a precautionary measure for the protection of the complainant or to prevent interference in the investigation, the alleged perpetrator may be suspended while investigation and any subsequent disciplinary procedures are undertaken. Such suspension will be for as short a time as possible, will be on full pay and will not amount to a disciplinary sanction.
- 12.8.10 At the end of the investigation, the Investigator will provide a detailed response in writing to the complainant specifying outcomes wherever appropriate. If the complaint is upheld, this will include details of the action taken to address the specific complaint and of any preventative or structural measures taken to safeguard against future incidents of a similar nature.
- 12.8.11 If the outcome of the complaint is that the matter will proceed to a disciplinary process, the complainant will have a right to know that this will be pursued under a disciplinary procedure. However, they will not have the right to know what the outcome of that procedure was or if any sanction has been imposed. We recognise that this can be incredibly frustrating. Some sanctions (for example, an exit from the organisation or apology) will be visible and this can help to reassure the complainant that action has been taken. Other sanctions

are "invisible" to others in the organisation (for example, a disciplinary warning or training requirement) and this can lead to concern that no action has been taken. In other situations, processes can be delayed (for example, to accommodate illness or hurdles in the investigation process). We wish to reassure all those involved that just because action cannot be seen does not mean steps are not being taken. As an employer the Town Council has a duty towards all employees and must respect the confidentiality expectations of staff who are the subject to disciplinary proceedings.

- 12.8.13 Where the complaint is not upheld or proceeds to a disciplinary process under which the outcome involves the alleged perpetrator remaining with the organisation, the disciplinary outcome will include the *option* of a facilitated reconciliation meeting, at which the perpetrator will be required to attend, and the complainant will have the option to attend at their discretion. Support will be made available to all parties involved. The aim will be to understand and rebuild professional relationships where possible, failing which to provide closure as far as possible and enable the organisation to learn and move forward. Mediation may also be offered to affected parties.

12.9 Outcome and Sanctions for Committing Sexual Harassment

- 12.9.1 In some cases the outcome of a complaint under this procedure may be an informal resolution, such as an apology or mediated discussion with the alleged perpetrator about how their behaviour is received, or that the matter is not found to amount to sexual harassment. If this is the case the information will be provided to the complainant and any alleged perpetrators. There will be support provided in dealing with the outcome.
- 12.9.2 If a complaint of sexual harassment is upheld, then it may progress to a disciplinary process. The sexual harassment investigation is likely to be the basis of that disciplinary investigation. The outcome of that disciplinary process could range from no sanction to a sanction including warnings and dismissal (with or without notice). These steps will be taken in accordance with the staff disciplinary procedure.
- 12.9.3 We also recognise that the standard of proof in a workplace matter is lower than that in a criminal matter. As such, it is possible for there to be different outcomes in different processes as a result of their different remit and scope.
- 12.9.4 Any decisions taken under this procedure do not preclude any person from pursuing a grievance in the usual way under the staff grievance procedures (though in some cases we may consider that it is appropriate for the matter to be addressed pursuant to this Policy rather than the grievance process where the concern relates to sexual harassment). An individual may also report the matter to the police if they believe that a criminal offence may have been committed (and they are not required to wait for the outcome of this process to do so).

12.10 Right of Appeal

12.10.1 The complainant has the right to appeal against the decision following the investigation within 5 working of receiving the decision from the Investigator.

12.10.2 Any appeal must be made in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal.

12.10.3 On receipt of an appeal, a meeting will be arranged with the Appeal Panel who have not previously been involved in the procedure, to consider the appeal. The complainant will be given the opportunity to put forward their case and explain why they are not satisfied with the outcome. The meeting may be adjourned by the person hearing the appeal, if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible.

12.10.4 The decision of the person hearing the appeal shall be final.

12.10.5 If disciplinary action is taken against an individual as a result of sexual harassment then they will have a right of appeal as set out in the Disciplinary Policy.

13. Protection from Victimisation

All workers shall be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for making a complaint of sexual harassment or for assisting in an investigation. Retaliating against a worker for complaining about or assisting in an investigation of sexual harassment is a disciplinary offence.

14. Management of legal disputes connected to sexual harassment

14.1 In the event of a legal dispute connected to sexual harassment, we commit to managing such matters appropriately, fairly and with empathy. We recognise that for some people, the formal court and tribunal process can re-open past trauma and cause harm. As such, we commit to always being open to the possibility of alternative dispute resolution and mediation (including judicial mediation) where this is requested by a person who alleges that they have been sexually harassed.

