

Sandy Town Council

**To: Cllrs N Aldis, P Blaine, A M Hill (Chairman), W Jackson, C Osborne, M Pettitt, and S Sutton
c.c. A Gibson, J Hewitt, T Knagg, R Lock, S Paterson, M Scott, P Sharman and N Thompson**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council to be held in the Council Chamber at 10, Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 22nd March 2021 commencing at 7.30pm.



Town Clerk
10 Cambridge Road
Sandy, SG19 1JE
01767 681491
16th March 2021

Notes:

- (1) Due to the current Covid-19 Coronavirus situation, the Town Council will meet virtually via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>) as permitted in The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations").
- (2) Meeting ID: 832 6786 0049

Press and public are cordially invited to attend. Those wishing to join the meeting should contact the clerk on clerk@sandytowncouncil.gov.uk in advance for the meeting password.

- (3) Members of the public wishing to address the Council during the public participation part of the formal meeting must make the Clerk aware of their intention before the meeting starts.

A G E N D A

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

Under the Localism Act 2011 members of Council are not required to make oral declarations of interest at meetings but may not participate in discussion or voting on any items of business in which they have a Declarable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) and under Sandy Town Council's Standing Orders must leave the room for the duration of all discussion on such items. (All members' register of interests are available on the Sandy

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Town Council website or on application to the Clerk.)

This item is included on the agenda to enable members to declare new DPIs and also those who wish to do so may draw attention to their stated DPIs and also any non-declarable personal interests which they have declared under Sandy Town Council's adopted Code of Conduct and which may be relevant to items on the agenda.

- i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
- ii) Non-disclosable Interests
- iii) Dispensations

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

To consider the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on Monday 27th January 2021 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

Previously circulated

4 Public Participation Session

Members of the public may ask questions or make representations to the committee about items of business which are on the agenda.

5 Health and Safety / Accident Report

To note there are no health and safety issues or accidents to report.

6 Training Report

To receive a report on employee and Councillor training undertaken or planned.

Appendix I

7 Employee Handbook Review

To receive and consider policies which form part of the employee handbook, which has been reviewed and updated by the Council's external HR Advisor.

- i) Equal Opportunities Policy

Appendix II

- ii) Equal Pay Policy

Appendix III

- iii) Alcohol and drugs Policy

Appendix IV

- iv) Anti-Bribery Policy

Appendix V

8 Chairman's Items

9 Date of Next meeting: 5th July 2021

10 COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION

RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to

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disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

11 Staffing Matters

- i) To receive and note employee sick leave figures for the financial year to date.
- ii) To note an increase in the national living wage.
- iii) To receive a report from the Town Clerk on 2020/21 annual leave.
- iv) To receive and consider a staffing matters report.

Confidential

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL**COMMITTEE:** Human Resources**DATE:** 22 March 2021**AUTHOR:** Town Clerk**SUBJECT:** Training and Conferences**Training**

The following training or seminars have been completed by staff and Councillors since the last meeting of the Human Resources Committee:

Training	Provider	Participants	Date
Parish Carbon Footprint Tool – Training Session	Centre for Sustainable Energy	Cllr Sutton Anne Elliott-Flockhart	12/01/21
Council powers and duties	BATPC	Town Clerk	27/01/21
Council meetings	BATPC	Cllr Pettitt Town Clerk	23/02/21
Mazars – External Audit training	SLCC – Bedfordshire	Town Clerk	11/02/21
SLCC Virtual Conference	SLCC Practitioners Conference	Town Clerk	24/02/21

AGENDA ITEM 6**APPENDIX I**

The following training has been identified for completion as soon as it becomes available at a suitable location. Interest has been flagged with each of the training providers listed below.

Training	Provider	Participants	Cost
New Councillor Induction	BATPC	Cllr S Paterson	£30
Chainsaw Maintenance and Use	City and Guilds	Chris Dainton	£410
Basic Tree Survey & Inspection	Bedford College	Grounds Team Member	£195
Grounds Maintenance and Management	Institute of Groundsmen	Outdoor Team	£900 for on-site based training course.
Press Releases and Social Media for Local Councils	Costs being sought from various providers.	Clerk/Admin Team	Unknown
Microsoft Office for Local Councils	SLCC	Admin Team	Unknown