14.2 Where sensitive matters form part of proceedings we will always consider whether it is appropriate to apply to the court or tribunal for special orders restricting reporting or protecting anonymity of those involved. While these may not always be appropriate and will ultimately be a matter of determination for the relevant court or tribunal, we will approach any legal proceedings with this in mind to minimise the adverse impact on those who have raised concerns about sexual harassment.

14.3 In some cases, a sexual harassment dispute may be resolved by way of agreement. We also commit to not making any settlement agreement, COT3 or other resolution subject to an obligation that the affected individual will be

restricted from disclosing their experience of sexual harassment, for example by signing a non-disclosure agreement.

15. Review and Evaluation of this Policy

- 15.1 We are committed to ensuring that this Policy and all related procedures are effective in preventing sexual harassment and in dealing with incidents where they do occur. Essential to achieving this aim is adequate investment, and continuous review and evaluation.
- 15.2 If staff have concerns that this Policy is not being followed this should be raised with the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.
- 15.3 We recognise the importance of monitoring this Sexual Harassment Policy and will ensure that it anonymously collects statistics and data as to how it is used and whether or not it is effective.
- 15.4 The Town Clerk will report on compliance with this Policy to Staffing Committee, including the number of incidents, how they were dealt with, and any recommendations made. This will be done on a yearly basis. As a result of this report, we will evaluate the effectiveness of this Policy and our strategy. We will take this into account when reviewing the Policy and our strategy. Where appropriate, goals for improvement will be set publicly and monitored.
- 15.5 This Policy will be reviewed by the Town Clerk and Council on two yearly basis. The initial review of effectiveness will take place 1 year after this Policy comes into effect. Thereafter, reviews will be carried out at intervals of not less than 24 months. Ludlow Town Council will also periodically monitor how successful it is in creating a workplace free of sexual harassment by other means which will include confidential staff surveys, training, raising awareness of harassment and bullying in general and undertaking risk assessments.

16. Support for Those affected by Sexual Harassment

- 16.1 We recognise that sexual harassment can cause stress, anxiety or other mental health issues as well as physical health problems. Deterioration in job performance which results from sexual harassment will be dealt with as a health-related issue and the person will be encouraged to seek help and support under the terms of this Policy.
- 16.2 There will be no discrimination against individuals suffering from stress caused by sexual harassment.

17. Legal

Equality Act 2010

Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

18. Other relevant policies

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this Policy:

Equal Opportunities Policy
GDPR (Data Protection Policy
Staff Code of Conduct Policy
Councillor Code of Conduct
Health and Safety Policy
Bullying and Harassment Policy
Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Dignity at Work Policy



Risk Assessment – Preventing Sexual Harassment

Purpose

The aim of this risk assessment is to prevent sexual harassment during the course of employment. It considers the potential risks to all employees and workers, as well as third parties who are engaged with us to carry out services such as those who are self-employed and agency workers.

Carrying out this assessment will allow us to identify, assess and mitigate risks associated with sexual harassment in the workplace and will help to create a safe and respectful working environment and promote a positive workplace culture. It also supports the Council's compliance with its legal obligation of taking reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in the course of employment.

This assessment is kept under continuous review to ensure existing prevention measures remain adequate. Reviews will take place at least annually, with ad-hoc reviews taking place where circumstances require. This could be if there is a change to the demographics of the workforce or working arrangements, or where we have received complaints of sexual harassment taking place. An action plan will then be created and monitored on the back of this risk assessment.

The Council encourages all employees and workers to inform the Town Clerk of areas in which they believe sexual harassment protection could be further improved.

Please follow the instructions below to ensure that the assessment and accompanying action plan is completed thoroughly and accurately:

Considerations

Considerations are the elements of potential risk. Indicate those that apply and those that don't, e.g. if some people work at night or whether there is alcohol sold on the premises, etc.

Hazard

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm, e.g. power imbalances, coercion, differences in cultural expectations, etc.



- **Who might be harmed:** Consider all employees and workers who could be affected by each identified hazard. This may include employees, workers, those with specific roles, or those who may have vulnerabilities, e.g. waiting staff, travel-based sales staff, bar staff, young workers, etc.
- **Level of risk:** The level of risk is determined by considering both the likelihood of the hazard occurring and the severity of its potential consequences. If in doubt, err on the side of caution.
 - **Low risk:** Indicates that the likelihood of the hazard occurring is rare and the potential consequences are minimal.
 - **Medium risk:** Indicates that the likelihood of the hazard occurring is moderate and the potential consequences could result in sexual harassment occurring.
 - **High risk:** Indicates that the hazard is likely to occur and could result in sexual harassment taking place. This level of risk requires immediate attention and action to eliminate or substantially reduce it.



Ludlow Town Council risk assessment for the prevention of sexual harassment during the course of employment

Risk assessment owner:	Gina Wilding, Town Clerk
Assessment date:	15/10/2024
Assessment carried out by:	Gina Wilding, Town Clerk
Work location:	All Council sites
Next scheduled assessment date:	Annual – October 2025.
Version number:	V1

Potential hazards, risks and proposed actions in prevention

Considerations		Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
						Low	Med	High		
Workforce demographics:										
Is anyone required to work at night?			x	Evening working in the winter means it is dark when leaving the building.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Staff locking up leave the building together.	15/10/2024
Are there lone workers or people		x		Lone working staff.	Cleaning, DLF, market,		x		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff have a lockable space or vehicle where	15/10/2024

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
working in isolated workplaces?				and museum staff.				they can isolate themselves. • They have a works mobile phone. • There is a panic alarm at the Buttercross and Guildhall.	
Is there anyone who works with just one other employee/worker?	x		Potential to become a lone worker for part of the shift.	Cleaning, DLF, market, Guildhall, and museum staff.		x		• Staff have a lockable space or vehicle where they can isolate themselves. • They have a works mobile phone. • There is a panic alarm at the Buttercross and Guildhall. • Guildhall staff have enclosed reception area that is not accessible to the public.	15/10/24
Do your employees/workers interact with third parties, e.g. contractors or members of the public?	x		Meeting with an unknown individual alone.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and		x		• Meeting dates, times and participants are recorded in office diary or white board to make sure other staff are aware they are taking place.	15/10/24

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
				agency workers.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New contractors are met in a public place, and / or with more than one member of staff in attendance. 	
Do any of your employees/workers work alone with a third party?	x		Meeting with an unknown individual alone.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting dates, times and participants are recorded in office diary or white board to make sure other staff are aware they are taking place. New contractors are met in a public place, and / or with more than one member of staff in attendance. 	15/10/24
Do you require your employees/workers to attend the workplace of a third party or attend offsite locations / events?	x		Off-site meetings, conferences, training events. Unfamiliar location and persons.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and		x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting dates, times and participants are recorded in office diary or white board to make sure other staff are aware they are taking place. 	15/10/24

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
				agency workers.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New contractors are met in a public place, and / or with more than one member of staff in attendance. 	
Are members of staff expected to socialise with third parties, e.g. at events or conferences with contractors or clients?	x		Unfamiliar location and persons.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting dates, times and participants are recorded in office diary or white board to make sure other staff are aware they are taking place. New contractors are met in a public place, and / or with more than one member of staff in attendance. 	15/10/24
Are there any employees or workers who travel and work abroad?		x							
Are there high pressured, competitive or stressful environments within your organisation?	x		Coercion due to power imbalance or fear of reprisal.	All employees, volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual		x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff have a robust job description and allocated line manager. 	15/10/24

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
				workers, and agency workers.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The disciplinary and grievance procedure has a clear procedure for raising a concern and more than one member of staff to approach. Councillors are not subject to a disciplinary procedure, which creates a significant power imbalance, so councillors are not permitted to line manage staff. 	
Is there a higher representation of one gender in your workplace?	x		All female in the GH Office All male in the DLF Depot	All employees, volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate work space and personal space is provided for each employee. Adequate privacy is maintained in washrooms and toilet facilities. All staff are encourage to visit other work areas as appropriate to 	15/10/24



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
								<p>their roles and silo environments are discouraged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are encouraged to meet together to discuss work based issues and respectful behavior is encouraged in all staff. 	
Are there areas of power imbalances in the workplace?	x		<p>Senior management and junior employees have a power imbalance.</p> <p>Councillors and staff have a power imbalance.</p> <p>Members of the public and staff can have a power imbalance.</p>	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only staff are permitted to access the back-office spaces. There are lockable door and protective screens in place to prevent unauthorized access to office spaces. All staff have contracts and job descriptions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and have access to council policies. 	15/10/24

Vulnerable employees and workers:



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
Women	x		Discrimination based on gender and not reflective of their ability to do the job.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy	15/10/24
LGBTQ+	x		Discrimination based on sexual orientation and not reflective of their ability to do the job.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy	15/10/24
Young workers		x	Discrimination based on sexual orientation and not reflective of their ability to do the job.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy	15/10/24