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

1. The Council is an equal opportunity employer.
2. The Council is committed to being a successful, caring and welcoming place for all employees. We want to create a supportive and inclusive environment where our employees can reach their full potential, without prejudice and discrimination. We are committed to a culture where respect and understanding is fostered and the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances will be positively valued.
3. The policy aims to achieve equality by removing any potential discrimination in the way that our employees are treated by fellow employees or the Council, including:
 - people with disabilities
 - people of different sexual orientations
 - transgendered and transsexual people
 - people of different races
 - people on the grounds of their sex
 - those of faith and of no faith
 - in relation to their age
 - in relation to their social class or medical condition
 - people who work part-time
 - those who are married or in a civil partnership
 - women who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.
4. Discrimination can be either direct or indirect discrimination. Some of the above are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and discrimination is prohibited, unless there is a legal exception under the Equality Act.
 - 4.1 **Direct discrimination**
This is where someone is treated less favourably due to one (or more) protected characteristics. It can be intentional or unintentional discrimination. Occasionally the discrimination may occur due to a protected characteristic of another person, so the discrimination may be because of association. An example is an advert for a job that requires 'men only' or 'under 30s only'.
 - 4.2 **Indirect discrimination**
This is where someone is disadvantaged by an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice (PCP) that is applied 'across the board' or 'equally across a particular group'. The PCP may have the consequence (usually unintended) of causing a disadvantage, which then actually affects somebody. For example, a PCP relating to clothing or headwear could be applied 'equally', but may cause someone with a protected characteristic to be disadvantaged. The PCP could be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
 - 4.3 **Victimisation**
This is not the same as the common meaning of victimisation, but is specifically regarding treating someone less favourably because they have complained about or given information about discrimination or harassment, either regarding themselves or someone else.

4.4 Harassment

This is part of the Equality Act but is covered in more detail in the Harassment policy.

The Equality Act 2010 applies to how employees treat fellow employees, visitors, suppliers and former employees. The Act also applies to customers/clients.

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that no applicant or member of staff receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Council.

Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.

The Town Clerk has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring the equality and diversity policies and, as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

5. Commitment

1. We are committed to ensuring that all of our employees and applicants for employment are protected from unlawful discrimination in employment.
2. Recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria.
3. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job.
4. Interviews will be conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary and relevant.
5. All employees have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. Discrimination is a serious disciplinary matter which will normally be treated as gross misconduct.
6. Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds should raise the matter through the Council's grievance procedure.

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL**EQUAL PAY POLICY**

Our vision is for the Council to be a successful, caring and welcoming place for employees and visitors. We want to create a supportive and inclusive environment where our employees can reach their full potential without prejudice and discrimination. We are committed to a culture where respect and understanding is fostered and the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances will be positively valued.

Part of this vision includes the principle of equal pay between women and men. There should be equitable and fair treatment of our employees, based on capability and merit, rather than biases based on sex.

The Council will ensure that all employees, male or female, have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

The Council is dedicated to the removal of inequality of pay based on sex. Procedures that determine pay and other conditions should not cause unlawful discrimination and instead will be based on transparent objective criteria.

"Pay" for the purposes of this policy is not just salary/wages (remuneration) but also other terms and conditions of employment such as opportunities and training programmes that may be offered by the Council.

The principle for determining equal pay between roles is where the work being undertaken is substantially similar, or of equal value, unless there are clear or specific reasons unconnected with sex to explain/justify any difference in pay.

Some of the reasons unconnected with sex that may justify pay differences include factors relating to differences in positions, senior/junior roles, qualifications held or experience.

This policy is connected with the other equality and diversity policies that the Council operates, stemming from the Equality Act 2010.

What is an equal pay claim?

All workers, including full or part time employees, casual workers and temporary workers are covered by the principles of equal pay.

The Equality Act 2010 contains the rights of workers and obligations of employers in respect of equal pay, amongst other areas of equality such as sex and race discrimination provisions. Previous cases heard at the European level have been highly influential in the area of equal pay and continue to guide best practice in this area.

The governing principle enables an employee to make a comparison with the contractual entitlements enjoyed by a 'named comparator'.

There are several basis for making a claim. Comparisons can be based on:

- like work
- work rated as equivalent
- work of equal value.

All contractual terms and pay are included in these comparisons. The men and women should be in identical situations for the comparisons to be made.

Council commitments

As set out within this policy, the Council is committed to the following:

- to create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued
- every employee, worker or self-employed contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all
- equality of pay in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense
- we will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness. The equal pay policy will be discussed and agreed with employee representatives as appropriate
- Introduce annual equal pay audits and take any steps that may be required to resolve any issues.

Grievance procedure

If an employee wishes to raise any concerns about their circumstances, they may do so informally in the first instance but are free to raise a complaint under the Council's grievance procedure, so that any concerns can be properly investigated.