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
				agency workers.					
Someone with a disability (mental or physical)		x	Discrimination without considering reasonable adjustments and not reflective of their ability to do the job.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy Bullying and Harassment Policy Dignity at work policy	15/10/24
Black and minority ethnic workers		x	Skin colour or race-based discrimination based that is not reflective of their ability to do the job.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy Bullying and Harassment Policy Dignity at work policy	15/10/24
Non-UK nationals, including those who may not be confident in making a complaint in English or for whom English is not their first language		x	No advocate / representative in the workplace to help them communicate their concerns.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy Bullying and Harassment Policy Dignity at work policy	15/10/24

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
				workers, and agency workers.					
Low-paid earners	x		Power imbalance.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Adherence to the recruitment and selection policy Written contract in place Bullying and Harassment Policy Dignity at work policy	15/10/24
Home workers	x		Potential disconnection from their colleagues in the office.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy Adherence to Lone worker policy Adequate opportunities and methods of communication with their colleagues. Bullying and Harassment Policy Dignity at work policy	15/10/24
Lone workers	x		Vulnerable to demands /	All employees,		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy	15/10/24

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
			influence of others.	Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.				Adherence to Lone worker policy Adequate opportunities and methods of communication with their colleagues. Bullying and Harassment Policy Dignity at work policy	
Agency workers		x	Job insecurity / power imbalance.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy Bullying and Harassment Policy Dignity at work policy	15/10/24
Casual workers		x	Job insecurity / power imbalance.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy Bullying and Harassment Policy Dignity at work policy	15/10/24

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
				workers, and agency workers.					
Those on fixed term or zero-hour contracts	x		Job insecurity / power imbalance.	All employees, Councillors and volunteers, self-employed contractors, casual workers, and agency workers.		x		Adherence to the Equal Opportunities policy Bullying and Harassment Policy Dignity at work policy	15/10/24
Policy:									
Do you have a clearly written anti-harassment policy that deals with the prevention of sexual harassment?	x					x			15/10/24
Do you address third-party harassment in your policy and take reasonable steps to prevent it?	x					x			15/10/24
Is your anti-harassment policy easily accessible to all employees?	x					x		Will be sent to all employees after approval by council	pending



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
Do you re-circulate your policy or remind staff members of where and how to access the policy on a regular basis, including when changes are made?	x					x		Actioned via P&F.	Pending
Do you regularly review, monitor and update your anti-harassment policy?	x					x		Actioned via P&F.	Pending
In your disciplinary policy, do you specify that sexual harassment is considered a potential act of gross misconduct and could lead to someone's summary dismissal?	x					x		Subject to approval of policy changes by P&F	15/10/24
Do policies on the use of IT communication systems and social media include appropriate warnings against online harassment, and how to report concerns?	x					x			
Do you have policies regarding proper use of social media	x					x			



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram or X?									
Is there a policy for workplace relationships?		x				x		Create a policy	Ongoing
Do your anti-harassment policies align to all other company policies such as homeworking, lone working, and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)?		x				x		Alignment of policies under way	Ongoing
Training:									
Do you carry out EDI training that covers sexual harassment as part of the induction/onboarding process?	x							Training session diarized	
Do you carry out EDI training that covers sexual harassment on an annual basis?	x					x		Training session to be diarized	
Do you provide separate training to line managers (to that which is given to		x				x		Seek external trainers.	Ongoing



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
employees and workers)?									
Do you provide EDI training that is specific to your workplace and that uses case studies or scenarios that relate to your organisation?	x					x		Training session diarized	7/11/2024
Do you provide refresher EDI training when circumstances warrant it, e.g. when there is a change in working arrangements or workforce demographics, or after receiving a complaint of sexual harassment?	x					x		Seek external trainer or in-house e-learning options.	
Management structure:									
Is there a higher representation of one gender in the leadership team?	x					x		Adherence to recruitment and selection policy	
Are there areas of the business that have power imbalances?	x							Adherence to staff code of conduct and disciplinary procedures, and councillor code of conduct.	
Are there areas of the business where		x							

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
company policies aren't adhered to?									
Is decision making concentrated, i.e. only a few individuals at the top of the business can make decisions?		x						Scheme of delegation so that everyone understands how decisions are made. Collaborative working and decision making encouraged where appropriate.	
Is there an HR team, or access to an external HR outsourcing provider?	x							Worknest	
Do leaders have individual authority over recruitment practices?		x						Adherence to recruitment and selection policy	
Do leaders have individual authority on pay decisions?		x						National pay award process observed.	
Working environment:									
Do you have an IT policy that sets the rules for appropriate usage?	x								
Do you monitor and address inappropriate	x								

Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
behaviour on digital platforms?									
Do employees travel abroad for business?		x							
Are there sexualised or sexist materials on display such as calendars or posters?		x							
Is there adequate privacy or security for workers using bathrooms or changing rooms?	x								
Do you have areas that are isolated or with inadequate lighting or security?	x								
Are there different uniform requirements between genders, or prescriptive dress codes or expectations for either gender?		x							
Are workers required to travel and have overnight stays?	x								
Do employees and workers travel to remote locations?		x							
Do you provide accommodation		x							



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
facilities for employees?									
Are sexist jokes prevalent in the workplace?		x							
Do workers engage with social drinking on site?		x							
Do you have high staff turnover, particularly of female workers, young workers, or low-paid earners?		x							
Have you been informed that some workers are more reluctant to work with certain workers or take on certain tasks?		x							
Is alcohol consumed, either by staff or third parties, whilst staff are working?	x								
Outside of the workplace:									
Do staff socialise outside of the workplace?	x								
Is alcohol available at social events?	x								



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
Do you undertake background or reference checks for all workers and other people engaged at your workplace such as contractors?	x								
Do you issue employee communications in advance of workplace events?	x								
Complaint handling:									
Do you have clear and effective procedures for receiving and responding to complaints of sexual harassment?	x								
Are there multiple, confidential ways for employees to report harassment?	x								
Are your workers able to access management who are outside of their direct reporting line?	x								
Is your workforce so small that	x								



Considerations	Yes	No	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Level of risk			Preventative action	Date completed
					Low	Med	High		
confidentiality and confidence to raise issues may be difficult to achieve?									
Have there been previous cases of harassment?		x							
Are line managers consistent at, and do they enforce, disciplinary and grievance policies?	x								
Do you ensure prompt, thorough and impartial investigations of sexual harassment complaints?	x								
Are there support systems in place for victims of sexual harassment such as counselling services, or employee assistance programmes?	x								
Do staff report a culture of banter or casual sexism which is hard to challenge?		x							
Do you audit your work practices to	x								



Ludlow



Action Plan – Preventing Sexual Harassment

Purpose

The key purpose of this action plan is to prevent sexual harassment from occurring during the course of employment. The activities listed within it have all been identified through the completion of a risk assessment which considered all of our working practices, including our policies and procedures.

A further aim of this action plan is to strengthen relevant employment policies and reporting mechanisms and to foster a workplace culture of responsibility and awareness, all of which are fundamental in preventing sexual harassment. By implementing the actions that have been identified through the risk assessment process, it supports the Council's compliance with its legal obligations.

Please follow the instructions below to ensure that the action plan is implemented, monitored, and amended timely and accurately:

Preventative steps

Record the results of the risk assessment by listing all of the activities identified and provide detailed information for its effective completion. This should include those who are to be responsible, the resources required (such as people, budget, and time), and timeframes for completion.

Monitoring

The monitoring of the action plan is fundamental in the prevention of sexual harassment. It enables the tracking of progress, detects any issues early, provides meaningful data to aid decision making, facilitates accountability and transparency, and allows for continuous improvement, all of which will lead to the successful implementation of each action point and therefore remove, or significantly lower, the risk of sexual harassment occurring.



Ludlow Town Council action plan for the prevention of sexual harassment during the course of employment

Action plan owner:	Gina Wilding, Town Clerk
Action plan date:	15/10/2024
Work location:	All Council sites
Date of risk assessment this action plan aligns with:	15/10/2024
Next scheduled risk assessment date:	Annual – October 2025.
Version number:	V1

Action plan for the prevention of sexual harassment during the course of employment

Risk assessment result	Activity	Responsible	Resources (people, budget, time)	Time frame for completion	Monitoring
All employees and workers aware of the organisation's policies on the prevention of sexual harassment and response mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line management training Employee training Part of the induction and onboarding process 	Town Clerk.	Annual training next scheduled for November 2024	Training of the entire workforce, circa 20 employees, carried out November 2024	Insert any notes on the progress and implementation
Site security procedures to be reviewed and enforced with Councillors and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommunication of site security arrangements. 	Town Clerk		November 2024	Annual review.
Alignment of policies	Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal Opportunities Policy 	Town Clerk and Full Council		October 2024	Review at P&F Committee



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GDPR (Data Protection Policy• Staff Code of Conduct Policy• Councillor Code of Conduct• Health and Safety Policy• Bullying and Harassment Policy• Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure• Dignity at Work Policy			
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