Equal pay grievances are treated as matters of priority and the Council will not unreasonably delay any reviews or investigations into equal pay matters.

More general comments and feedback on the policy can be directed to your line manager or, if that would be inappropriate, PNC HR. The Council will take appropriate action based on the concerns received.

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL**ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY**

Alcohol and drug misuse can have an adverse effect not just on an individual but on their colleagues, customers and the public. Having a safe working environment, providing excellent customer service by maintaining productivity levels and avoiding days being lost to illness are all critical to our function as a council.

Sandy Town Council requires all employees to comply with the alcohol and drugs policy and the testing policy. Breaches of the policy will be taken very seriously and may be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'drugs' means illegal substances (or legal substances which induce similar effects to legal drugs) or other substances, for example, solvents. Drug misuse also refers to the misuse of prescribed medication.

Policy

The Council strongly discourages employees from drinking any alcohol or taking drugs prior to driving or reporting to work. Employees must not turn up for work under the influence of alcohol or drugs under any circumstances.

Employees must not drink alcohol or take drugs during working time. Working time is any time between when an employee reports for work and the time they finish work and includes lunchtimes. It includes any period of call out whilst on standby duty or overtime working.

Prescribed medication

The policy does not stop employees from using prescribed medication, over-the-counter medication or herbal remedies. However, medication such as tranquillisers, sleeping pills, pain-killers, decongestants, cough suppressants, antihistamines (for treatment of hay fever or other allergies) and antidepressants can make people feel drowsy and may affect their work performance or the safety of themselves or others. If an employee is taking any medication they should:

- check the possible side effects with their doctor or pharmacist and
- let their line manager know, in confidence, that they are taking medication and the possible side effects. Their line manager will, if necessary, make alternative arrangements for them.

Assistance

If an employee comes forward voluntarily and seeks help for an alcohol or drug problem they will be given help and support by the Council. If an employee thinks they have a problem and may be violating this policy as a result, the Council strongly encourages them to come forward and seek help. The Council will be sympathetic and ensure the employee gets the help and support they need which may include direction to external specialists. If an employee volunteers information to the Council that they have an alcohol or drug problem they will be treated with dignity at all times.

Any discussions will be in the strictest of confidence.

The Council recognises that employees may continue to struggle with alcohol or drug dependency even after they have sought and are receiving assistance. The Council will make every effort to provide ongoing support to employees.

Absence

If employees are absent from work due to their attendance for treatment in relation to alcohol or drug abuse, that absence will be treated as normal sickness absence.

Formal procedures

Whilst the Council will be sympathetic to employees who are experiencing difficulties with alcohol and drugs, it may be appropriate to implement a disciplinary or capability procedure as appropriate where conduct or performance is not satisfactory, which could result in termination of employment.

Criminal activity in the workplace involving drugs will, in every case, require the Council to alert the police.

Alcohol and Drugs Testing Policy

Purpose

The Council reserves the right to require employees to undergo random alcohol and drug tests and this policy sets out the applicable procedure.

The benefit of testing is that it provides an objective way of measuring whether an employee has used alcohol or drugs rather than relying on the personal opinion of a colleague.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our alcohol and drugs policy.

Test procedure

Tests are undertaken on a random basis with no prior warning. The employee's line manager will ask the employee to attend an agreed place at work so that a sample may be taken. The sample may be blood, urine or breath.

Before the test, the employee will be asked to declare, in confidence, any medication that they are taking which may interfere with the test result. If necessary, the person appointed to take the test sample may need to make further enquiries into the possible impact of the medication on the sample.

Tests under this policy should present no risk to pregnant employees. However, it is advisable for pregnant employees who are asked to provide a sample that they declare their pregnancy to the person appointed to take the sample. The employee will have the opportunity to raise any concerns they have. This information will be treated with the strictest confidence.

The test will be carried out by The Town Clerk under a tightly controlled environment, ensuring the results are fair, accurate and objective. Tests are carried out in the strictest confidence and privacy, and will ensure the employee's dignity.

Once the test is complete, the employee will be asked to confirm in writing that the sample belongs to them and it will be sent away for testing.

Refusal to take test

An employee refusing to be tested under the provisions of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the Council's disciplinary procedures, up to and including dismissal. The procedure may be halted/postponed/waived if the employee has a good medical reason

for refusal. Other reasons which are not medically related will not be accepted and the employee will be required to take the test.

Positive results

Employees will be informed of their test results by the Town Clerk. Employees who have tested positive may be subject to action under the Council's disciplinary procedure, up to and including dismissal.

The Council will consider whether a further test may be of assistance, however, this will depend on the circumstances. If the length of time which has passed since the first test is of such a duration that it is likely that any evidence of alcohol or drug use may have disappeared, a further test will be deemed unhelpful.

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL**ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY****Definition**

Bribery is, in the conduct of the Council's business, the offering or accepting of any gift, loan, payment, reward or advantage for personal gain as an encouragement to do something which is dishonest, illegal or a breach of trust.

Bribery is a criminal offence. The Council prohibits any form of bribery. We require compliance, from everyone connected with our business, with the highest ethical standards and anti-bribery laws applicable. Integrity and transparency are of utmost importance to us and we have a zero tolerance attitude towards corrupt activities of any kind, whether committed by Sandy Town Council employees or by third parties acting for or on behalf of Sandy Town Council.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to convey to all employees and interested parties of Sandy Town Council the rules of the Council in relation to our unequivocal stance towards the eradication of bribery and our commitment to ensuring that Sandy Town Council conducts its business in a fair, professional and legal manner.

Offences

It is a criminal offence to:

- offer a bribe
- accept a bribe
- bribe a foreign official
- as a commercial organisation, to fail to prevent a bribe.

You should be aware that if you are found guilty by a court of committing bribery, you could face up to 10 years in prison and/or an unlimited fine. The Council could also face prosecution and be liable to pay a fine.

Definitions of bribery and corruption

Corruption is the misuse of office or power for private gain. Bribery is a form of corruption which means in the course of business giving or receiving money, gifts, meals, entertainment or anything else of value as an inducement to a person to do something which is dishonest or illegal.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Sandy Town Council regardless of seniority or site. It also extends to anyone working for or on our behalf eg those engaged by us on a self-employed basis or an agency arrangement.

We will encourage the application of this policy where our business involves the use of third parties eg suppliers; contractors.

Policy

It is prohibited, directly or indirectly, to offer, give, request or accept any bribe ie gift, loan, payment, reward or advantage, either in cash or any other form of inducement, to or from any person or Council in order to gain commercial, contractual or regulatory advantage for the Council, or in order to gain any personal advantage for an individual or anyone connected with the individual in a way that is unethical.

It is also prohibited to act in the above manner in order to influence an individual in his capacity as a foreign public official. You should not make a payment to a third party on behalf of a foreign public official.

If you are offered a bribe, or a bribe is solicited from you, you should not agree to it unless your immediate safety is in jeopardy. You should immediately contact the Town Clerk so that action can be taken if considered necessary. You may be asked to give a written account of events.

If you, as an employee or person working on our behalf, suspect that an act of bribery, or attempted bribery, has taken place, even if you are not personally involved, you are expected to report this to contact the Town Clerk. You may be asked to give a written account of events.

Appropriate checks will be made before engaging with suppliers or other third parties of any kind to reduce the risk of our business partners breaching our anti-bribery rules.

The Council will ensure that all of its transactions, including any sponsorship or donations given to charity, are made transparently and legitimately.

Sandy Town Council takes any actual or suspected breach of this policy extremely seriously and will carry out a thorough investigation should any instances arise.

We will uphold laws relating to bribery and will take disciplinary action against any employee, or other relevant action against persons working on our behalf or in connection with us, should we find that an act of bribery, or attempted bribery, has taken place. This action may result in your dismissal if you are an employee, or the cessation of our arrangement with you if you are self-employed, an agency worker, contractor etc. Staff are reminded of the Council's whistleblowing policy which is available in the employee handbook, or upon request.

Gifts and hospitality

We realise that the giving and receiving of gifts and hospitality where nothing is expected in return helps form positive relationships with third parties where it is proportionate and properly recorded. This does not constitute bribery and consequently such actions are not considered a breach of this policy.

Gifts include money; goods (flowers, vouchers, food, drink, event tickets when not used in a hosted business context); services or loans given or received as a mark of friendship or appreciation.

Hospitality includes entertaining; meals or event tickets (when used in a hosted business context) given or received to initiate or develop relations. Hospitality will become a gift if the host is not present.

No gift should be given nor hospitality offered by an employee or anyone working on our behalf to any party in connection with our business without receiving prior written approval from the Town Clerk. Similarly, no gift nor offer of hospitality should be accepted by an employee or anyone working on our behalf without receiving prior written approval from The Town Clerk.

A record will be made of every instance in which gifts or hospitality are given or received. As the law is constantly changing, this policy is subject to review and the Council reserves the right to amend this policy without prior notice.